



# Smart Libraries™

Formerly Library Systems Newsletter™

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## VTLS Gets Leg Up in ERM

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

**As other sectors of the library automation arena become saturated, the competition is just getting underway for commercial products that deliver electronic resource management.**

VTLS recently increased its footing in the electronic resource management (ERM) product market with VERIFY, its new ERM system. The Tri-College Library Consortium—comprised of the Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, and Swarthmore College libraries—reports it has signed an agreement stipulating it will serve as a beta test partner in VERIFY's development and will license the product.

The Tri-College Consortium has been active in the Electronic Resource Management Initiative of the Digital Library Federation and had previously developed its own software for managing its electronic resources.

Given that this consortium uses Innovative Interfaces Inc.'s Millennium as its library automation system—and that Innovative currently is the premier vendor for the ERM market—Tri-College's VERIFY choice indeed stands out. Also noteworthy is Innovative's product in this genre was available over a year ahead of its competitors and has been sold to almost 200 libraries, including the Library of Congress.

By choosing to partner with VTLS in VERIFY's development, the consortium will get the opportunity to take an active role in defining the functionality of the product; VTLS will get the advantage of working with a library with deep experience in electronic resource management.

VERIFY was designed to function either as a stand-alone application or as an integrated module of VIRTUA, the company's flagship library automation system.

**Contact:** [www.vtls.com/Corporate/Releases/2005/15.shtml](http://www.vtls.com/Corporate/Releases/2005/15.shtml)  
[www.iii.com/mill/digital.shtml](http://www.iii.com/mill/digital.shtml)

### More Information on ERM at:

Electronic Resource Management: The Report of the Digital Library Federation (DLF) Initiative, [www.diglib.org/pubs/dlfermi0408/](http://www.diglib.org/pubs/dlfermi0408/)  
A Web Hub for Developing Administrative Metadata for Electronic Resource Management, [www.library.cornell.edu/cts/elicensestudy/home.html](http://www.library.cornell.edu/cts/elicensestudy/home.html)

*American Libraries'* "Technically Speaking," column, March 2005, by Andrew Pace: "2005: Confirming the Promise of 2004," [www.ala.org/ala/online/techspeaking/2005columns/techMar2005.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/online/techspeaking/2005columns/techMar2005.htm)

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# THE VAST AND VIRTUAL VOICES IN LIBRARY LAND

One of the most arduous facts of life in our virtual world is the vastness of the content. Yet it is an exhilarating fact too. Steering the Web and the blogosphere these days is a time eater; as those savvy bloggers well know, you can't help but get eight windows deep into what was meant to be a trek to a specific entry. I love it, but it stresses me out—after I realize I've spent my entire morning reading online (all about library technology, of course) and am on a two pm production deadline.

But what's life without pressure anyway? I'd rather have the content available, the intellectual (and sometimes not-so-intellectual) information exchange than not.

I like being able to see what "Tame the Web" Michael Stephens has to say, or "Free Range Librarian" Karen Schneider's take on Google Scholar, or how "Shifted Librarian" Jenny Levine celebrated Yahoo's tenth birthday with ice cream coupons and her son in early March.

## Finding Oz at PLA with Abram

I've also discovered the commentary of Stephen Abram in both the physical and virtual worlds. I saw Abram speak at both the early-March Public Library Association (PLA) Spring Symposium in Chicago and the Computers in Libraries (CIL) 20th Annual Conference in Washington DC in mid-March.

VP of Innovation at Sirsi and Canadian Library Association President Stephen Abram is one of the most engaging speakers I've ever witnessed. His Public Library Association's symposium presentation, "Finding OZ: Discovering a Bright Future for Libraries," was so riveting it cut into cocktail time; almost the entire audience stayed *willingly* past the five-o'clock quittin' mark until Abrams concluded more than quarter after the hour.

The presentation—minus Abram's irreverent, insightful impromptu observation and mesmeric presence—is, of course, available online on Sirsi's site at [www.sirsi.com/Resources/abram\\_articles.html](http://www.sirsi.com/Resources/abram_articles.html) ("Stephen Abram Articles and Presentations").

In it, he provided the fortunate attendees with a "how-to" list that could help them create a brighter future for

their individual libraries and for the future of the library institution.

