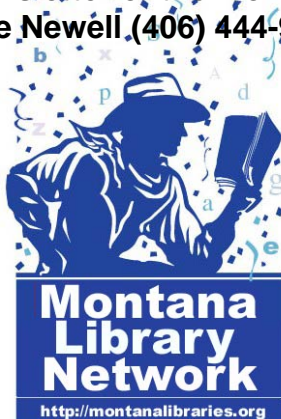


Reading Cowboy News

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Montana Library Network
March—April 2002 Bruce Newell (406) 444-9815 bnewell@state.mt.us



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Montana Shared Catalog (MSC)

Implementation continues at a rapid, if near frantic pace. The workgroups are functioning well and libraries are meeting their deadlines for turning in profiles and data. The key link for finding out how things are going, and who's doing what is:

<http://montanalibraries.org/MLNmsc-home.htm>

The MSC has passed several of its initial biggest hurdles, and is on track for 'going live' during the last week of July 2002. Our Sirsi implementation contact, one of the world's nicest and most competent persons, continues to express her growing confidence that we're going to get it done right, and get it done on time. From my perspective, the 'good neighbors' aspect of Montana libraries is responsible for a great deal of our success.

MSC Training Schedule

The seventeen libraries engaged in migrating to the Montana Shared Catalog are scheduled into a busy training schedule. Member libraries will all receive basic Unicorn training, and where appropriate, will provide additional training as required. The training schedule is available online:

<http://montanalibraries.org/MLN%20.pdf%20.ppt%20.doc%20files/SIRSI%20TRAINING%20SCHEDULE.doc>

Scheduled classes include: Searching, Circulation/Request, Cataloging, Acquisitions, Serials, Materials Booking, Reports, Technical Services Reports, and Public Services Reports.

MLN Shared Catalog Project in South Central and Sagebrush Federations

The MLN shared catalog project continues to move forward in SCF and Sagebrush. Sagebrush is engaging in a long range planning process that will, I trust, provide guidance for MLN's and the Montana Shared Catalog's role in southeastern Montana. My hope is that our southeastern librarians are able to identify helpful roles for the MSC in their operations; I think that this planning process also helps Sagebrush identify other non-catalog related opportunities for useful interlibrary collaboration.

InfoTrac Subscription Runs Through August 2003

Diane and I have been receiving a modest but steady stream of questions regarding when libraries Gale/InfoTrac subscription runs out. This is a two-year subscription, expiring at the end of August 2003. If your library is currently subscribed to InfoTrac, you're good through August 2003. If you'd like to subscribe, contact me and we'll get you set up for the next sixteen months.

See also the next item regarding the Online Information Source Survey.

Online Information Source Survey

Should more funding become available, the Networking Task Force is considering which additional online information sources to add to the Montana State Library's (MSL's) statewide purchase agreement (such as the current subscription to InfoTrac).

MSL plans to continue to coordinate the purchase of a general-purpose magazine index, such as InfoTrac, UMI's Proquest product, or EbscoHost. The subscription for Gale's InfoTrac magazine database ends in August 2003, and MSL will release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek proposals in the spring of 2003. Members of the Networking Task Force, and other interested individuals will evaluate the proposals.

If we do add an additional database or databases, the selection will have something for everyone. This survey is intended to seek your advice on these selections. We're asking for your suggestions by subject rather than for specific databases. Examples illustrate the subject area, and are not intended to express preference for a specific product. Academic, public, school, and special libraries should all find resources useful to them in the mix of online information resources selected.

Ballots and survey instructions are available online in your Montana Library Directory edit path: <http://montanalibraries.org/Directory/mldEUstart.asp> In addition, the survey is linked from the MLN homepage. To vote, you'll need your library's MLD password. Instructions for logging into your library's password edit screens may be found at: <http://montanalibraries.org/help/#mldhelp>

OCLC Enrollment

June 14 is the deadline for enrolling in the MLN/OCLC statewide contract for next year, July 2002 through June 2003. The Networking Task Force has devised a new shared-cost formula for copy-cataloging libraries, based on a size-indexed base-rate and CatExpress transactions. For more information about this, see:

<http://montanalibraries.org/MLNoclenroll2003.htm#2002>

Ours is a unique cooperative venture; no other group of libraries in the world works together in Montana's fashion to purchase OCLC services. By working together Montana libraries make it possible for most if not all Montana libraries to make use of OCLC's copy-cataloging and interlibrary loan tools. As a state our contract saves us over \$600,000 a year, and we're building a solid foundation for the collaborative delivery of library services and materials.

Enrollment forms are coming in at about the rate we expected them to. We encourage libraries to contact us if they have questions.

- Bruce Newell, (800) 338-5087 e-mail bnewell@state.mt.us
- Diane Gunderson, (800) 338-5087 e-mail dgunderson@state.mt.us

Public Library Statistics Online in April

The "green book" of Montana Public Library Statistics will soon be available on the Web. This valuable annual report features a variety of public library statistics, including collection, staff, population, library automation, and financial information. You can find data for fiscal year 2001 by logging onto the Montana Library Directory, and following links in its 'browse path'. <http://montanalibraries.org/Directory/mldHome.asp>

If you have problems logging on to the Directory, or if you have questions about the data, contact us and we'll do our best to answer your questions promptly.

