# An Ambitious Academic Strategy

*Part of* **The ILS Scoop** *by Marshall Breeding . . .*

In its twenty-year history, Dynix steadily has grown as a provider of library automation systems. It ranks as the largest in the industry, with more and more libraries using either its Dynix Classic or Horizon library management systems.

While the company markets its products to all types of libraries, traditionally it's seen the most success with public libraries. In recent years, Dynix has solidified its position with publics, with a very high percentage of those running the legacy Dynix Classic system electing to migrate to Horizon. According to Dynix, its software finds use in 12,500 libraries worldwide, including 1,100 academics. Now intent on significantly increasing its share in another library market, the company now turns major focus to academic libraries.

## Defining the Difference

In most cases, library automation system vendors have decided to market their products to a single library type, or each company has decided to market its products to several library types. If a vendor's ambitions include multiple library types, it also needs to further decide whether will it offer the same system to each, or will it develop and offer specialized versions?

Though libraries share the basic automation needs, academic libraries have specialized concerns.  Providing access to thousands of scholarly electronic journals and databases, academic libraries tend to have greater involvement with electronic content. Also, there's a higher need for tools for federated searching and Open URL-based linking as well as and course reserves and links into courseware systems.

## Academic Architecture

At the early April Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) conference in Minneapolis, Dynix launched a new automation system called Corinthian. Designed especially for college and university libraries, Corinthian aims to be the most sophisticated automation system for academic libraries on the market.

Since the June 2002 appointment of president/CEO Jack Blount, Dynix has undertaken a major effort to redevelop its automation systems using state-of-the-art technologies. Those efforts culminate in version 8.0 of Horizon—developed for libraries that don't fall within the 'academic' category—and the new Corinthian. A company with a 20-plus year ILS development history (see "The Chronicles of Dynix"), Dynix positions Corinthian as its fourth-generation library automation system

Dynix has partnered with some of its existing academic library sites, including John Hopkins University, University of Chicago, and the University of Iowa, in designing Corinthian. In years past, Horizon has been deemed to be relatively week for academic libraries; some large academic libraries that had utilized Horizon have now migrated to competing systems. But with Corinthian, Dynix believes it has a system that now exceeds the capabilities of those competitors.

**Contact:** www.dynix.com/about/
   press/2005/850.asp

## IN THIS ISSUE

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# THE ILS SCOOP

## The Chronicles of Dynix

A brief historical review of the library automation systems this company has created in its twenty-two-year history:

■ The original Dynix ILS traces its history to about 1983. The earliest versions of Dynix ran on the Pick operating system, later ported to run under Unix. The system gained wide popularity and was one of the most-widely deployed integrated library systems in public, and academic libraries, with smaller, but significant presence among school and special libraries. Although the Dynix ILS continues to see use in many libraries today, it is now considered a legacy system with a shrinking user base.

■ The company launched its first client/server system in 1991, called Marquis, which ran under the OS/2 operating system. Marquis initially was developed by a small spin-off company, an operation that eventually was re-integrated into the larger company.

Although Marquis enjoyed modest success, it didn't achieve widespread adoption, largely due to its ties to the ill-fated history of the OS/2 operating system. In its earliest days, Marquis saw use largely in special libraries, with Microsoft Corp. as one of its early implementers.

■ During the period when Dynix Systems and NOTIS Systems were both part of Ameritech Library Systems, the NOTIS side of the company began a development effort to create a client/server system to replace the mainframe-based NOTIS system as the company's primary offering for academic libraries.

**The demarcations from one generation to the next are not always distinct or abrupt. But even evolutionary transitions mark important transitions through the preferred technology architectures and computing platforms of each time period.**

That development effort collapsed in 1993, with a decision to take forward the technologies already present in Marquis as the basis for the company's next generation client/server system (instead of the product of the NOTIS development effort). Many of those involved with the NOTIS client/server development effort went on to found Endeavor Information Systems and create the Voyager library management system.

■ By 1997, Marquis had fully morphed into Horizon, the company's second client/server system and third overall. Though initially based on Marquis, Horizon required significant reworking of its technology platform. Though OS/2 was once predicted to become the dominant operating system supplanting the weaker Windows platform, it utterly failed to gain traction.

