

**Adult Services Advisory Council**  
June 25, 2004 Meeting Notes

**Attendees:**

Jo-Ann Benedetti (UHLS), Mary Fellows (UHLS), Suzanne Fischer (VOOR), Margaret Garrett (GUIL), Barbara Goetschius (RCSC), D Hobin (EGRN), Barbara Kubli (STEP), Ginny LeJuene (ALTM), Jane Minotti (SNLK), Gordon Noble (BETH), Katie Quinn (APLM), Pat Sahr (NASS), Deb Shoup (EGRN), Mary Trev Thomas (BETH)

**Overview:**

Jo-Ann discussed the current statistics available and the prices we (UHLS and Albany Public Library) paid for databases last year. She had handouts describing the current costs and cost per use of current databases, as well as the projected costs of databases the system is considering. In 2004, database costs were approximately \$118,000. For 2005 we are looking at a 5% reduction, since this is the proposed budget cut for libraries.

Also, Jo-Ann mentioned that Nylink offers discounted databases, but that their fiscal year is July – June and because of this, we cannot take advantage of this discount. Also, MVLS/SALS purchase their databases on a July-June schedule. If we were to do this, we could get perhaps better pricing as the consortium would be larger and give us more leverage. We may also consider purchasing databases for more than one year. Locking in a product for 2 years might also help us with price.

**Literature Databases:**

Suzanne Fischer demonstrated Literature Resource Center (Gale), Magill on Lit (Ebsco), Novelist k-8 (Ebsco), Children's Lit Comprehensive DB, Book Index with Reviews (Ebsco), and Books in Print (Bowker).

- It was decided that the Gale product was the superior literature database, and could be considered a "10". The Ebsco product was inadequate when compared to the Gale product.
- Novelist K-8 was thought to be useful, but questions were raised about the intended audience. Novelist covers only fiction, and the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD) covers both fiction and non-fiction. Mary Fellows joined for this discussion. It was thought that both products would be nice to have, but if we had to select one because of budget constraints, it would be CLCD.
- Book Index with Reviews was compared with BIP. It was thought that Book Index with Reviews was "clunky". It did not have many of the features that Books in Print offers such as publisher web sites, author bios, availability, and forthcoming books. The recommendation was to stay with BIP.

**Biography Databases:**

Katie Quinn led the discussion and demonstrated Biography Resource Center (Gale) and the various Wilson products (Wilson Biography, Biographies Reference Bank, Biographies Plus Illustrated, Current Biographies Illustrated).

Again the Gale product is far superior. Although the Wilson products are supposed to be updated monthly/daily (depending on product), a couple of searches on current newsmakers did not seem to confirm this. The recommendation was to consider Gale's Biography Resource Center.

### **General Reference Work and Encyclopedias**

Usage statistics do not support renewing the Word Book subscription. It was noted that the sales representative made a pitch to the youth services librarians, and that they overwhelmingly want this product. It was also noted that the past 3 years have been tough for online encyclopedias. We went from WB to Groliers and back to WB hoping that statistics would improve. Most computers are bundled with Encarta (although B. Kubli noted that her computer did not have Encarta), all libraries in the system have a print encyclopedia, and we get Funk and Wagnalls through the NOVEL. Many also will just do a Google search to find information. In a time of severe fiscal limitations, we cannot justify the purchase. This is something we can drop.

Oxford Reference Online is user-friendly and popular as well as inexpensive. The group gave this a "conditional" yes. If we have money, we should get it. If money is tight, we could drop this.

Reference USA is indispensable.

### **Genealogy**

Mary Trev Thomas led this discussion which compared Jewish Data, Heritage Quest and Ancestry.

It was thought that Jewish Data is too limited in scope and not useful for the system.

HeritageQuest was nicer, more information, but not the caliber of Ancestry. The group was very excited about Ancestry and wants to pursue this database for the System, in spite of the high price tag.

### **Education**

The group compared Learn-a-Test and Testing and Education Reference Center. Learn-A-Test was superior. It offered more tests as well as feedback to patrons about what questions they missed. Much of the content on the Gale database was from Petersons, and this is available online with free registration.

Recommend keeping Learn-A-Test.

### **Newspaper/Periodicals**

Mary Trev Thomas and Gordon Noble described the differences of the periodical and newspaper Databases.

Gale's General Reference Center Gold had limited full-text, except for the Knight-Ridder Newspapers. It was thought that Ebsco had a better product, and we should not consider Gale.

The Proquest databases seemed to be more academic in nature and not suitable for a public library. Although their National Newspaper database had full text of Wall St Journal, Boston Globe, Washington Post and NY Times, it was felt that this was a huge investment to make, and that ILL could take care of this need. Ebsco's Newspaper Archive Elite had sporadic coverage, and is not worth pursuing. The newspapers we get from NOVEL and the Times Union subscription seems to meet our newspaper needs at this time.

Recommendation: put \$1500 towards the Times-Union subscription, and keep the Ebsco Masterfile Premier.

### **Conclusions**

After much discussion, it was decided that the databases most cited as desirable were Ebsco's Masterfile Premier, Reference USA, and Ancestry. These are the most expensive databases, and our current budget cannot pay for these.

The suggestion was made that perhaps BETH, EGRN, GUIL, VOOR and others may be able to purchase Ancestry, the Gale Literature Resource Center and the Gale Biography Resource Center as a small consortium. Jo-Ann will see what she can do about pricing on these for these libraries.

The compromise is to recommend to the Central Library Advisory Committee:

Ebsco Masterfile Premier: \$33,475  
Reference USA: \$28,270  
BIP: \$27,111  
Learning Express (Learn-A-Test) \$15,000  
Times Union: \$1,500  
Children's Lit Comprehensive DB: \$5,500

Total: 110,856.