Among his words of wisdom: Tell stories with positive endings, which will, in turn, help the library movement. "This is more important than ever," explained Abram. "Then people will be asking, 'Why don't we do it?'"

Abram says stories of course entertain, but they also can convey critical information, preserve cultures, build relationships and communities, and *change* organizations.

Also according to Abram: It's imperative to know your market; he says the Normative Data Project may be able to help you with

this. (See [www.librarynormativedata.info](http://www.librarynormativedata.info), and/or "Sirsi and the NDP," *Smart Libraries Newsletter*, March 2005 [25:3], 2).

Abram also provided the actionable advice:

- rethink the repository
- get on the wagon early
- invent targeted search
- lead the wireless revolution
- get into the community
- build context first

In addition, he noted the content syndication tool RSS provides a handy and hip way for libraries to let patrons know



Stephen Abram @ the PLA Spring Symposium  
photo by Beverly Goldberg,  
*American Libraries*

what new books are available. He pointed out, too, that librarians should be prepping themselves and their libraries, if possible, for the next “massive wave” of innovation and demand for information technology, which will start in 2006-2007 and will include:

- secure broadband wireless;
- low-power consumption mobile/display devices;
- real-time infrastructure; and
- transition to service-oriented architecture.

At CIL, Abram was among the noted speakers for several sessions, and each time I found myself grinning and appreciating his ease, wit, and knowledge.

With all these tools swirling in the technology “twister” that could render “Oz” for Library Land, we’re all bound to be stressed out at least a bit. But as you technophiles know, you gotta love it!—*Teresa Koltzenburg*

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[www.librarynormativedata.info](http://www.librarynormativedata.info)

## NOOKED NOW ON YOUR RSS MENU

RSS feeds can lead either to a feeding frenzy or gastrointestinal discomfort. A new company, Nooked, is trying to establish some bibliographic control over one slice of the RSS feed pie—corporate RSS feeds.

The Nooked user can search for corporate RSS feeds via a simple keyword search, or browse through a hierarchical display of categories. Some of the categories contain no RSS feeds yet, but Nooked seems to be an early entrant in an online service that may grow into something substantial.

In the new era of directory building, the creators provide a method for entities to be included in the directory to self-submit or update an entry.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** <http://dir.nooked.com>

## Isaac Could Create Repositories

Ebrary, the purveyor of e-books, has almost finished beta testing Isaac, its new server-based application for viewing, distributing, and shared PDFs.

Isaac is based on ebrary’s existing hosted content-management and delivery service, the Dynamic Content Platform (DCP). Both Isaac and DCP include the ebrary Reader client and InfoTools. The Reader uses the Exchange Document Format (EDF) to enhance the deliverability and usability of PDF documents on a page-by-page basis. InfoTools manages a federated search across multiple online databases and the Web.

A library could use Isaac to create a digital repository. Distribution channels for a repository created with Isaac could include the library’s integrated library system (ILS), an intranet or extranet, or the public Internet.

Isaac also contains a digital rights management system to protect copyrighted materials.

One limitation it seems, however, is that Isaac can contain only digital objects already in, or convertible to, PDF format. To help with conversion to PDF, Isaac will contain an automated drag-and-drop submission tool.

An interesting trend to note here—of which Isaac’s development may offer just one instance—is the growing realization (from so-called “content providers”) that the tool set developed to create, manage, and deliver the content may be as valuable as the content itself. So that libraries can build their repositories from scratch, ebrary plans to deliver the Isaac application devoid of content.

According to ebrary, Isaac runs on Linux, Unix, and Windows and will enable content integration across multiple networks.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** [www.ebrary.com/corp/techIsaac.htm](http://www.ebrary.com/corp/techIsaac.htm)

## A NEW WAY TO SCROLL

Philips Polymer Vision, a subsidiary of Philips Electronics, and E-Ink have announced significant strides in the development of a thin, scrollable digital paper that should be ready for the general consumer market in early 2007.

This development could affect the basic form factor of many personal portable information appliances, including PDAs and smart phones. Quoting from Polymer Visions Web site, “In a world of powerful, ‘always connected’ wireless devices, Polymer Vision’s goal is to provide the leading technologies for large displays in small mobile devices.”

In their collapsed form, scrollable display appliances may become even smaller, perhaps the size of a fountain pen on steroids. The display will be unfurled like the scroll of old, followed by, of course, an obligatory “hear ye, hear ye” from the user.

