

What is DALNET/NOTIS?

DALNET stands for Detroit Area Libraries Network and is made up of the Detroit Public Library and the libraries of Wayne State University, Oakland University, Wayne County Community College and several teaching hospitals. It was formed for the purpose of joint automation. The University of Detroit was a charter member of DALNET and has participated as a full partner through the planning stages.

NOTIS is software developed by Northwestern University. It provides an online public catalog with access using subject, title or author by means of terminals located on site or dial-in. It automates the charge-out, return and reserving of materials and shows the location and the circulation status of items in the online catalog. It also automates internal library functions such as issue by issue check in of periodicals, acquisition of new books and subscriptions and fines/fees.

NOTIS has been purchased by WSU for DALNET. Most of the other participating institutions have signed contracts and are beginning to implement NOTIS. NOTIS has also been selected by the state library, the University of Michigan, Michigan State, Michigan Tech and the Upper Peninsula Region of Library Cooperation. Eventually this widespread use of NOTIS will permit a state-wide network.

Why should we join DALNET and implement NOTIS?

Participation in the network will provide instant access to the library holdings of all major institutions in the area (6 million volumes) and will bring our unique resources to the notice of others in the scholarly community. This has great potential for holds/delivery of items from other collections and for cooperative collection development, allowing our scarce dollars to go further. It will bring Clarkston and EBA into the mainstream and link our professional libraries to the total library community.

Expansion from a metropolitan area to a state network is a highly probable future development. This would allow transfer of materials and collection development cooperation state-wide. Given the constant escalation of the cost of library materials as well as the expense for ever-larger buildings to house growing collections, coordinated buying has become a necessity.

Our own students would be better served. Automation would allow us to perform services better and more efficiently. Online catalogs which both locate and show the circulation status of books give a high degree of satisfaction to users. The catalogs of all the libraries in the network can be reached from other buildings on campus and by means of home computers. The system provides management reports for better tracking of in-demand titles and subjects, allowing us to spend our acquisitions dollars where the need is.

What will be the effect if we do not join DALNET?

Computers and automation for libraries are no longer the wave of the future. They are the existing technology. We must begin using this technology in order to keep pace with other universities, to provide our students with rapid access to a wide pool of resources and to bring our unique resources to the notice of others.

We have already invested over \$200,000 and three years of planning effort in this project. System capacity will soon be reached. Other institutions will take our place if we do not join DALNET almost immediately. In this case we will be left out of both the metropolitan and state-wide networks, since automation on our own at a later time is both too costly and robs us of the benefits of the joint catalog. This would have serious ramifications for the University of Detroit, reducing us to third-class citizenship, behind Wayne County Community College and even smaller libraries. If we remain on the sidelines while others move ahead, it would be a serious blow to the scholarly community here and to the prestige and status of the largest private institution in the state.