The LLMC-Digital Newsletter
    Issue No. 2: September 2003

Opening Day

The full *LLMC-Digital* web site went up on schedule on September 1. This was a new experience for our partners at the University of Michigan's Scholarly Publishing Office (MI-SPO). Since they function as the server for several digital libraries, they are naturally familiar with the problems involved in handling access for a large number of individual libraries or library systems. However, in the past their subscribers usually arrived singly or in small numbers and were accommodated fairly routinely. This was the first time they provided initial access to over two hundred libraries or library systems in one fell swoop.

Given that, in general things went smoothly. More than 95% of subscribers got up without a problem. Of those remaining, the most common problem turned out to be access being denied to machines not entitled to it within the IP ranges provided (see endnote No. 1). This was resolved in a day or two once the numbers were sorted out or clarified. A number of U.S. court libraries didn't get access until the second week after launch. That problem was complicated by enhanced security measures in effect for those U.S. Government users. It was finally isolated and identified as stemming from overlapping IP ranges. This latter symptom apparently is what is troubling the two remaining institutions still having problems as of this writing (See endnote No. 2).

Site Improvement, a Case history

One of the first things many folks noticed was that access to the titles provided was unnecessarily complicated. As presently configured, the interface requires that users search for the title by entering key words from the title in a search box. This is problematic in several ways. One, it would be a lot more efficient just to have a link from the title where it appears in the title list. As one user, Jim Shelar of Arnold and Porter, put it: "I start from the premise that 90% or more of the time when we want to find something on LLMC Digital we will be starting with a known citation. I see the usefulness of LLMC Digital largely as an archive, similar to the Hein Service, (which) starts with a clear list of easily displayed titles and provides an easy, intuitive way to enter the numbers of your citation and go right to the document.… It seems a long way around the barn to have to enter a search to get to a citation you have in hand and to search the whole database of titles to get to it."

A second problem with the present configuration is that the search process

is inherently subject to subtle error. Thus, one user, seeking to pull up the reports of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit was told that this title is not in the collection, even though it is. His mistake lay in typing in the words "United States," rather than "U.S." —the official, cataloged version. That user joined with Jim and others in asking: "Please tell me that it is possible to enhance and change the interface."

The good news is that it is possible, and that help is on the way. Fortunately this problem of "clunky" interface was identified even before the site went up; while it was in the beta phase. During the summer Margaret Leary of the University of Michigan Law Library and her staff generously gave of their time to do an extended critique of the demo site. The cumbersome access problem was identified early on as something meriting high priority for improvement.

We think the problem stems from differences in viewpoint between us legal beavers and our MI-SPO technical partners. In the other digital libraries developed by Michigan the prevailing pattern is that users wouldn't know the titles. Therefore, primacy was accorded to the search process. We're different and we need a different approach.

Fortunately, the computer jocks at Michigan started working on a replacement access strategy immediately. Of course, they knew it wouldn't be the work of a day. In the words of Maria Bonn, Head of MI-SPO: "It's not that we don't get it, its just harder than it looks and that's why 'browsing," as we call this kind of navigation is not a standard part of our systems. When a collection changes every month, its especially hard to know what's online. In your case we have a lot of new stuff added each month, and we have to figure out some automatic way for the system to know what's gone online and then to create new pages to indicate that. It takes some logic and some programming. This gets even more complicated when the titles you want to display are different from the official bibliographic titles in the cataloging record because we have to write code to map one version to the other. We're getting there, but it will take a little longer."

Despite Maria's caution, her wizards have been working away. A prototype was ready for LLMC approval by mid-August. Finding it was a very significant improvement, we gave quick approval and authorized full scale development. We have just received word from MI-SPO that a completely new title-access system is nearing completion and should be ready for installation "this fall." We've learned in this game not to be overly date-specific. But we interpret that to mean "before Thanksgiving." We hope you will find it a great improvement.

This subsection was subtitled "A Case History" for a reason. *LLMC-Digital* belongs to us. We are the ones paying the bills. So, if we can identify something that could use enhancement, and if we can clearly articulate what it is that would serve our needs, the folks at MI-SPO are more than willing to try to make us happy. This is a case where the people doing the critique were able to make their case with specific suggestions for improvement. We hope that it can serve as a model for future input by our community of users into the site design process.

