

Chapter XIX

The Impact of Locally Developed Electronic Resource Management Systems

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ABSTRACT

As libraries dramatically increased their numbers of licensed electronic resources in the 1990s, such as online journals and databases, they realized the need for a record-keeping system that would help manage the details of acquiring and maintaining them. Since no off-the-shelf product existed, some libraries developed their own tools to manage electronic resources. This chapter discusses the development of locally designed electronic resource management systems; the process of developing the tools at several academic institutions is traced, with a focus on the aspects of the systems unique to each university. Locally developed electronic resource management systems have lead academic institutions to engage with other institutions and vendors building similar tools. As a result, community-wide efforts in identifying key elements for managing electronic resources have begun to emerge. These efforts lay the foundation for the future successful development of tools and standards to assist in electronic resource management.

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s libraries began to see a dramatic increase in publication of and patron interest in electronic resources. Delivering materials to a user's computer desktop in digital form brought with it a multitude of considerations for providers of information in academic settings. Due to the

rapid acquisition of electronic resources libraries had to quickly create new workflows for technical processes such as managing and renewing license agreements and "processing" virtual products, as well as develop new communication structures and staffing workflows related to electronic resources (Gardner, 2001).

As libraries acquired an increased number of electronic resources, such as online journals and databases, they realized the pressing need for a recordkeeping system that would help manage the details of maintaining the resources. Since no off-the-shelf product existed, and traditional serials vendors did not provide management services for electronic resources, some libraries began developing their own tools to assist them in managing electronic resources.

In this chapter we will recount the impetus for the creation of several locally developed electronic resource management systems. The process of building such tools will be described in detail, as reported by the libraries that developed them (Cyzyk & Robertson, 2003; Farb & Riggio, 2002; Hennig, 2002; Loghry & Shannon, 2000). In addition to the creation of the management system itself, the administrative and staffing changes will be discussed, as evidenced in the literature (Duranceau & Hepfer, 2002; Gardner, 2001; Loghry & Shannon, 2000; Montgomery & Sparks, 2000).

As the idea of locally designed and built electronic resource management systems became more accepted, academic institutions began to seek assistance outside their universities to build their own systems. Examples of universities collaborating with other universities as well as commercial vendors and their impact on effective group management design will be presented (Chandler & Jewell, 2005; Digital Library Federation, 2004; Digital Library Federation, 2006; Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, 2006; Johns Hopkins University, 2004). The development of the individual management systems and the by-products of those systems, such as administrative metadata and the automatic exchange of serials data, will be noted (Chandler & Jewell, 2005; Jones, 2002). The process of developing these electronic resource management systems, and their eventual expansion, will be discussed as a possible model for organizing effective future library tools (Conger, 2004).

THE STATE OF LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS AS ELECTRONIC RESOURCES EMERGE

The delivery of electronic resources has transitioned from physical formats such as tapes, 3.5" floppy disks, and CD-ROMs (CD) and DVDs to remote databases and the currently common format of delivery via the Internet. Since large amounts of data could be stored on a CD, companies began to offer their proprietary resources in this format rather than in print or on earlier electronic formats such as floppy disks. The CDs acted as early databases, allowing users to "search" the CD for data. The CDs were either used at individual workstations or networked to allow for simultaneous searching by multiple patrons. The acquisitions department had to begin working more closely with their systems or technology department in order to ensure that the material delivered on CD was made appropriately available. In contrast with today's current expansive publishing on the Internet, relatively few publishers and vendors produced CD products, so the workflow paths that were initially developed were addressed at an ad hoc level.

As users grew comfortable with accessing content on their desktops rather than in print, publishers explored other options that would allow them to provide more frequent updates to their content, with quicker production times, and took advantage of an Internet-based format for delivery of materials. The move from CD- and remote database-delivered material to delivery via the Internet quickly gained popularity among library users; libraries nationwide cite a sudden and dramatic increase in purchases of electronic resources (Montgomery & Sparks, 2000, p. 13). In 2003 the Association of Research Libraries reported that in just ten years the average percentage of a member institution's total budget on electronic resources grew from 3.6% to 25% (Young & Kyrrillidou, 2004).

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