The new five-inch diagonally rollable, scrollable display screens will be only one-tenth of a millimeter thick. One of the real advantages of digital paper is, once a page of text has been presented, no energy is required to maintain the display. The contrast and general legibility of digital paper is reported to be closer to print on paper than most current display technologies.

Early commercial versions of these digital scrolls probably will be black and white with shades of gray.

Libraries may be challenged to optimize the usability of library-provided content on these devices. No mention of a price point for these new displays could be found.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** [www.e-ink.com](http://www.e-ink.com)

## Zooming In on . . . You

Using the Web to find background information about a person (not the dirt and the dirty laundry, *just* background information) has become such a standard practice within libraries and among end-users that “Googling” a person’s name probably is under serious consideration for inclusion in the Oxford English Dictionary.

But a new service called “ZoomInfo,” launched this past March, attempts to outflank Google on this front. ZoomInfo claims to have compiled electronic dossiers based on publicly accessible Web-based information on more than twenty-five million people.

For those that don’t like what they find in their Google “ego search”—looking up information about themselves, auto-Googleing, I suppose this practice could be termed—ZoomInfo reports it provides the functionality to change this “ego” information. ZoomInfo offers the searcher the ability to complete a profile citing the current and true information—at least from the person’s perspective—about himself or herself.

In an era characterized by identity theft and self-promotion, the notion of identity grooming makes sense. Libraries with a people search section in their virtual reference collections should update them to include ZoomInfo.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** [www.zoominfo.com](http://www.zoominfo.com)

## HOW DO YOU SAY GOOGLE IN FRENCH?

As further evidence that massive digitization projects are becoming the 21st Century source of national and continental pride that encyclopedias provided in the 18th Century, the French—already aghast as the perceived rampant Anglocentrism of the Google Print initiative—recently announced the development of preliminary plans to undertake a project to make French and other European library works and cultural materials available online.

According to BBC News, French President Jacques Chirac will discuss the proposed massive digitization effort with other European Union leaders in May.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4358871.stm>

## “LIFE WITH JEEVES” IAC-STYLE

Evidently there's money to be made helping seekers find information on the Internet—or at least in exposing the seekers to advertising. On the continually evolving Worldwide Web, Internet search-engine companies are grooming to become even more useful to—and used by—information seekers, which likely is the reason why IAC/InterActive is getting into the search-engine domain, announcing its intention this spring to acquire Ask Jeeves.

In late March, IAC/InterActiveCorp.—a company that states its mission as: “to harness the power of interactivity to make daily life easier and more productive for people all over the world”—signed an agreement that stipulates IAC's purchase of Ask Jeeves Inc. for \$1.85 billion. With approximately seven percent of the global search-engine market, Ask Jeeves is the fourth largest Internet search engine, behind Google (with nearly half the market), Yahoo, and MSN.

Advertising dollars are the major source of revenue for Ask Jeeves, and the money being spent by advertisers in the Internet

search-engine sector continues to grow. Citing research by Merrill Lynch, a *BusinessWeek Online* article reports search-engine advertising revenues are expected to increase twenty-four percent per year for the next five years.

Already the owner of several Web-based businesses (including Expedia, Citysearch, a network of city guides, Ticketmaster, the Home Shopping Network, Hotels.com, Hotwire, and online-dating service Match.com), IAC says approximately forty-four million people per month visit at least one of its above-listed sites. In addition, IAC recently launched a new service, Gifts.com, providing a personalized online gift-shopping experience.

IAC chair and CEO Barry Diller says he wants Ask Jeeves to develop a wireless service so users can find answers to questions using any of Web-connected devices currently on the market. Diller adds he wants to enhance the ability of Ask Jeeves to find answers for local (parochial) questions too.

With a new, made-over Ask Jeeves on a GPS-enabled portable device, the perennial question asked at library reference desks everywhere, “Where's the restroom?” could be answered without the mediation of a reference librarian or even signage.

Although libraries don't stress selling advertising and generating revenue, the twin goals of providing question-answering services down to the portable device level and grounding answers to specific locations—and the specific needs of individuals—are held by library public services as well.