Scope of Law School Library Access.

One facet of the *LLMC-Digital* subscription program which has caused some confusion is the extent to which other members of a law school subscriber's campus community are entitled to access. We have received at least ten requests for clarification, and one law school subscriber asked us to draft some boilerplate which it could use in its publicity efforts. In the hope that the draft will be useful to others with similar questions or needs, the text of that draft follows.

> Library units on the campus of the University of _____ should know that the Law School's subscription to the digital service called *LLMC-Digital* entitles all other campus libraries to access this electronic service subject to the following constraints. Access for members of the campus community is restricted to on-site use at any of the campus libraries, or remote access provided under a con-trolled IP system which restricts access to bona fide students, staff and faculty of campus community acting in that role. Members of the general public are permitted access to the service on a walk in basis at any of the campus libraries. Campus library units should be aware that *LLMC-Digital* is a non-profit consortial undertaking, which is dependent upon mutual trust and cooperation among its members to help maintain the service's core subscription base. In keeping with that sense of mutual trust and cooperation, library units will be expected to use their best efforts to restrict access obtained through their agency to the campus community as described above.

Of course, every clarification requires more definition. Several law school library subscribers presented local situations requiring a more refined definition of "campus." If your school needs any such clarification, please contact LLMC in Kaneohe. Basically our response will be geared to insuring the fairest possible conformity with the practice of the generality of *LLMC-Digital* users.

Cataloging

Richard Amelung, our man in St. Louis, wrote a general description on our cataloging program which appeared in the first issue of this newsletter. In

that first article, which bears re-reading if you have responsibilities in this area, Richard outlined the general philosophy underlying the *LLMC-Digital* cataloging program, and laid out what libraries should do if they wished to obtain this cataloging, either piecemeal or on subscription from OCLC. He generously concluded that article by offering: "For further details, comments or questions, please feel free to contact Richard Amelung at St. Louis Univ. Law Lib. by phone at (314) 977-2743 or e-mail amelunrc@slu.edu".

Apparently a number of people came up with more detailed questions. So Richard penned a general e-mail a few days ago to the AALL Tech Services and Online Bib Services SIS discussion lists. His hope was to reach a large segment of subscribers and answer quite a few of the early, repetitive questions. Given the general interest, the text of that message follows:

"Friends--The LLMC-Digital site went 'live' two weeks ago. In the meantime, I've fielded a few questions concerning the availability of cataloging for the set. I'd like to take a few lines describing how that process is shaping up, and exactly what subscribers can expect.

First of all, records are now available from OCLC's WorldCat Sets service. However, let me issue a cautionary note. With the launch of *LLMC-Digital,* the targeted titles are for the most part long runs of administrative agency decisions. (Read: many volumes, few titles.) In fact, I count 26 entries on the site as of this morning. Due to cataloging rules, these 26 entries resulted in 37 cataloging records due to title changes, separately cataloged related volumes, etc.

Consequently, you will need to make a value judgment. Do you really want to get these records now? That is purely a local decision. But let me offer a couple of possible solutions for access to this data.

- Use a set level record only until more data is available. The set record is the record for *LLMC-Digital* as a total entity. OCLC's set record for *LLMC-Digital* is #53027307.
- Hang back until more titles are mounted. As many of you know, in LLMC's *Newsletter* of Sept. 1, Mr. Dupont published a three-page 'target' list of the titles which will be mounted on *LLMC-Digital* during the first year or so of its operation. Giving the site a few more months before ordering the cataloging might give that first load of records into your local system more bang for your buck for your local 'launch.'
- Let me also note that, in terms of cataloging, we are in the rather unusual position of actually being ahead of the publisher. (In all the years of doing microform sets, I only remember always being behind!) However, we have set up a work flow in which Saint Louis University Law Library is receiving notification of which titles are being added at

about the same time as these titles are being sent to be digitized … that is, anywhere from two to six weeks before a given title appears on the website. Consequently, if the truth be known, there are really over 70 *LLMC-Digital* titles in OCLC right now. We at St. Louis 'release' them when we see that they have actually been mounted on the web site. I don't think anyone wants to load records for titles to which their patrons do not yet have access. That would be what the Public Service types call 'Bad Karma.'

