 [Overhead 1]

ACQUISITIONS/SERIALS IN A CONSORTIUM ENVIRONMENT
THE VANDERBILT EXPERIENCE

The original title for this session was "Acquisitions/Serials in a Multi-Library Environment," which fits my presentation better because Vanderbilt is not involved in an outside consortium. The Jean and Alexander Heard Library system at Vanderbilt University is made up of seven division libraries. Five of the divisions are served by General Technical Services, which I will refer to as GTS. However, the Law and Medical Center libraries have their own technical services operations that have traditionally been fairly independent of GTS, depending on it only for final invoice payment and fund accounting. As the Assistant Director for Technical Services at the Medical Center Library, I will be presenting developments in our cooperative venture from the view of one of the smaller units.

Vanderbilt made the decision to purchase the NOTIS system in the fall of 1984. In order to retain as much independence as possible within NOTIS, each of the technical services operations was set up as a separate processing center with its own bibliographic records. This means that if Law, Medical, Divinity and Central own the same title, [Overhead 2] the index screen will show 3 records, one for Law, one for Medical, and one for the libraries GTS serves, in this case Divinity and Central. However, we felt that it was also very important to try to standardize what each processing center did so that the online system would be as consistent as possible to users. To that end, a Technical Services Implementation Group (TSIG) and a corresponding Public Services Implementation Group were formed early in 1985, even before the system was installed. TSIG, composed of the heads of technical services in the three processing centers, the head of the Systems office, and a public services representative, began meeting weekly to discuss issues of common concern. Three subcommittees of TSIG, one for acquisitions, serials, and cataloging, were appointed to come up with proposed standards and to deal with any problems that arose during implementation

Planning in acquisitions was complicated by the decision of GTS not to use the acquisitions module right away. In 1982, only 3 years before the implementation of NOTIS, GTS had designed its own computerized acquisitions and book fund accounting system which, for the first time, interacted with the university's accounting office and was recognized as an official subsystem of that office. GTS did not want to lose this interaction, so it decided to delay initial implementation of acquisitions until the possibility of an interface had been explored. The Medical Library and the Law Library, on the other hand, which did not have online access to the GTS information and found using the system for ordering somewhat cumbersome, began using NOTIS for new book and serial acquisitions as soon as that module was available in the summer of 1985, although they still had to send invoices to GTS for payment.

When fund accounting became available on NOTIS, the Medical Library, which helped test the system in 1986, opted to use it to keep its own NOTIS fund records in addition to the ones done by GTS; Law tried it for awhile, but decided to continue to use only the acquisitions part of NOTIS and rely on GTS for fund accounting. Once division librarians began seeing Medical and Law orders, check-in records, and payment information in the online catalog, they began wanting theirs to show too. So, in the summer of 1986, GTS began using NOTIS for ordering and serials control, and rekeying information into their own system for payment. Later, they started putting serial payment information in note statements in the OPR, and this past year, GTS began creating fund records for periodicals and serials in order to be able to load serial invoice tapes.

Is that complicated enough for you? Anyway, the result of all this was that the largest user of the system was not actually involved with the acquisitions or serials system until after many of the standards had been set up and used by other divisions. If GTS had been using the acquisitions/serials system more actively when standards were being established, it is possible that a somewhat different decisions would have been reached.

I am going to discuss some of the issues the acquisitions and serials subcommittees spent much time reviewing when NOTIS was first installed and later developments. I will focus mainly on the vendor file, bibliographic records, public displays of information, staff mode formatting, and management reports. For those of you who would like more details about the implementation of the serials module, [Overhead 3], I would like to refer you to an excellent article by the heads of serials at GTS and the Medical Library, "Implementation of Online Serials Control: Two Approaches Within the Same Library System." I'm sorry that I neglected to include this citation in your handouts.

The Vendor File

Even before NOTIS was installed, the Vanderbilt Libraries were using a shared numeric vendor file developed and monitored by GTS. Whenever a library used a vendor that wasn't already in the file, a form with the relevant information was filled out and sent to GTS, where a 4 digit numeric code was assigned. Staff in the Medical and Law libraries did not like having to look up the numeric code every time and felt that the move to the NOTIS system was the perfect opportunity to change from a numeric file to a mnemonic one where, we hoped, the codes would be easier to remember. GTS was not too pleased with this idea because of the large number of vendors they would have to assign new codes to, but since they did not plan to use the system right then anyway, they went along with it. Because Law and Medical still needed to send invoices to GTS for payment, it was agreed that the GTS vendor number would be added after the vendor name in the vendor address section, preceded by a # sign [Overhead 4] so that it would appear on orders. To avoid duplication of codes, it was agreed that the first library to use a new vendor would propose a mnemonic code and send it to the Acquisitions Subcommittee for approval. Lists of proposed codes for the major vendors used by Law and Medical were prepared and reviewed by the Acquisitions Subcommittee.

Within a few months, problems with all processing units trying to use the same vendor record appeared. Having each new vendor code approved by all the members of a committee took time and began to hold up ordering. The Law Library wanted to include vendor account numbers in the vendor record, which would not be possible if all units, each with a different account number, shared the same record. Since computer file space was not an issue, and feeling that there was only minimal overlap in the minor vendors now being added anyway, especially between Law and Medical, it was agreed in 1986 that each processing unit could have its own vendor records. To be sure that no duplication would occur, Law and Medical agreed to add /L or /M to their records. Although I don't think we realized it at the time, with this decision we essentially agreed not to have a shared vendor file at Vanderbilt. Later, when GTS finally decided to start using the acquisitions module, it saw no reason not to continue using its numeric system, so our vendor file is now really three independent files [Overhead 5].

