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of those further
along.*

DRAFT

Detroit Area Library Network (DALNET)

If Detroit Area Libraries wanted to automate jointly, i.e. create an automated library network, how could they proceed?

- I. The libraries would need to agree on the goals of cooperative automation.
 - A. One goal could be to save money by automating cooperatively. Some areas for cost savings, or at least cost containment, include:
 - (1) Sharing the costs for hardware and software, realizing a savings on the initial investment.
 - (2) Continuing savings on equipment and supplies with group purchases.
 - (3) Reduced storage and maintenance costs for mutually used data bases, e.g. bibliographic records, patron files, authority files.
 - (4) Potential for external funding is higher with cooperative automation projects.
 - (5) Reduced retrospective conversion costs for those matching against the shared bibliographic data base.
 - B. A second goal could be to improve service in each library system by sharing resources. Some areas of increased resource sharing via automation include:
 - (1) Shared cataloging via a mutually used data base
 - (2) Cooperative acquisitions and collection development possibilities
 - (3) Online Interlibrary Loan capability among libraries
 - (4) Compatible bar codes and patron ID cards to facilitate the circulation of materials
 - (5) Shared circulation and serials holdings files to give online availability of materials.

- II. The libraries would need to agree on the type of automated library network that would best meet their goals.

Options include:

- A. A shared automated system based on the use of ^{one or more} large super-mini or mainframe computers located at selected sites.
- B. Each library contracting with the same vendor independently so their stand alone systems could easily be linked.
- C. Each library contracting with the vendor of its choice and agreeing to contract jointly later for linkages to be developed between their systems.

- III. Major decisions the libraries would need to make to automate cooperatively include:

- A. Which functions to automate.

It is recommended that shared systems be planned as integrated systems, with the functions, e.g. circulation, implemented one at a time.

- B. Standards for the system.

Bibliographic standards would include complete MARC II formats and AACR II entries. Bar code standards, ID card compatibility, etc. would have to be decided.

- C. Which libraries to include.

A geographic area with libraries 12 to 15 miles from a central computer is recommended. The legal structure of the network could limit membership.

- D. Central services to be provided.

To operate a shared system, these services may be needed:

- (1) a site for the CPU and related hardware
- (2) a liaison to the vendor(s) for the libraries
- (3) a computer system operator
- (4) support for initial and ongoing training
- (5) administrative support, e.g. budgeting, reports.

E. Funding components

- (1) Initial commitment
- (2) Fund raising options
- (3) Cost sharing plan

F. Governance and legal structure.

Options for a structure include:

- (1) a not-for-profit corporation could be formed to select and run an automated system for the members. ✓ draft?
 - (a) a not-for-profit corporation could be formed to select and run an automated system for the members.
 - (b) a system of equitable cost sharing would have to be devised, based most likely on system use.
 - (c) membership options could be provided, e.g. full, partial, and access only.
 - (d) a governance structure like that of the Michigan Library Consortium could be developed, with an Executive Board that is responsible to Trustees.
- (2) a large library (either DPL or WSUL) could own the automated system and contract with other libraries for time and services.
 - (a) Various types of contracts would have to be developed.
 - (b) A fair cost structure would have to be devised.
 - (c) An Advisory Group would need to be established to review services, standards, pricing, etc.

IV. Conclusion

The decision to automate as a group must be made with a strong commitment for regional resource sharing.