- The last option, then, at least initially, when there are a limited number of titles, would be to seek out those specific titles and merely download/export them. If you do this, BE SURE TO UPDATE YOUR HOLDINGS. Because, later on, when we start hitting significant runs of mono-graphs, and you want to set up a subscription for the cataloging with OCLC, there is a box on the form that reads: 'Do not send records that already have the library's symbol attached.' That way, later on, you won't end up with a lot of duplicates.

In conclusion, let me note that, insofar as possible, we will be attempting to maintain these records on a current basis. If serials die, titles change, etc., we will make every effort to close them off and add their subsequent manifestations. Therefore, your institution may want to consider contracting for the OCLC bib. notification service so that your cataloging access to this resource stays current.

As with all sets that Saint Louis University Law Library has worked on in the past, all headings represented on the *LLMC-Digital* records will have authority records to back them up. Once we switch to Connexion, we will be linking the headings to those authority records.

Repeating from my earlier article in these pages, for OCLC members, the cost for these records will be determined by your regional network. OCLC itself is not in a position to discuss money. They will take it … just not discuss it. We all have our scruples.

Finally, if there are any additional questions about the cataloging, please let me know.

Thanks, RCA"

Assistant/Deputy Director Search

The search for an assistant or deputy director to assist with the running of LLMC, and in particular with the development of *LLMC-Digital,* is going into its final phases. We received some nineteen applications for the post. Interviewing of a selected ten of these applicants was conducted at the AALL convention in Seattle and elsewhere.

We are happy to report that the process has finally winnowed out two superbly qualified candidates. As it happens, both have had their major law library experiences in law firm library settings. Both have been in the forefront of the past decade's widespread adoption of digital delivery systems for legal materials. Each has already been interviewed by LLMC directors in their home communities. They are scheduled to come out to Kaneohe for final interviews and to familiarize themselves with LLMC's operations in the first full week of October. It is hoped that the final steps in this process can be completed in the next six or so weeks and that a final offer can be made well before Thanksgiving.

Logo Contest

Some readers may recall that LLMC announced a logo contest many months ago. Since then the press of other deadlines has prevented much attention being paid to this matter—although it hasn't been forgotten.

We received submissions from nine individuals and some were of great merit. Unfortunately, most suffered from a lack of specificity on our part as to where the logo would be used. Thus many depend heavily on color, which does not figure in much of our public literature. Other's were too complicated for easy use on stationery or other routine applications.

In any event, we found sufficient merit in at least four of the submissions that we will be re-contacting those individuals in October to ask that they refine their ideas with the view to specific uses. Therefore, at this point the process can be considered to be going into "Phase Two." Hopefully by Christmas we will no longer be logoless.

Endnotes:

Endnote no. 1— It might be helpful to know the process whereby Michigan tracks down this common problem. They first ask the user to check again to be sure that they can't access the site from that machine. Then they ask them to go to the following URL: http://ets.umdl.umich.wedu/cqi/whoami. This site tells them the specific IP address for the machine they are using. That IP is then checked against the IP list submitted for that institution to see if that computer's number is within the specified range. For most users this same process can be followed at home. However, it will not work for libraries, such as the federal court libraries, which have an extra layers of security protection such as "gateway" IPs.

Endnote no. 2—A problem which apparently affected only one librarian may be worth notice just in case someone else out there doesn't know they have it. She wrote: "When I view (the list of titles contained in a collection) it is hard to read the black text on the dark background. Would a lighter background be possible?" Jerry Dupont responded for LLMC: "The color combination you report is not the color combination being 'broadcast' by the server. The latter is in white text on a grayish/green background. I had this problem occur on my own computer (a Mac) when the site

was in early development. It turned out that I was using AOL as my browser, and AOL is not supposed to be good at this kind of thing. I was advised to switch to my Internet Explorer browser, and the problem disappeared. Why not try switching browsers?" Apparently this worked for her, since we didn't here any more about that.