



Montana Library Network Reading Cowboy News September—October 2002

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MLN 2002 OCLC Training Comes to Montana

A number of OCLC-related classes are offered during fall 2002, between October 21 and December 12. Classes include use of the MLN Gateway, WorldCat, OCLC CatExpress, and the OCLC ILL Web interface. For libraries doing original cataloging on OCLC, additional classes are offered for CatME and OCLC's new Connexion cataloging tool. You can see a detailed schedule with course descriptions on the MLN's Web site:

<http://montanalibraries.org/MLNOCLCtrainingfall2002.html>

OCLC Western and the Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR) will provide training. State Library staff will teach ILL protocols and an introduction to the MLN Gateway. Training sites include Montana State University-Billings Library and the Lewis & Clark Library in Helena; we appreciate MSU-Billings' and Lewis & Clark's willingness to share their facilities, please thank them when you get a chance.

This year our contract with OCLC did not include training, so libraries will pay for the training they attend. Registration is completed directly with OCLC Western or BCR (all Montana libraries are BCR members and so qualify for member pricing). OCLC Western registration can be done online at:

<http://www.oclc.org/western/training/index.htm>. Registering for BCR taught classes can be accomplished at: <http://www.bcr.org/workshop/wkshops.html>.

Class sizes are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Montana Shared Catalog Goes Live!

Seventeen western Montana libraries have inaugurated their new online library catalog, called the Montana Shared Catalog. The Library's new catalog is sold by Sirsi, Corporation, from Huntsville, Alabama. Sirsi calls its public catalog 'iBistro', and it's familiar 'Amazon.com-like' look and feel helps library users easily search their library's catalog, look through other libraries' catalogs (in Montana and around the world), visit selected high-quality Web sites, read book reviews...all from one easy-to-use search screen.

The Montana Shared Catalog, provides access to over 400,000 books, tapes, and magazines in one academic, fifteen public, and one school/public libraries. These libraries are located in the western part of the state in a triangle, stretching from Thompson Falls to Helena and Dillon. Plans are to add libraries from eastern Montana in calendar year 2003.

This catalog is available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, in the Library, or from home, work, or school. All that is required to use your library's catalog is a Web browser and an

Internet connection. Browse the catalog by going to: <http://montanalibraries.org>, and selecting a library from the drop down "Montana Shared Catalog" dialog box.

The Montana Shared Catalog is a project of the Montana Library Network, part of the Montana State Library, and partially funded by federal Library Service and Technology Act funds.

New MSC Members (LSTA \$ Permitting) 2003

The following Sagebrush and South Central Federation libraries have indicated their interest in the Montana Shared Catalog:

- Big Horn County Public Library, Hardin
- Carnegie Library, Big Timber
- Glendive Public Library
- Lewistown Public Library
- Miles City Public Library
- Sidney Public Library
- Sweet Grass County High School, Big Timber

Funding will likely become available to South Central (SCF) and Sagebrush (SAGE) Federation libraries in January or February 2003. Funding comes through the State Library from the Federal Government, in Library Service and Technology Act funds. We won't know how much money will be available, or when it will be available, until January. This list must be viewed as 'provisional' until we have this federal funding in hand, however, if all goes as planned we'll begin the process of bringing these libraries into the MSC sometime in January, with a June 'go-live' date. For more information, contact Bruce Newell at MLN. <mailto:bnewell@state.mt.us>, (406) 444-9816

Our plan is to continue to increase MSC membership and, at the same time, encourage shared catalog growth, as long as funding and interest holds out. The next round will be open to all types of libraries, irrespective of location. Recruitment for this fourth round of shared catalog project libraries will begin in Spring 2003, progressing to a firm commitment from interested libraries during the summer of 2003, and culminating in bringing about ten new libraries on beginning in January 2004 and going live in June 2004.

Data Communications Planning and Management

One of the hard lessons we've learned from the Montana Shared Catalog project is that libraries cannot have too fast, too wide, or too reliable data communications. We've learned that we need more than just simple access to sufficient data communications services; additionally we must be able to manage and troubleshoot our links to the networked world. And we've learned that the skills required are far beyond most of our abilities.

We are beginning to explore ways in which Montana libraries might be able to work with one-another, and telecommunications industry partners, to help meet our increasingly complex data communications needs. I'll let you know as our thinking progresses...

September Networking Task Force Meeting

After welcoming Mary Anne Hansen, from the MSU-Renne Library, Lyn McKinney from the Billings School District, and Colet Bartow, from the Manhattan Schools to the Networking Task Force, we discussed a number of issues ranging from the magazine index request-for-proposal process, to MLN's fiscal year 2003 budget, and keeping abreast of the state's increasing OCLC obligation.

