

University Library Committee 1995-1996

The Orbis Proposal

The following information was received from George Shipman (University Librarian) regarding the Orbis Proposal

V. Proposal to enhance orbis with automated borrowing

Description

The Orbis Consortium requests funds for most automated borrowing start-up costs and selected expenses in the first year of operation. Expenses fall into the following major categories:

- Software Software will be purchased from Innovative Interfaces Inc. of Emeryville, California at a cost of \$195,000 (\$75,000 plus \$10,000 per local system). Purchase price for this feature was negotiated at the time the Orbis system was purchased.
- Hardware Although automated borrowing will require additional computing power, the Orbis Consortium anticipated this enhancement by purchasing a DEC Alpha 3000 with sufficient disk space and RAM to support this feature with no additional hardware expenditures. Thus no funds for hardware are requested from the Meyer Memorial Trust. The value of the Consortium's hardware investment in automated borrowing is approximately \$25,000.
- Ports The number of people who may use a system at the same time is determined by the number of ports purchased for that system. Each user requires one port or user license. The more a system is expected to be used, the more ports need to be made available. Implementation of Orbis automated borrowing will generate a need for greater staff access to local systems, greater public access to local systems, and greater public access to Orbis. In other words, a significant enhancement such as automated borrowing leads to greater use of the system by both patrons and library staff. In addition to 10 Orbis ports for general public use (for a total of 20 ports), funds requested in this proposal will cover two more public ports and one more staff port at each institution. Due to its larger size the request for the University of Oregon includes ten public ports and three staff ports.
- Database processing To ensure an optimal distribution of loan requests, some manipulation of the Orbis database will be required. This activity will probably be contracted to a vendor such as Blackwell North America in Lake Oswego, Oregon. Database processing is likely to be required for several hundred thousand records from older cataloging sources and will include activities such as duplicate removal and correction or insertion of fields used for record matching. Patrons using Orbis will find the system simpler to use and automated borrowing will be optimized as a result of these database clean-up projects.
- Materials Delivery Books and other material requested by patrons through the Orbis system will be delivered by commercial carrier. Consortium members currently use Pony Express, a likely carrier for the expanded capacity expected when automated borrowing is implemented. First year delivery expenses are estimated to total approximately \$10,000.
- Advertising Member libraries will bear expenses associated with advertising expanded Orbis capabilities to their campus communities. The Orbis staff will produce printed materials and will create World Wide Web documents explaining and advertising Orbis automated

borrowing. The present proposal requests funds for printing and graphics work associated with these new publications.

- Personnel Orbis Member Library Financial Commitment Orbis member libraries have made the commitment to supply most personnel costs associated with implementation and all costs associated with continued operation of Orbis automated borrowing. During a six-month implementation phase it is estimated that more than half of the Orbis Coordinators time, a quarter of the time of the UO Library Head of Systems, a quarter of the time of the UO Library Head of Access Services, and approximately ten percent of the time of twelve technical support staff at member libraries will be required. Implementation will also require a concerted effort in staff training. The value of this human capital used during implementation of Orbis automated borrowing is expected to exceed \$45,000. First-year personnel costs for operation of Orbis automated borrowing will depend on the success of advertising efforts. The OhioLINK experience indicates that usage will build steadily over a period of one or two years. Thus, the Consortium expects relatively modest activity in the year of implementation with peak activity reached in the second or third year of operation. Student labor required to retrieve, pack, ship, and unpack materials borrowed through Orbis are estimated at \$25,000 - \$30,000 in the first year. Thus, the total personnel commitment made by Orbis member libraries during the first year of operation may well exceed \$75,000. Personnel costs in subsequent years will depend on the success of Orbis automated borrowing.
- Grant Request for Personnel Implementation of this new, heavily used capability, together with recent growth in membership, will significantly increase the work required by Orbis staff. It will not be possible for one Orbis support staff person to manage current operations and coordinate implementation and daily operation of automated borrowing. This proposal includes first-year office equipment and personnel costs for a second Orbis technical support position. This position is expected to supply clerical support and perform more routine technical tasks. Salary and benefits will total \$35,000 per year. In subsequent years funding for this position will come from Orbis membership fees.
- Remote Conference Technology The success of the Orbis Consortium is due, in large measure, to efficiency and clarity in communication. It is often impossible to find a time when representatives from all twelve member libraries can meet in a single location. Further, the costs associated with travel from Southern or Eastern Oregon to Eugene or Portland to attend an Orbis meeting are substantial. Since its inception the Orbis Consortium has exploited communication technology to the fullest extent possible. Many issues have been discussed and settled via email lists maintained by Orbis staff. Remote conferencing technology has also proved extremely useful. Several Orbis meetings have been held via PictureTel, a system that supports moving images and sound transmitted over telephone lines. PictureTel and other similar products allow several remote sites to participate in a single conference. In the past, the Consortium has rented PictureTel equipment from other departments on the University of Oregon campus. These units are expensive to rent, in high demand and often unavailable. In keeping with its philosophy of exploiting technology to realize efficiencies, the Orbis Consortium will make increasing use of remote conference equipment during the implementation of automated borrowing. After implementation, this equipment will be used on a continuing basis as an aid to the work of various Orbis groups (Council, public, technical, reference database, and circulation). Costs associated with the purchase of one PictureTel unit (or similar product) are included in this grant.