- Diane Gunderson at (800) 338-5087, or e-mail her at: dgunderson@state.mt.us.

Networking Task Force Minutes Available Online

NTF minutes are available online at: <http://montanalibraries.org/MLNntfmembers.htm>
Many thanks to Maggie Farrell (from MSU-Bozeman) for sharing her minutes, and to Barbara Duke for taking minutes during NTF meetings.

OCLC Training Plans Fall 2002

We're in the process of working with OCLC-Western and the Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR) to schedule OCLC training sessions for next year. We anticipate that training will be available east and west of the divide, and include classes in:

- CatExpress;
- Web-based Interlibrary Loan;
- MLN Gateway training; and
- OCLC's anticipated new suite of web-based metadata/cataloging tools.

Our FY03 contract with OCLC does not include training, so libraries will have to pay for training. We are anticipating having BCR and OCLC-Western provide the training; training costs typically range from \$45/day to \$65/day.

As training plans firm up, we'll change this text as well as let folks know via Montana libraries' mailing list, wired-mt.

OCLC WorldCat Usage

Montana's use of OCLC's giant WorldCat reference database continues to climb. While we haven't had to turn any searchers away, the average number of ports in use increased to a record 3.17 (of 10), and Montana libraries conducted an all-time high number of 5,180 searches.

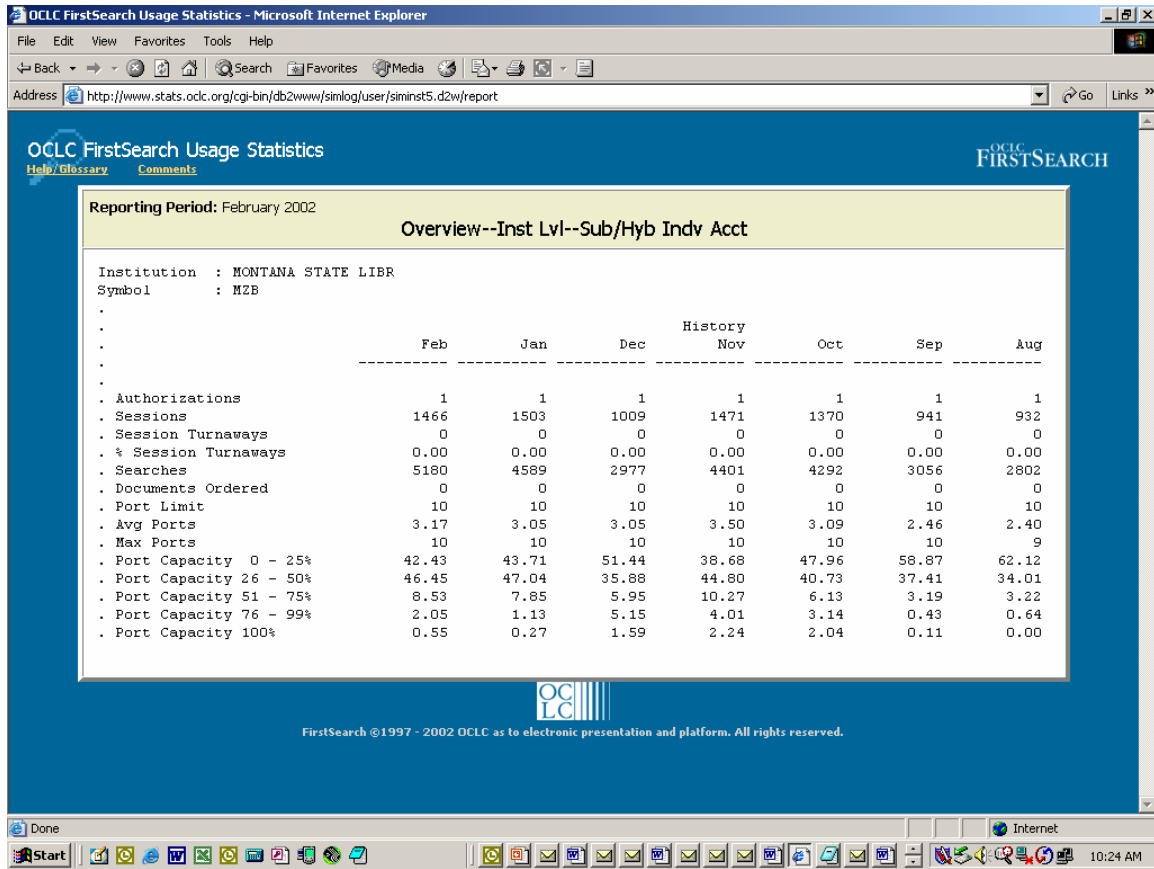


Figure One: WorldCat Usage