Steve Berkowitz, the current CEO of Ask Jeeves, is expected to continue in that capacity. Prior to coming to Ask Jeeves, Berkowitz was president of IDG Book, the publisher of the ubiquitous “For Dummies” books, which also diversified under Berkowitz's guidance by acquiring Cliff Notes, Frommer travel guides, Betty Crocker cookbooks, and JK Lasser tax guides.

Although Ask Jeeves is headquartered in Oakland, Calif., USA, the entity does maintain a London office, so poor Sir P.G. Wodehouse—the English-born humorist who created the Jeeves character for *The Inimitable Jeeves*, *Very Good, Jeeves!*, and *Right Ho, Jeeves*—probably is not turning in his grave.—Tom Peters

**Contact:** [www.iac.com/index/news/press/IAC/show\\_pr?objId=7278](http://www.iac.com/index/news/press/IAC/show_pr?objId=7278)  
[www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D88VEE480.htm?campaign\\_id=apn\\_tech\\_down](http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D88VEE480.htm?campaign_id=apn_tech_down)

### Give Your Brain a Boost

Ask Jeeves isn't the only Internet search engine firmly committed to a natural language, unmediated reference service interface. Brainboost is trying to make a commercial go of a system that uses machine learning and natural language processing to provide real answers in plain English to the questions posed to it.

According to the Brainboost Web site, the company uses “cutting-edge artificial intelligence technology to understand your question.”

Another interesting feature of Brainboost is its simple method for gathering patron feedback concerning the usefulness of a Brainboost-generated answer. A user can click on a “thumbs up” to indicate general satisfaction with the answer constructed by Brainboost.

But Brainboost is hedging its bets here a bit. In addition to providing its auto-generated attempt to provide an answer to your natural language question, Brainboost also provides a more traditional list of relevancy-ranked Web pages.—Tom Peters

**Contact:** [www.brainboost.com](http://www.brainboost.com)

# THE ILS SCOOP

by Marshall Breeding

## SMS Offers Libraries New “Talk” Tool

As new tools for communication come into vogue, it's important for libraries to adapt. In order to stay current, libraries have integrated—and continue to integrate—a wide range of communication options in to their modern reference services, i.e., the telephone call, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), and Web page co-browsing. Now enter SMS.

Though prevalent in other parts of the world for quite some time now, text messaging, also known as SMS (short messaging service), via cell phones only recently has caught on as a common way of communicating in North America. (Use of SMS has long been prevalent in the Europe, Asia, and Australia). In settings where making a voice call might not be socially acceptable—classrooms, movie theaters, libraries—text messages provide a way to “chat” and exchange information silently.

So as SMS gains a place as a widespread communications media, it's important for libraries to begin thinking about how to use it to better communicate with their users.

### iii to Build in SMS

To make it easier for libraries to include SMS in their communications options, Innovative Interfaces Inc. (iii) says it build SMS messaging into future versions of its Millennium library automation system. Some of the functionality expected from the vendor's SMS integration into its ILS includes the ability to send text messages to patrons' mobile phones so library users can be alerted when requested materials are available as well as to help libraries provide other circulation-related functions.

Given that many library patrons interact almost constantly through their cell phones, receiving library notices through them will be more convenient and immediate than printed notices or even e-mail.

Edge Hill College of Higher Education located in Ormskirk, near Lancashire in the United Kingdom, recently signed with Innovative to migrate from its current Geac Advance system to Millennium. This library will also be Innovative's development partner in its initiative to develop SMS capabilities for Millennium. Because text messaging has been prevalent there longer

than in the U.S., it's not surprising to see a U.K. library anxious to more forward with SMS.

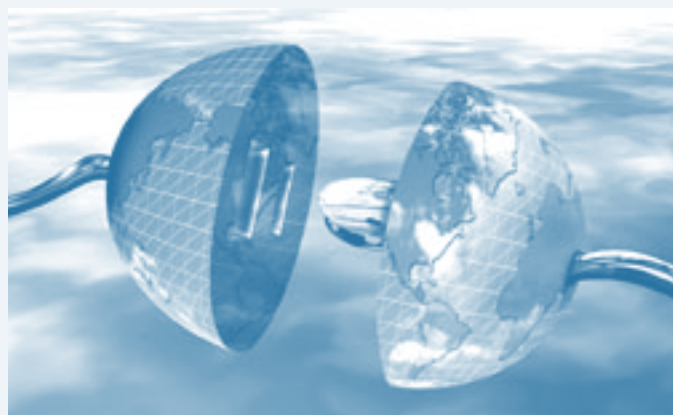
Innovative has a short of history of adapting systems for portable and wireless devices. The company has offered AirPAC—an online catalog designed specifically for cell phones, PDAs, and other small devices—since June 2001.