Unix and Windows NT gained favor as server operating systems with various flavors of Windows completely dominating the desktop client arena. In step with this reality, Horizon was re-formed as a library automation system with Windows clients, and Unix a server, based on the Sybase relational database management system. Horizon has been enhanced steadily since that time, gaining new features and functionality with each new release.

■ Around 2002, the company began an effort to rebuild the system according to state-of-the art technologies. Some of these technologies include a Java-based development core, adoption of the service-oriented architecture and Web services, complete independence of the relational database layer, LDAP for local authentication, and reliance on several open source components. In general, the system was to be based on the same technologies employed by large enterprise systems deployed in other industries. The new system also includes support for emerging library-specific technologies,

such as Shibboleth for cross-domain authentication of electronic resources.

- Today: Corinthian follows Horizon as the company's fourth automation system for academic libraries.

As this historical overview indicates, the demarcations from one generation to the next are not always distinct or abrupt. But even evolutionary transitions mark important transitions through the preferred technology architectures and computing platforms of each time period.

Marketing strategy often plays as great a role as technology "advancements" are released. Ironically, Horizon, the system originally positioned for academic libraries, now stands as the company's strategic offering for public libraries.

Horizon has been the system the company has promoted to libraries ready to migrate from aging Dynix implementations. As the lion's share of the Dynix customer base consisted of public libraries, it stands to reason that much of the Horizon development focused on the needs of publics—to keep customers from migrating competing companies' systems.

In the last few years, the majority of libraries running the legacy Dynix system have selected Dynix's next system. Once that round of legacy migrations is complete, the public library automation market basically will be saturated, with almost all libraries running a current system. In order to continue to expand their customer base, the company needed a system (hence the recent release of Corinthian) with strong appeal to academic libraries.

## INNOVATIVE WINS VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech, the original development site for the VTLS automation system, announced that will it migrate its libraries to Millennium from Innovative Interfaces. With this selection, Innovative shores up its lead among the prestigious members of the Association of Research Libraries to 37 out of the 123 total.

# TLC Buys into AMH & RFID

The Library Corp. (TLC) has closed a deal to purchase Minnesota-based Tech Logic, a major developer and supplier of automatic material handling (AMH) and radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies to libraries. Tech Logic employs about 35, in line with the smaller size of TLC, which operates with a head count of about 200.

Although the value of the transaction was not disclosed, Tech Logic's approximate $8 million annual revenue level will enhance TLC's current $30M annual revenue significantly. Both are privately owned companies.

Established in 1997, Tech Logic was founded by Mark Frich, an engineer with a thirty-five-year background in industrial material handling technologies.

## Branching Out

As opportunities decline for new sales in an increasingly saturated ILS market, most of the companies have branched out to incorporate other related technologies or content components into their business strategies. As libraries increasingly adopt AMH and RFID, acquiring a company in this area seems both a natural synergy and a strong business opportunity.

Tech Logic will continue to operate as an independent company. TLC CEO Annette Murphy will take on the role of CEO of Tech Logic. In addition to his other existing responsibilities, TLC VP Gary Kirk will oversee the operations of the company as its executive director. Existing staff at Tech Logic will continue in their current roles, and company founder Mark Frich will remain active in Tech Logic's operation.

Tech Logic's current customers include libraries that use various automation systems; the company's products will continue to be neutral relative to the ILS used by each library.

The purchase of Tech Logic is TLC's second acquisition. In July 2000, the company acquired Carl Corp., from which it gained the technologies that are the basis of its current Carl.Solution and Carl.X library automation systems.

**Contact:** www.tlcdelivers.com/tlc/press/pr040105.asp

# THE ILS SCOOP

## Innovative Intros Commercial Repository Offering

Many universities have taken great interest in creating institutional repositories, a centralized service that can house the electronic documents that represent the intellectual content produced within the organization. Scholarly articles, theses and dissertations, and working papers are but some of the items of content that many academic institutions channel into these repositories to provide increased accessibility and better long-term preservation.

The software that underlies an institutional repository needs to provide mechanisms for collecting, managing, providing access to, and preserving electronic content created within the institution.

To date, most of implementations of institutional repositories have been based on freely available open source software, usually the DSpace software created through a partnership between Hewlett-Packard and MIT Libraries, or Fedora, software created with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation by Cornell University and the University of Virginia. VTLS offers a product called VITAL, based on the Fedora software with commercial installation and support services.