At our next meeting, scheduled for November 4, 2002, at the State Library, our discussion will include interlibrary loan statistics, Montana's OCLC cost share model, MLN's budget, and the Gate's program as it might relate to getting a handle on data communications needs and trends.

Work Plan for Fall 2002 and Winter 2003

The loss of Diane Gunderson as Data Coordinator has already had an effect on MLN's workflow. It can fairly be said that we miss her daily. Here's what I think is going to keep us busy over the next six to eight months:

- OCLC training
- Preparing for next year's OCLC and magazine index contracts
- Bringing several Montanaiana projects to a satisfactory conclusion
- More than several scheduled presentations, meetings, retreats, conferences
- Visits to Montana libraries and with library boards
- Updating library automation standards documentation on MLN's web site
- Data communications strategy planning
- Focusing on better marketing (as Montana libraries' partner)
- Shared catalog implementation (western and S.E. libraries)
- Consulting, as requested
- Other duties, as assigned

Public Library, Academic and Special Libraries Dual Retreat Focus on Cooperative Reference

The upcoming PL/ASLD retreat will focus, in part, on cooperative reference. 'Cooperative reference', that is, reference questions asked locally and answered remotely (usually with the help of workstations and data communications), is a promising new way for Montana libraries to improve and extend services.

Vendor representatives as well as Montana library practitioners will discuss cooperative reference in Montana, and as it appears in libraries elsewhere. This retreat, held over Sunday and Monday October 20—21, begins a discussion that will continue through OFFLINE and the MLA annual conference. I believe this discussion about cooperative reference's role in Montana libraries warrants our collaborative attention.

OFFLINE Retreat Includes Focus on Security

Montana Library Association's 2003 OFFLINE retreat will be held in Great Falls, February 21—22. I don't want to sound alarmist, but as libraries become increasingly networked, so too do they become increasingly vulnerable to being hacked. Leaving aside our legal responsibility to protect user confidentiality and staff files, it can cost thousands of dollars to rebuild our libraries' servers and workstations after they've been subject to what is often casual trashing by a hacker.

There are things we can do to prevent unauthorized access to our networks and servers. OFFLINE will offer some essential training in security, as will (a proposed) workshop at the MLA annual conference in Butte. I strongly encourage all libraries with Internet access to learn more about this important topic.

MLN Gateway WorldCat Statistics & Cost Saving Strategy

We have statistics through August 2002, but, when the September statistics become available, I expect we'll see a significant increase in WorldCat use. We're starting to fill up all our available ports and while we had not in August experienced any 'session turnaways', I expect we'll see some in September; ten simultaneous users costs MLN about \$22,000, and additional ten user license will cost over \$7,000. In our current budget environment, we'd like to postpone the additional cost for as long as we can.

We can maximize the availability of WorldCat for all, if, when we're done using the MLN Gateway, select we EXIT (upper right hand corner) then LOG OFF to free up a session for someone else.

This particularly is true if we've been using WorldCat; Montana has a 10 simultaneous user license to access WorldCat. If you don't EXIT and LOG OFF, the session stays open for a while, then is automatically shut down by the server. But in the meanwhile, if we are at our limit of users, others are getting the dread "Database unavailable" message.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the OCLC FirstSearch Usage Statistics report. The report is titled "Overview--Inst Lvl--Sub/Hyb Indv Acct" and covers the reporting period of August 2002 for the institution MONTANA STATE LIBR (Symbol: MZB). The data is presented in a table with columns for months from August to February and rows for various usage metrics.

	History						
	Aug	Jul	Jun	May	Apr	Mar	Feb
Institution : MONTANA STATE LIBR							
Symbol : MZB							
. Authorizations	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
. Sessions	1245	1205	1172	1341	1525	1450	1466
. Session Turnaways	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
. % Session Turnaways	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
. Searches	4170	4081	3696	3994	5167	4648	5180
. Documents Ordered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
. Port Limit	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
. Avg Ports	4.39	2.72	2.75	2.87	2.99	3.05	3.17
. Max Ports	10	9	9	8	10	10	10
. Port Capacity 0 - 25%	26.10	50.79	50.77	46.53	44.92	44.00	42.43
. Port Capacity 26 - 50%	41.77	43.15	43.43	47.35	47.48	46.69	46.45
. Port Capacity 51 - 75%	20.72	5.31	5.12	5.74	5.90	7.45	8.53
. Port Capacity 76 - 99%	8.51	0.75	0.68	0.37	1.31	1.79	2.05
. Port Capacity 100%	2.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.39	0.07	0.55

The screenshot also shows the OCLC logo and copyright information: "FirstSearch ©1997 - 2002 OCLC as to electronic presentation and platform. All rights reserved."