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Visions of Statewide Document Delivery

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Visions of Statewide Document Delivery

by Paula Hamilton

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Sharing Committee

Statewide Library Catalog

- *Encourage Oregonians to place inter-library loans through the statewide catalog.*
- *Deliver library materials and information directly to the customer.*

How to provide document delivery from any one Oregon library to any other library within Oregon?

Inspired by the futurist scenarios accompanying the *Vision 2010* document, the OLA Resource Sharing Committee (RSC) decided to apply for a grant to assist libraries to survive and thrive in the next quarter century. Committee members Aletha Bonebrake, Gretta Siegel, Ann Fox, Mary Jane Fisher, Frances Rasmussen, Lorraine Borchers, Jeff Ring, Greg Doyle, and Paula Hamilton fixed on pushing toward “the knife edge ridge,” described in Deborah Carver’s article as a place close to the summit, where the slopes drop off precipitously, and where, in order to reach one’s goal, the summit, one must focus (Carver, 2001).

We decided to focus on maximizing the use of Oregon’s library collections by developing a plan to provide document delivery to all libraries in the state.

Our committee work relates to resource sharing. The challenge for us, described in *Vision 2010*, falls under the charge to establish a statewide library catalog. Two objectives relate directly to the RSC:

1. Encourage Oregonians to place inter-library loans through the statewide catalog; and
2. Deliver library materials and information directly to the customer.

We realized that some libraries in the state did not participate in the courier service and others did not offer interlibrary borrowing because they could not afford to pay document delivery costs. But we also found that resource sharing in Oregon through interlibrary loans is steadily increasing due to the high visibility of resources to patrons, and the availability of patron-initiated borrowing. Assuming that patrons would be able to request materials directly from a statewide catalog, a statewide delivery system is both logical and necessary. With the goals of *Vision 2010* in mind, the RSC wrote a grant proposal under the auspices of the Oregon Library Association to the State Library to obtain Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding. The committee sought funding to develop a plan for an effective statewide delivery system in Oregon.

We were awarded LSTA funding and, in early 2003, hired Wes Stevens, Facilities and Operations Supervisor for Multnomah County Library, as our consultant. Wes examined existing in-state delivery systems, studied statewide plans operating in other states, and devised an extensive plan and maps outlining a highly effective statewide delivery system.


Wes and the committee later met with John Helmer, Nancy Nathanson, and Travis Honea of the Orbis Cascade Alliance, and together we developed the following goals:

Short term goals

1. Continue to publicize (“raise awareness” about) the courier system.
2. Approach selected libraries that clearly would serve well to become a forwarding site associated with a drop site, based on proximity.



3. Approach selected public libraries that would be good candidates to form new drop sites (based on volume, postage costs): Albany, Douglas County, Eugene, Hood River, and Springfield.
4. Begin a conversation with the OLA Board, the Oregon State Library, and the LSTA Advisory Council about the potential for subsidizing selected drop sites.

For good reading, you will find the complete OLA Resource Sharing Committee report, authored by Wes Stevens, on our web page: <http://www.olaweb.org/org/rs.shtml>. 

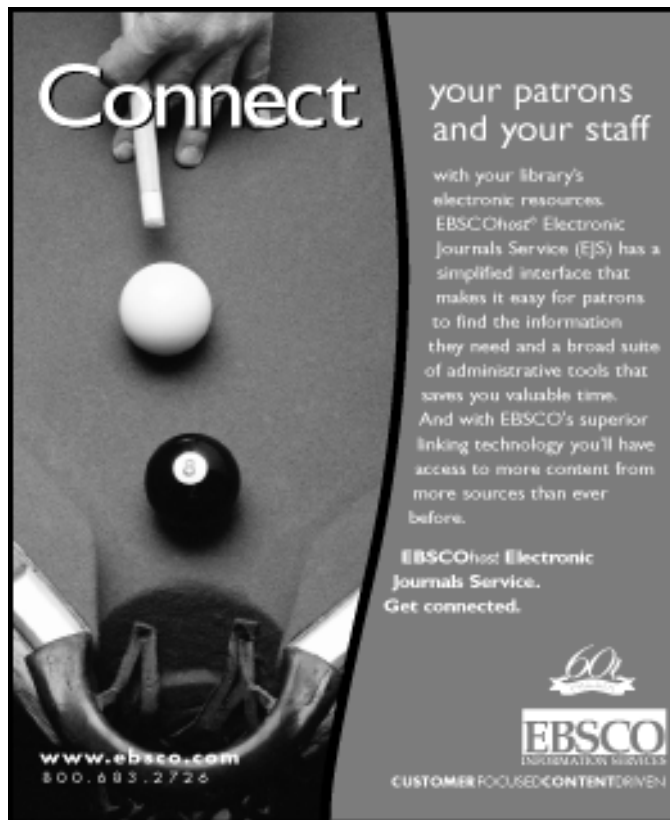
References

Carver D., 2001. The Knife Edge Ridge. *OLA Quarterly* 7(3):1.

Longer term goals

1. Continue plans to reduce courier costs for selected sites (e.g. reduced fees for low-volume sites and options for less frequent pickups) during the next RFP for courier service, as the Orbis Cascade Alliance has done in the past.
2. Seek additional LSTA monies to fund a limited-duration project to help organize libraries not currently linked to the Orbis Cascade Alliance courier system.
3. Subsidize courier fees for selected sites (sites, formula, and source of funds to be identified).

Using this plan as a working document, we hope to cut through the barriers to providing efficient, cost-effective document delivery service to all libraries in Oregon. Our intention is to request a subsequent LSTA grant to carry out the goals stated above. With a statewide delivery system in place, can a statewide catalog be far behind?




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