<u>Bibliographic Information</u>

Because new acquisition records would appear with cataloging records in the public catalog for the first time, the Acquisitions Subcommittee was very concerned initially with standards for the records to be used. It was agreed that if another library had a record in the system, the derive procedure should be used. If no record existed, an OCLC record was to be transferred, with the LC record for monographs and an authenticated CONSER record for serials preferred. This was a concession for the Medical Library, which had previously preferred National Library of Medicine records. If no OCLC record could be used, it was agreed that a provisional record should be input, with the LANG, DT/1, ISN, author, title edition, imprint and series (if available) fields required. The form of name, including series, was to be as authoritative as possible, and checking in the authority file and online catalog was required, with additional checking of the LC name authority file recommended.
In our library, Acquisitions and Serials Section staff were given brief training sessions on choosing and creating authoritative records.

Standardized Displays - Public

There was general agreement that consistency was especially important in areas that displayed to the public. Because the potentially complex information about the receipt and holdings of serials was to be displayed from free-text fields, the Serials Subcommittee spent much of its time coming up with minimum standards for the recording of receipt and volume holdings information. They felt that any abbreviations used in the records should conform to AACR II, Appendix 3, and that the American National Standard for Serial Holdings Statements, ANSI Z39.44 should be followed. The level of specificity with which to report holdings was left to each individual processing center;most began using open-ended summary holdings in volume holdings records, but are now trying to go back and create detailed holdings.

Various committees also looked at the messages displayed to the public by various codes. "IN THE PRE-ORDER PROCESS" was changed to "IN THE ORDER PROCESS" to accommodate GTS's original plan to add bibliographic records but not order records in the database. Since most processing units did not add a title to the database unless it was being ordered anyway, the wording was left changed even after GTS began creating orders. In response to complaints from all divisions, we also changed the infamous "THIS RECORD IS FOR STAFF USE" to "THIS ITEM IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE LIBRARY. The record remains in Acorn for staff use" in an attempt to make it clearer to the public why the record was being retained. We also found that it was possible to change some of the other copy holding codes that display messages to the public and agreed that some of the codes that none of the processing units planned to use be changed to provide messages that processing units wanted to display to the public.
[Overhead 6]

Standardized Displays - Staff

In the beginning, we felt that it was very important that staff from all processing centers be able to interpret the records from other processing centers, and all committees spent a lot of time looking at the list of notation codes provided by NOTIS and recommending additions, deletions, and revisions. For the most part, committees were hesitant to delete codes (who knows what might possibly be needed later), but recommended the addition of many new codes, especially for the Law Library, which felt that its needs were not met by the original list. It was also recommended that codes should be in all small letters and initials in all capital letters so that they could be easily distinguished (a distinction that I'm afraid has not always been adhered to), that dates follow the NOTIS format, and that semicolons be used to separate elements of a note. Experience has shown that we don't need to read the notes of other processing units as much as we thought, and that most codes can be fairly easily interpreted, so the list of codes is not always been updated now as timely as it once was.

The Acquisitions Subcommittee also discussed whether the use of the OPR local code fields, L1-L4 should be standardized [Overhead 7]. Some processing centers had uses in mind which were not of interest to other centers. Other centers didn't have specific uses yet, but did not want their use of the fields limited in case they needed them later. It was finally agreed that there wasn't a need for standardization between processing centers here. Because any reports that needed to be run could be limited to a processing center, only conformity within a processing center was necessary. We are now using L1 and L2 to record our bindery title and color codes, and L4 to record the expected expenditure by class for monographs.

Another topic considered by the Acquisitions Subcommittee with input from the Serials Subcommittee was the topic of vendor memo codes. After using the memo codes for a couple of years, acquisitions staff wanted changes and additions. Our Systems Office staff was approached, and after investigating, felt that they could modify and add statements to some extent and asked the subcommittee for recommendations. The committee studied the memo codes in great detail and agreed that there was a need for 14 new codes and revisions to several others. [Overhead 8] I thought these might be of interest, so I included them in your handouts. We were very pleased that these changes were able to be made.

<u>Management Reports</u>

During the first few years of implementation, Vanderbilt's capability for producing any reports and statistics other than those available with the NOTIS software was very limited, so the subcommittees concentrated on other issues. Pressure for more reports continued to com from the division libraries, however, so in 1987, the Systems office asked divisions and subcommittees for a "wish list" of needed reports. From the many requests received, Systems tried to determine which ones were feasible and would meet the needs of the most divisions. Unfortunately, due to the complexity of the O/P/R record, few of these first reports dealt with acquisitions or serials. In 1989, the Systems Office hired a person who could work with the database, and we have finally begun to get reports useful to acquisitions and serials. It has been great. When a report is requested by one processing unit that would be applicable to other units, the Systems Office asks the other units if they would also like the report run for them. Some examples of some of the reports generated to date include: a report on the number of vendor memos requested each month by receiving unit, location and vendor, a monthly list of records coded OA without an order in ten days, lists of current subscriptions, lists of duplicate journals in the system and between specific divisions, and lists of titles on order for more than 4 months.

I would summarize the Medical Library's and Vanderbilt's experience with NOTIS acquisitions in a multi-processing center environment over the last 5 years as follows:

1. The NOTIS system is flexible enough to accommodate a great deal of independence among its users if that is desired.

2. The concern with standardization that is usually felt when a multi-library network or consortium is being established often lessens over the years as some of the original issues are dealt with and as participants realize that the system can function adequately without the complete standardization anticipated in the beginning. Here at Vanderbilt, the Technical Services Implementation Group first met weekly, then biweekly, then monthly, then quarterly, and now infrequently.

3. If no group is given monitoring or enforcement responsibilities, it is easy for members of the consortium to become lax about or ignore standards. Decisions about what to do if a member does not follow the group's norms should be made in advance and known to all participants.