



# Todd Library Update

Spring 1985

Number six

## Library Considering Automation Project

The university library is a critical and central link in the chain that creates, acquires, organizes, and makes available to students and faculty the published knowledge and information required for instruction and research. This link between published knowledge and the information access needs of students, faculty, and the off-campus community is being stretched to the breaking point by a number of powerful forces. On one side is the tremendous explosion in published information and the trend toward the publication of highly specialized magazines and indexes in an electronic rather than a printed format. Because of these forces the Library can no longer meet all of the information needs of its campus users.

On the other side of the library link is the faculty members' and students' need for published information. Our society has come to expect instantaneous gratification of its needs, whether they be physical, social, or informational. The computer age has contributed to our expectation of speed, accuracy, and convenience—a prime example being the neighborhood "automatic bank teller." Borrowers who slowly fill out long book check-out cards are no longer patient when they think of how quickly bar-coded information is read by electronic devices in local stores.

As libraries have come to recognize that they represent weakened links in the knowledge-library-access chain, they have looked for alternatives to traditional methods of information resource management. The proven alternative in the past decade has been the application of modern electronic data processing to traditional manual methods used by libraries. In 1976 Frederick Kilgour, a leading authority in library modernization, said:

"...Library service cannot be substantially improved by traditional means. In making a profound modification, the technology of choice is obviously an information processing machine: the computer. Computer technology is the only technology

available that can greatly enhance productivity of library staff."

Faced with diminishing printed resources, personnel, and space, the MTSU Library staff in 1982 recognized the need to supplement and enhance its traditional operations and services with electronic technology. Since that time, staff have been converting manual information records into an electronic form in preparation for future computerization. Just as the University is moving from typewriters to word processors, so also the Library must move from traditional manual operations to more technologically sophisticated ones having a new electronic dimension. This addition of an electronic dimension will require an investment of a



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# Automation Across Tennessee

During the last two years, significant computerized systems have been installed in academic libraries from Memphis to Knoxville. The first major system to be installed was at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, which now has a fully-automated circulation system as well as an on-line computerized catalog. In 1984 the University of Tennessee at Knoxville installed a new automated circulation system and began planning for an on-line catalog which is expected to be operational in 1987. At the other end of the state, an automated circulation system and an on-line catalog were installed at Memphis State University this year. MSU and UTK are hoping to develop the ability for these two systems to communicate with each other for resource sharing purposes.

At Tennessee Technological University, library users now have access via terminals to an on-line

catalog of library holdings. The staff there also has benefited for several years from a locally developed automated acquisitions system. In the middle Tennessee area, library automation has come to Nashville State Technical Institute and to Vanderbilt University. NSTI has recently implemented a computerized circulation system and an on-line public catalog of its holdings. Vanderbilt has recently announced that an automated cataloging and circulation system will be installed during 1985 with full implementation by January of 1986.

The library directors of SBR institutions met last fall to discuss automation and how computerized systems could be used to locate and share materials among these libraries. A committee has been formed to develop a position paper on library automation that will encourage all SBR libraries to pursue automation

projects that will enhance existing interlibrary cooperation activities.

Computerization in Tennessee has not been limited to college and university libraries. The Public Library of Memphis and Shelby County is now installing an automated circulation system and the other metropolitan libraries have or will soon complete their projects to convert manual bibliographic records to a computerized format.

The Tennessee State Library and Archives is funding a study, being conducted by George Peabody College's School of Library and Information Science, on the needs for computerization in public libraries throughout the state. This study is also examining the potential for linking computerized public library systems with those in other kinds of libraries to form a state-wide network for sharing bibliographic information and materials. (DC) □

## New Equipment to Aid Computerized Literature Searching

New equipment has recently been added to improve the library's computerized literature search service. An OCLC M300 terminal and Epson FX+ printer will significantly improve the efficiency of the on-line searching service.

The new terminal was designed to access the OCLC database which the library uses for cataloging and interlibrary loan, or the DIALOG, BRS, and new WILSONLINE on-line reference services. It may also function as a self-contained unit with specialized library software products. The Epson FX+ printer is capable of a range of formats and letter styles in printing. Words may be highlighted, spacing expanded or contracted, and printing done in a variety of type faces.