Budget

Category

Formula \$ requested \$ committed

from MMT Orbis Consortium*

Software \$75,000 + 12(\$10,000) \$195,000

Hardware 0 \$25,000

Ports

staff ports 14 @ \$2,000 \$28,000

public ports 32 @ \$2,000 \$64,000

public ports, Orbis 10 @ \$2,000 \$20,000

Database manipulation \$5,000

Materials Delivery \$10,000

Advertising \$5,000

Personnel

salary and benefits \$35,000 \$75,000

PC, barcode reader, furniture \$5,000

Remote conference technology \$37,000

Total \$ 404,000 \$ 100,000

* Although \$100,000 represents the Orbis Consortium's direct investment in automated borrowing in the first year of operation, it is worth noting that Orbis relies heavily on previous automation investments at member libraries. Orbis automated borrowing will be dependent on local patron databases and circulation software maintained at each member library. The Orbis Consortium has millions of dollars invested in hardware, software, and personnel that support local systems and ultimately Orbis. Although not exclusively dedicated to Orbis, this investment makes Orbis possible.

Under the terms of the Orbis Memorandum of Understanding, Section 3.0, the University of Oregon acts as the fiscal and business agent for the Orbis Consortium, providing administrative and technical support as well as a location for central system hardware and software, and a reliable central site capacity for Orbis-related telecommunications traffic. Private grant funds, OSSHE funds, and contributions from Orbis member libraries are paid into designated University of Oregon or University of Oregon Foundation accounts and disbursed in accordance with the instructions of the Orbis Council. (The Orbis Council consists of the library directors from each member institution. Each institution, including the University of Oregon, has one vote.)

VI. Continuing Support

The Orbis Consortium is prepared to support all recurring costs associated with automated borrowing. As evidenced by letters of support in Appendix 2 below, Orbis also has the firm support of the Oregon State System of Higher Education and the administrations of member institutions.

More on the Orbis Proposal

Proposal Summary

As fiscal agent for the institutions forming the Orbis Consortium, the University of Oregon Library System requests a grant of \$404,000 for the purpose of expanding the Orbis online catalog to allow automated borrowing.

The funds requested will facilitate an unprecedented level of collection sharing among the member libraries of the Orbis Consortium:

- Eastern Oregon State College
- George Fox College
- Lewis and Clark College
- Linfield College
- Oregon Institute of Technology
- Reed College
- Southern Oregon State College
- University of Oregon
- University of Portland
- Western Oregon State College
- Whitman College
- Willamette University

The Consortium proposes to implement a feature that provides students and faculty with the ability to initiate the delivery of library materials throughout the Orbis system. This feature will allow patrons at member libraries to consider the combined collections of all twelve libraries as a single research collection. For example, a student in La Grande who uses Orbis to discover books at libraries in Ashland, Eugene, and Portland will be able to initiate delivery of those materials to Eastern Oregon. Automated borrowing will be possible both in the library and remotely from home or office with a few

keystrokes. In a matter of seconds, the Orbis system will communicate over the Internet with several local systems to verify the patrons borrowing privileges, select an available copy among member libraries, update the union database, and produce reports for the lending and borrowing libraries.

The implementation of automated borrowing represents the fulfillment of a vision for Orbis, a vision that will revolutionize research and library service in the region. Evidence from OhioLINK, the first consortium to implement the software used in Orbis, shows that allowing patrons to initiate delivery during an online search removes nearly all of the barriers present in traditional interlibrary loan services. The OhioLINK experience indicates that lending among institutions may increase as much as ten-fold after the implementation of automated borrowing. OhioLINK Executive Director Tom Sanville was recently quoted as saying that OhioLINK use has grown so much that we now routinely process as many loans in a week as we used to do in a quarter ...even this weekly volume will likely double (College & Research Libraries News, December 1995). In Oregon, this experience would translate into the delivery of a million items each year. This would be an astounding achievement, representing yearly delivery of the equivalent of one half of the entire collection of the University of Oregon.

Interlibrary loan has traditionally been a complicated and expensive process and has largely been the purview of faculty, graduate students and other sophisticated library users. Orbis automated borrowing can be thought of as a kind of self-service interlibrary loan launched from the most inclusive library system in the region. With this feature Orbis will popularize and enhance lending among libraries by making it fast and easy for undergraduates.

Compared to traditional interlibrary loan, the cost of borrowing via Orbis will be far lower for both patrons and library staff. Patrons will no longer have to search multiple databases, visit an interlibrary loan office, fill out paper forms, and wait days or even weeks for the delivery of a book. Orbis automated borrowing will be a self-service delivery system often requiring a wait of only one day. Highly trained interlibrary loan staff will be freed from the need to process paperwork or search and enter information into databases for materials available from the twelve Orbis member libraries. After the patron enters their request in Orbis, the only labor needed is relatively inexpensive student workers to retrieve and pack books at the sending library and unpack books at the receiving library. Orbis automated borrowing will cut out the middle man, thus simplifying and speeding up the process. Patrons will have immediate access to up-to-date information about the availability of materials in a 3.7-million volume research collection, a collection which they can view as an extension of their own local library.

The Meyer Memorial Trust was extremely generous in providing start-up funds for Orbis. The value of this investment in library service is evidenced by the spectacular growth in membership and popularity of the Orbis system among students, faculty, business, and the general public. Since its inception, the Orbis Consortium has added seven private colleges and is now widely recognized as a premier example of collaboration between private and public institutions of higher education. The success of Orbis is a credit to the cooperative spirit of member institutions and the wisdom of the Meyer Memorial Trusts investment in this Consortium. The current proposal builds on that initial investment and completes the Orbis vision of a world-class regional academic union catalog and delivery system.