Innovative Interfaces recently created commercial institutional repository software called "Symposia." Developed in partnership with Northeastern University in Boston, this software includes the functionality seen in the open source alternatives, with complete installation and support services as most libraries expect from their ILS and other major software investments.

Symposia will include a Java-based client for managing the content in the repository, a Web forms-based process for content owners to submit documents and enter metadata to describe them. Symposia also will support the Open Archives Initiative Metadata Harvesting Protocol to make the metadata available to other applications and resources, which provides the infrastructure to make the institutional repository part of a federated searching environment.

A prototype of the Symposia software has been operational at Northeastern University since January 2005. Full production use of the system is expected to be in place by January 2006.

*The* Library Technology Report *"Establishing an Institutional Repository" (Jul/Aug 2004, 40:4) by Susan Gibbons, "guides you through the process of establishing an institutional repository at your organization, from conceptualization to actualization, encompassing both the technology and the intangibles." Subscribers to ALA TechSource (to both* Smart Libraries *and* Library Technology Reports*) can access Gibbons's well-received report at www. techsource.ala.org.*

**Contact:** www.iii.com/news/pr.php

## TLC STRIKES EXCLUSIVE DEAL WITH AQUABROWSER

In the April 2005 issue (25:4, 5), *Smart Libraries* reported The Library Corporation (TLC) had formed a partnership with Medialab Solutions of The Netherlands to integrate and distribute the AquaBrowser Library search and retrieval interface. At the time, TLC was one of several companies (along with VTLS and ISACSOFT) working with Medialab to promote its technologies.

In April, TLC announced it is now the exclusive supplier and distributor for AquaBrowser in the US and Canada. VTLS will continue to offer AquaBrowser within its customer base; ISACSOFT incorporates technology from Medialab Solutions within its ZONES portal interface to support its WordSurfer feature, but this is not the full AquaBrowser Library interface.

According to Medialab, the company will be starting its "AquaBrowser Library 2005 Summer Tour" at the American Library Association's Annual Conference (June 23-29, McCormick Place) in ALA-headquarter city Chicago. Medialab says it will be exhibiting at TLC's booth (3605) and will have its own staff on site "to assist in answering questions and presenting all the AquaBrowser Library features to inquiring minds."

**Contact:** www.tlcdelivers.com/tlc/
   press/pr040505.asp
www.medialab.nl/index.
   asp?page=news/overview
www.ala.org/ala/eventsand
   conferencesb/annual/2005a/
   home.htm

# ACRL Minneapolis Meeting Makes History

ACRL not only got great weather for its early April annual conference in frequently inclement Minneapolis, Minn., but it also got a record number of first-time attendees.

According to American Library Assn. (ALA) division, the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) 2005 Conference garnered close to 4,000 attendees (from every state and 15 countries) for the April 7–10, 2005, venue; 1,059 of them were first timers, a record number of first-time attendees. In addition, the event also scored the highest level yet of conference scholarship recipients (94). ACRL says 3,490 attended the 2004 annual event in Charlotte, N.C.

Along with dynamic physical sessions on Google, federated searching, institutional repositories, and a really enjoyable keynote luncheon featuring three mystery authors (Carolina Garcia-Aguilera, J.A. Jance, and Valerie Wilson Wesley) and National Public Radio personality Liane Hansen, the event offered—via its ACRL Virtual National Conference—live Web casts of several programs, as well as discussion boards, blog entries, speaker materials, and more.

Among the topics covered at the conference were, of course, new technology developments. "Our profession is at a tipping point with technology and connectivity for our users," explains ACRL president Francis Maloy. "Librarians create a learning environment outside the classroom . . . , we create enhanced information databases and powerful search tools . . . , and we promote and demonstrate the value of the academic enterprise."

ACRL says it's still possible to register for the Virtual National Conference at www.acrl.org/minneapolis; all conference registrants have unlimited access to the online conference community for one year after the event. —*Teresa Koltzenburg*

**Contact:** www.acrl.org/minneapolis
ACRL 12th Annual Conference Blog: http://home. learningtimes.net/acrl
ACRL Online Conference Proceedings Available from ACRL Bookstore www.acrl.org/ publications

# JYBE TAKES JAB AT VIRTUAL REFERENCE

The virtual reference (VR) sector of librarianship continues to search for an acceptable cost-benefit ratio. While some of the established, pricier software and service suppliers to virtual reference (i.e., QuestionPoint from OCLC and Tutor.com) work on major new software and system upgrades, some libraries are seeking less expensive, more "bare-bones" options.