At present the terminal and printer are being used by the computer reference searchers. Located in an office in the Reference Department, the new equipment provides capability for more efficient searching and better quality of printouts. The new location provides easier access to

manuals and thesauri and permits more flexible search scheduling.

Staff members are now evaluating specialized software designed for specific library functions. One program under consideration can assist librarians in organizing and producing subject bibliographies and research guides in standard bibliographic form or in individualized formats.

Another will allow on-line searchers to formulate search strategy and analyze the probable results before connecting to expensive databases.

A fully automated library is still in the future, but this new equipment will help the library staff improve the quality of the current on-line search service and explore other new library technology. (HHG) □



*Virginia Vesper and Harietta Gaida demonstrate the on-line literature search service.*

# RECON: An Update

Microwave ovens, home computers, any-time tellers - no one could have escaped hearing these phrases, and most of us have first-hand experience with these modern miracles. Now, consider our campus library for a moment. Detailed check-out cards, an unwieldy card catalog, and slow access time - the contrast is all too clear. Todd Library is sifting, shifting, and shuffling tons of paper, while the rest of the world is moving toward computer-assisted everything. Although the present situation appears grim, there are steps being taken to bring our library up-to-date.

An earlier edition of "Update" introduced a project called RECON. For those with imperfect memories, RECON refers to the process of updating, or changing, the library's manual records to machine-readable formats. This retrospective conversion of pre-1975 acquisitions is vital to our automated future. In order to provide comprehensive service in a time-efficient manner, the library must utilize every means available. High technology offers many options to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, preparing the library for automation requires more than buying sleek terminals and hiring the set designer from Star Trek. As other libraries and information centers are automating and planning computerized resource sharing networks, MTSU's Todd Library is preparing to join their ranks.

Specifically, RECON involves the tedious task of matching existing manual records with computerized records to create magnetic tapes which will contain information similar to a catalog card, but more easily accessed and less susceptible to damage. This first step toward automation was taken in 1975 when Todd Library began using the On-line Computer Library Center. This national network provides a bibliographic information lifeline that connects MTSU to a comprehensive data base of library holdings throughout the country and in many foreign nations.

Since 1975, all new acquisitions have been entered into the OCLC system, but a large portion of pre-1975 holdings do not fall into this category. Although the OCLC system provides an invaluable cataloging tool, it also provides a means of retrospective conversion. MTSU's RECON project began in February of 1982 and is continuing through the efforts of a full time project director and student employees. To date, this important project is approximately 60 percent completed, with over 200,000 library records in machine-readable format. This represents significant progress toward our final goal, automated library service. Continued efforts and funding are necessary before Todd Library can become an automated information center.

RECON work requires the use of specialized terminals, three of which are located in the Library's cataloging area. Because competition for these terminals and the cost of updating is greatest during the day, RECON is done evenings and on weekends. Every effort is made to control costs, but increased fees have significantly depleted funds set aside for this project. RECON must be completed before the library can take full advantage of today's automated systems. For example, convenient automated circulation systems depend on machine-readable records, which are provided by RECON. If funding for this activity is not continued, efforts toward the automation of library services will be delayed.

Today, automated systems are widely available for information processing and library operations, all designed to increase speed, efficiency, and services. MTSU's library is taking steps to incorporate these new systems, and the progress of RECON reflects this commitment. Continued investments of financial and human resources will, undoubtedly, result in an improved library environment in the future. (RP) □

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considerable amount of money, staff time, and effort. To obtain funding for the project, the Library has submitted a proposal to the faculty sub-committee of the 75th Anniversary Celebration Committee. This committee will consider the Library computerization proposal as it searches for projects for which funds might be raised during the University's 75th Anniversary.