### More Sellers Support SMS

This isn't the first example of products that support SMS. Civica's Spydus library automation system has the ability to produce SMS circulation notices. Though a handful of libraries in the U.S. use Spydus, the library division of the company is based in Australia, and the majority of its customer base resides in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and other parts of Asia.

Altarama, a company specializing in virtual reference software, also developed a product that allows a library to integrate SMS in its reference services. “Reference by SMS,” introduced in November 2004, allows reference staff to receive queries by SMS on a computer and to send responses. Altarama is also an Australian company.

And, of course, Google has launched an SMS search service, though it's still considered a beta service. Available since November 2004, the “Google SMS Service” enables one to send



text message form queries to Google in order to find information items. Examples Google suggests include local business listings, movie show times, word definitions, current weather, and product prices. Unlike the Google Web search, the results are presented as simple text, not links to other sites.

## SMS Potential

Cell phone users utilizing SMS can transmit and receive text messages up to about 160 characters. Multiple messages can be chained together as needed for more long-winded responses, and while the majority of SMS messages originate and terminate on individual phones, it's possible to generate them on a computer and receive them on that communication tool. And despite their many similarities, traditional e-mail seems to be in trouble while SMS is on the rise.

The few examples of library-oriented SMS applications demonstrate that we're in the early stages of the product cycle, and the expanding adoption of text messaging by the general public indicates great potential. As libraries strive to offer services in tune with their users' interests, SMS may be one communication method really worth investigating.

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[www.altarama.com.au/refxsms.htm](http://www.altarama.com.au/refxsms.htm)  
[www.google.com/sms/](http://www.google.com/sms/)

## DYNIX NAMES NEW CTO

With the March 2005 appointment of Jeff Hagins as chief technology officer, Dynix gains new leadership for its ambitious development strategy.

Hagins comes to the company with extensive experience as a technical architect; he has held several senior executive positions with responsibility for technology, most recently as CTO for Aptix, a company specializing in software for providers of outsourced computer services. In his twenty-five year career, Hagins also has held executive positions at Lockheed Martin, J.D. Edwards, TeleComputing, and ASP-One.

Hagins replaces Henry "Ric" Rodriguez, who began his chief technology officer stint in May 2003. Arriving at Dynix in November 2000 as CTO Julian Critchfield preceded Rodriguez; he became chief operating officer in April 2003 and left the company in June 2004 for a position at Oracle.

## WHEN A CLUTTERED DESKTOP IS A GOOD THING

For several months a beta version of Google Desktop has enabled users to create and search a full-text index of many of the most popular file types found on many personal computers, including email, word-processing documents, PowerPoint presentations, Web pages viewed, etc.

Recently, Google announced that Google Desktop has graduated from its beta testing phase in the Google labs. With this first full release, Desktop has several additional features. For starters, more file types are now indexed, including PDF—love it or hate it, PDF is a common file type for many users—popular sound file formats (MP3, WMA, WAV, etc.), popular image file formats (JPEG, GIF, etc.), and popular digital video file formats (AVI, MPG, WMV, etc.). With the sound, image, and video file types, only the metadata are indexed and searchable. With plugins created by third-party developers, additional file types can be indexed within Google Desktop.

Google Desktop also now indexes Web pages and email viewed from up-and-coming non-Microsoft applications, such as the Firefox browser and Mozilla mail.

The new release also includes a Deskbar and Floating Deskbar, so the user can search her or his computer files directly from the desktop.

Desktop also is available now in several language versions, including Japanese, Korean, and traditional and simplified Chinese. The non-English interfaces will continue as beta versions. In what may be indicative of the new world pecking order: first comes English, then comes CJK, then comes, one assumes, French, German, and Spanish.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** <http://desktop.google.com/>



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## **May 2005**

### **The ERM Face-Off: Consortium Signs New Contender**

#### **Smart Libraries Newsletter**

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