One such option is JYBE, a free browser plug-in for Internet Explorer (IE) and Firefox. Released in January by Advanced Reality, JYBE enables two or more people, such as a virtual reference librarian and a virtual patron, to browse the Web together. JYBE also adds instant messaging (IM) capabilities to Internet Explorer and Firefox, another key component of a virtual reference service. Apparently voice-over-IP, an up-and-coming VR functionality, is not yet available through JYBE.

Reportedly, the JYBE plug-in works across the two supported browsers as well as across various operating systems. For example, a user running JYBE in IE within the Windows NT operating system should be able to co-browse with a librarian running JYBE in Firefox on a Mac.

Northern Illinois University in DeKalb is one academic library that has decided to give JYBE a whirl. At least one librarian blogger has reported that co-browsing via JYBE into proprietary databases seems to work well.

JYBE still presents a few hurdles for VR, online demonstrations, collegial interactions among librarians, and other potential library applications. For example, it does require the download and installation of a plug-in, which may turn off some potential users.

The new version of JYBE released in late April has some nice additional features. It enables co-scrolling within a long Web page, thus obviating the need for the reference librarian to instruct the user to scroll down the page to find the information or link of interest. The new software release also offers collaborative text input. It also enables the conversion of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files into HTML on the fly from within the JYBE interface.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** http://www.jybe.com/

# Is There an E-Text for this Class?

For the past two semesters, the University of Virginia (UVA) and Thomson Learning Labs have been conducting some field tests of digital course materials delivered to undergraduates on network-connected tablet PCs. Microsoft provided the software, and Hewlett-Packard supplied discounts on the equipment. Thomson developed the digital instructional systems used in courses on statistics, cognitive psychology, and biochemistry.

Thomson Learning Labs developed the content system so that reference information and other secondary and tertiary material from libraries and other sources could be integrated into these courses at a highly granular level. They also wanted to integrate their system with existing course-management system solutions at UVA and make the course content more individualized. The curricular materials for the test courses were a combination of print and electronic information.

The early results are encouraging. Approximately two-thirds of the students reported the Thomson test system improved their understanding of the course topics and their ability to remember the key points. More than half of the students in the biochemistry course reported increased interest in the course because of the integrated digital content system. More than eighty percent of the students responded favorably to using a tablet PC in these courses, and, predictably, many of them used the devices for extracurricular computing. —*Tom Peters*

*For an overview of library course-management systems and courseware options, including CMS integration strategies at the macro- and micro-level, check out Susan Gibbons's May/Jun 2005 (41:3)* Library Technology Report*, published by ALA TechSource. "Library Course-Management Systems: An Overview," covers the CMS products of such vendors as Blackboard and WebCT, the open source Sakai Project, as well as several universities' and colleges' homegrown CMS and/or courseware offerings.*

**Contact:** www.virginia.edu/topnews/releases2004/
    microsoft-may-19-2004.html
www.idpf.org/events/presentations/education/
    bsteigerwald%20-%20thomson.pdf
www.techsource.ala.org

# AMAZON EBOOK BUY MAY MUDDY MARKET

In late March 2005, Amazon.com, Inc. purchased outright Paris-based Mobipocket, one of the more popular and respected ebook reading software companies. Although versions of Mobipocket's software are available for desktop and laptop PCs, their raison d'etre—pardon my French—is the software they create for PDAs and smartphones. Franklin Electronic Publishers, Inc. of New Jersey, had been a part owner of Mobipocket. It was Franklin's report (to the SEC) of the sale of its Mobipocket shares that uncovered the larger acquisition by Amazon.

What this means for libraries, library users, and the ebook market remains uncertain. OverDrive and LibWise, two suppliers of ebooks to libraries, sell ebooks designed specifically for use with the Mobipocket reader. OverDrive CEO Steve Potash reports he sees no near-term affect on OverDrive's business, positively or negatively. The acquisition could provide financial resources and stability would allow the Mobipocket software developers to accelerate the good work they do.