When a computerized system is implemented, numerous significant benefits will be enjoyed by faculty, students, staff, and other Library users, some of which are:

1. A quick and simple wave of an electronic wand over a user's borrower's card and the book's call number will instantly check out or check in a book.
2. The card catalog information will be in a computer which can be queried by terminals from many locations within the library, from departmental offices, and perhaps from dormitories and homes having personal computers.
3. A user querying the computerized catalog will be able to determine if a book is in the collection, being ordered or processed, checked out, or even missing.
4. Students and faculty will be able to find books easier through the

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**Todd Library Update** is issued from time to time for the Middle Tennessee State University community.

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# Library Automation Committee Report

In order to meet the future automation needs of Todd Library, an Automation Committee was created in August of 1984 to study the feasibility of implementing a computerized library system. Librarians assigned to the Committee include Sue Burkheart (Cataloging Department), Sharon Campbell (Reference Department), Harriette Gaida (Reference Department), Linda Gill, chairman (Periodicals Department), In MacBeth (Cataloging Department), Virginia Vesper (Acquisitions Department), and Don Craig as an ex-officio member.

The Automation Committee will serve in an advisory and planning capacity throughout the life of the automation project. The Committee will attempt to fulfill the following goals:

1. Conduct a needs assessment to identify possible uses of automation and resulting benefits.
2. Prepare a general long range plan for the automation of the library.
3. Review what the library is currently doing by way of automation to determine whether it is consistent with future plans for automating library operations.
4. Plan a program of automation training for the staff.

The Committee began its work by conducting a study of available literature to become better informed. Hands-on experience with specific systems has been gained through trips taken to the UT-Chattanooga Library and to the Nashville Technical Institute Library to observe their automated library systems. Committee members have also attended automation workshops, meetings, and conferences throughout the fall semester.

In October the Committee began a long-term study of library functions. Circulation was chosen first, reflecting its priority status in the future implementation of an automated sys-

tem. The results have been recorded in a written report which describes in detail the activities and organization of the circulation department. The same process will be repeated for all six departments within the library.

More recently, on January 15, 1985, the Committee sponsored an in-house demonstration of the On-line Computer Library Center's (OCLC) LS/2000 integrated local library system. SOLINET representative Lynn Shrewsbury conducted a program which highlighted the LS/2000's Circulation, On-line Public Access Catalog, Bibliographic, and Administrative subsystems. Librarians, library clerical staff, members of the Faculty Library Committee, and interested university administrators attended one of the two scheduled sessions.

In the coming months committee members will be working on a number of projects simultaneously. High priority will be given to the search for an automation librarian who is expected to join the staff in the summer of 1985. Once hired, this person will work with the Committee in writing the exact specifications for an automated system and will supervise the completion of the Retrospective Conversion Project. During the spring semester, committee members also plan to continue the study of library functions and to develop staff educational programs. (SLC) □

## Tax Guide Available

Albert Einstein said it: "The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax." The 1985 edition of the *Tax Guide for College Teachers and Other College Personnel (for filing 1984 tax returns)* is designed to keep college teachers informed about the latest tax laws and rulings that apply to them. A copy of this 400-page book is on reserve in the Reserves Room of Todd Library.

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use of keyword searches on a terminal that does not require knowledge of specific titles or subject headings. Studies have shown that computerized catalogs are twice as effective as manual card catalogs.

5. A faculty member searching the computerized catalog for data on 1984 election results will find a videotape that is located in the separate Learning Resources Center. This item would not have been found in the card catalog.
6. If needed books are not found in the MTSU computerized catalog, the requestor will likely be able to search the catalogs of other SBR libraries to determine if the item can be borrowed.
7. Qualified users will have access through the computerized catalog to off-campus information databases so that they can perform their own computerized literature searches.
8. Computerization will significantly reduce the amount of typing, proofing, sorting, filing, updating, and withdrawing of cards now done manually in the 74-year-old, two million card catalog, and will eliminate card mutilation and theft.
9. Librarians will be provided with reports that analyze the use made of various parts of the collection and of specific books that may not circulate enough to justify their retention in the collection.

Significant improvements can be made in the knowledge-library-access chain on the MTSU campus by strengthening the Library link through the use of computer technology. It is hoped that funding for this project can be secured by the end of 1986 when the staff will be ready to begin adding a new electronic dimension to the Library. (DC) □