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TO: Gail Orange, DPL Duffield Branch
Ruth Biersdorf, DPL Mark Twain Branch
Carol Doll, WSU Library and Information Science Program

FROM: Louise Bugg *Louise Bugg*

SUBJECT: DALNET Children's OPAC Enhancements Task Force

DATE: March 31, 1999

The DALNET Board has approved your appointment by the Steering Committee to the DALNET Children's OPAC Enhancements Task Force.

The members of this Task Force are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>email ID</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Gail Orange, DPL, Co-Chair	<u>gorange@detroit.lib.mi.us</u>	(313) 924-6456
Ruth Biersdorf, DPL	<u>rbiersd@detroit.lib.mi.us</u>	(313) 924-9272
Carol Doll, WSU	<u>af6720@wayne.edu</u>	(313) 577-8520

with Scott Muir as the DALNET Liaison to the Task Force. Scott's email ID is aq1648@wayne.edu and his phone number is (313) 577-9341.

The Ameritech Library services official contact for this Task Force is Lisa Godfrey. Lisa's email ID is: lpg@amlibs.com and her phone number is: (800) 288-8020 ext. 5557. Another designated Ameritech contact of this Task Force is Ricc Ferrante (email ID: raf@amlibs.com and phone (800) 288-8020 ext. 5279.

DALNET Children's OPAC Enhancements Task Force

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This Task Force is charged as follows:

1. Work with Ameritech Library Services to provide specifications for an easy-to use graphical interface for the Horizon online catalog that includes:
 - a. a set of librarian-designed canned searches,
 - b. spell-checking,
 - c. ranked retrieval sets, and
 - d. concept searching;
2. Test these features with children in the Detroit Public Library;
3. Provide feedback on them as they are developed.

The Children's OPAC Enhancements Task Force, together with Ameritech's designated contacts, is asked to develop the detailed program plan for this enhancement, including proposed deadlines for milestones.

The co-chairs are responsible for:

1. organizing and conducting Task Force meetings;
2. providing minutes of those meetings to the Steering Committee chair; and
3. submitting official recommendations of the Task Force to the Steering Committee and presenting those recommendations at a Steering Committee meeting, as necessary.

Attached for your information is a copy of a description written by John Houser last Fall for two of the features to be developed.

Thank you very much for being willing to serve. If you have questions, please contact me by email: ac3731@wayne.edu or telephone: (313) 577-4058.

LB/cmz

cc. S. Muir
J. Houser
H. Masek

Description of Automatic Spell-Checking and Concept Searching Features for the DALNET Horizon Implementation

Concept Searching

The phrase "concept searching" is used to describe a set of search engine features which allow catalog users to search for a phrase representing a concept and retrieve records which are related to that concept but which may not actually contain the words included in the search phrase. For instance, when you search for the terms "science" and "fiction" with the Excite search engine, <http://www.excite.com/>, the system responds with records that include the terms "Sci-fi" and "Fantasy" but which may not include the terms "science" and "fiction". There is an automatic linkage between the concept of science fiction and the concept of fantasy.

The Excite engine also suggests appropriate search terms that may be related to those entered by the user. A partial explanation of this technology appears in the help materials available online:

The words suggested at search time are statistically derived from the words and concepts resident in our 50 million URL index. We accomplish this by clustering the body of words contained in our index and identifying relationships between the words. For each word or group of words you enter into a search box, we have a pool of hundreds of related words from which we can derive the ten words most closely related to the one(s) you've entered. — <http://www.excite.com/info/searching.html?a-tip-t>

Automatic Spell-Checking

This feature is used to correct spelling errors before running a search or to provide the user with assistance in selecting the correct spelling of a search term. A system using this technology might look something like this:

When the user enters a search, the catalog software runs the search terms entered through a filter. Some terms, capitalized phrases, acronyms, etc. will be skipped. The remaining terms are run through a spell-checker. If there is a match for each term, the search is run normally. If there is no exact match, then the spell-checker develops a list of terms judged likely to have been intended by the user. These terms are each assigned a score based on their likely relevance. The system then performs a search against the terms entered by the user and those scored highest by the spell-checker. The results are ranked by relevance. Records containing search terms generated by the spell-checker and given high scores are given a higher relevance score in the search results. The results of the search are displayed with the search terms highlighted. The user's original terms, if found, are displayed in one color, the terms added by the spell-checker are highlighted in another color.

If search terms were added to the search by the spell-checker while the search was being generated, the system then asks the user whether the highlighted terms were those the user intended. If the answer is no, the user is asked to select alternate search terms from the list of terms generated by the spell-checker. After the selection is made, the search is run again.

One variation of the system described above would have the user's original search terms checked against the catalog's name authority file as well as a local dictionary file. The dictionary file used could also be updated from the name authority records contained in the catalog automatically.