If anyone from Mobipocket or Amazon reads this, perhaps you should invest in making this very functional software more accessible to print-impaired readers. Some small publishers have expressed concerns that the acquisition could result in the Mobipocket format being less viable and affordable for them.

On his Idiotprogrammer blog Robert Nagle speculates Amazon wants to offer an ebook software and hardware option not controlled by Microsoft or Adobe.

Amazon also recently acquired BookSurge, a print-on-demand company based in Charleston, S.C. Evidently, Amazon sees a future in both ebooks and POD and is positioning itself to become a player in both markets.

It may also be positioning itself to become more involved in the Web-based distribution of music, motion pictures, and other content. Amazon also may be hedging its bets about the future and profitability of Web sales of traditionally printed books, regardless of how efficient that process becomes. Because Amazon is the largest Internet-based retailer, this hedge may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In January BookSurge and ebrary announced a collaborative project to develop a print-on-demand service for the library market.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** Idiotprogrammer, www.imaginaryplanet.net/
    weblogs/idiotprogrammer/?p=83398296

# GOOGLE ADDS Q&A TO MENU

Nary a month goes by without something new being announced by Google. In April, Google unveiled a new crumb to its bread-and-butter Web search service, which now provides factual answers to selected queries, on top of the usual relevancy ranked set of links to Web pages.

Enter the search terms "population Iowa" and you now will receive in return not only 5,310,000 relevancy ranked pages, but also the official 2000 Census population of Iowa, 2,926,324, along with a link to a page that functions as a citation for the source of the fact. Note that there appear to be more Web pages that at least mention the population of Iowa than actual Iowans.

Of course, as any reference librarian knows, the science and art of providing factual answers should be undertaken with both firm resolve and humility. Google appears to have decided that one factual answer, rather than some ranked list of factual answers, is the best way to go. However, it is easy to think of situations—the actual birth date of a famous person, for example—in which a relevancy ranked listed of competing factual answers to the same question would be instructive and useful.

In the example just described, right below the sole Google Q&A factual answer, was the highest ranked Web page (from the U.S. Census Bureau), and the summary of that page provides a 2003 estimate of Iowa's population, 2,944,062. So, if a user really wants to know the population of Iowa in the summer of 2005, in this simple test the relevancy ranking of Web pages still outperforms Google Q&A.

The new feature initially is focused on selected topical areas, such as geography, famous people, and facts about the physical world. Nevertheless, a simple yes/no question in one of the featured categories (Is Britney Spears pregnant?) returned 1,310,000 ranked Web pages preceded by a tip (in red, no less) stating that if I have a factual question, perhaps I should try Google Answers, their fee-based mediated reference service.

Google is a bit late to this dance, which is uncharacteristic behavior for them. Several established (e.g., Ask Jeeves) and upstart (e.g., Brainboost) companies already have working systems that attempt to provide machine-found factual answers to questions posed by human information seekers. —*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html#qna
www.brainboost.com/
www.ask.com/

# BACK TO THE FUTURE: OEBF NOW IDPF

The Open eBook Forum (OeBF), the International Trade and Standards Organization for the eBook Industry, has changed its name to the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF). Announced at the April 14th eBooks Education Conference in NYC, the new name, reports the group, better represents the purpose and scope of the forum. More than half of the two dozen-plus presentations made during the conference are now available online at the IDPF Web site.

The IDPF does have a Library Special Interest Group, which communicates via email and occasional conference calls to help publishers, aggregators, and technology companies to better understand the opportunities and challenges of serving libraries and library patrons.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** www.idpf.org/doc_library/presentations.htm
www.idpf.org/oebf_groups/library.htm

# Get Digital Audio Books from NYPL

NYC library patrons now can download audio books. According to the New York Public Library's Web site, as of May, "Downloadable audio books will be available for checkout! Download audio books to your Windows PC or laptop, then play them on your PC, transfer to a portable device, or burn to CD for listening on the go."

To date, NYPL is the largest public library system to launch a digital audio book service. The service builds on NYPL's November 2004 launch of an ebook collection and service. OverDrive is NYPL's content and technology partner in both projects.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** http://ebooks.nypl.org/

**June 2005**
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