

**DALNET Project Managers  
Database Taskforce Recommendations  
July, 2004**

History

The DALNET Project Managers Committee formed a taskforce to investigate and provide detailed information on the costs and benefits of DALNET having a single database model for the online catalog in place of the current multiple database model. The taskforce members include: Cathy Eames - Children's Hospital of Michigan, Joan Emahiser - Beaumont Hospital, George Marck - DALNET, Sara Martin - University of Detroit Mercy, Mary Ann Sheble - Oakland Community College.

Recommendation #1

**DALNET should develop a single online catalog database with individual HIPs. This will allow for the advantages of a single database while preserving the individual branding for each member institution.**

Examination of the Benefits

Taskforce members believe there would be a number of advantages to a unified DALNET database.

- \* **Cost Savings:** DALNET reports that a single database would save the consortium approximately \$18,000 per year over a multiple database model.
- \* **Labor Savings:** DALNET will be functioning with a reduced number of staff. A single database would be more manageable with a smaller staff.
- \* **Database Management:** In the event of acquiring new modules or software (such as an automated link checker), a single database would be much easier to install and maintain.
- \* **Maintaining Individual HIPs:** DALNET staff report that maintaining individual HIPs would be easier with a single database. This is because multiple HIPs would be run against just one database instead of multiple databases.
- \* **Shared Authority work:** A single database would allow DALNET to share authority records, instead of duplicating efforts across multiple databases.
- \* **Consortium Enhancement:** Developing and maintaining a single database will require Consortium members, at all levels, to work together more closely. This has the benefit of bonding the organization together into a tighter and more cohesive group.
- \* **Beneficial to Accreditations:** A shared database is a benefit during accreditation periods. Member institutions can list individual holdings as well as shared holdings of approximately ½ million records.

- \* **Shared Training:** Sharing a single database and pulling together as a group will allow for customized, shared training opportunities between institutions.
- \* **Attractive to New Members:** The opportunity to have an individualized HIP and at the same time provide access to a large number of holdings would be very attractive to potential new DALNET members.
- \* **Shared Resources:** A single database would provide the backbone for sharing other resources such as digitized bib records, etc.
- \* **Shared Cleanup:** Shared record cleanup would be possible in the event of a group load of purchased bib records.
- \* **Patron Records:** A single database would enhance the ability to copy over patron records from one institution to another.
- \* **Collection Development:** A single database would enhance each institution's ability to check the holdings of other libraries when making collection development decisions.

#### Challenges to a Single Database Model

The Taskforce looked carefully at the challenges involved with moving from a multiple database model to a single database. The work required by each library and DALNET is significant plus there will be costs from Dynix. However, members of the Taskforce believe the benefits outweighed the required work and migration costs. The primary challenges will be in developing standards and procedures for sharing a single database. Please note, it is possible to have multiple type subject headings and both LC and Dewey call numbers. The Consortium would need to develop committees for each module to work out the technical and procedural issues. (A listing of currently identified technical issues is attached to this recommendation.) The Taskforce estimates the process of moving to a single database could take as long as two years to complete.

#### Resources Available

The taskforce identified existing resources that could be utilized in the creation of a single database. Consortia cataloging manuals are still in existence from the previous online catalog system. The Nebraska Independent College Library Consortium cataloging manual is also available for DALNET use. These documents could be used as a discussion and starting point for developing a new DALNET cataloging and procedure manual. In addition, DALNET module committees used for managing the NOTIS system, could be reorganized for implementing the single database model.

## Recommendation #2

**The Taskforce strongly recommends that if a single database model is accepted, the consortium delay decision on a new ILS until the single database model has been completed.**

### Rational

As the Project Managers Taskforce examined the process and time involved with implementing a single database, it became clear that the project will take considerable effort on the part of the DALNET staff. In light of this, the Taskforce also recommends that the Consortium delay migration to a new Integrated Library System until the multiple databases have been merged into a single database. DALNET staff report that it would be easier to move to a single database before implementing a new ILS. Members of the Taskforce were also concerned with the problems associated with troubleshooting database issues if the consortium were to merge databases and implement a new system at the same time. *Therefore, the Taskforce strongly recommends that if a single database model is accepted, the consortium delay decision on a new ILS until the single database model has been completed.*

## Issues/Additional Information Requirements

### **1. Moving Bib Information to the Item Level:**

It needs to be determined if information from bib records can be moved to the item level as part of a migration to a union catalog and later, on a routine basis

A. Local Access Information (856 MARC fields): Some of the DALNET libraries provide access to electronic journals, books, and other subscription resources through the Horizon Information Portal (HIP). How this information is displayed and to whom will need to be determined.

B. Local Information Notes (590 and 740 MARC fields): Several libraries have notes in 590 bib fields and institution specific information in the 740 field that are necessary to retain. Decisions would need to be made on an institution-by-institution basis about the preferred item or copy field best suited to display the information. Institutional-specific mapping to a union catalog would be desirable for these fields.

## **2. Authority File:**

Two separate issues are involved in authority file work for DALNET libraries: (1) cleanup work on current individual authority files and (2) ongoing authority work to prevent blind references for the union catalog and in individual HIPs.

A. Authority File Cleanup: Authority records were corrupted during migration from NOTIS to Horizon and until 7.2.4, Horizon continued to corrupt selected categories of incoming authority records. Several DALNET libraries have cleaned-up and maintained their authority files, but many have not. A decision will need to be made about the desirability of deleting individual library authority files and loading a master set (names, subjects, series) prior to migrating to a union catalog.

B. Ongoing Authority Files: Ideally, there should be some type of capability when authority records are imported (batch and on-by-one) to eliminate blind references (1) in the union catalog and (2) scoped to the individual database level. It may be feasible to contract work to either an outside agency or library within DALNET to guard against blind references in a union catalog. Since all DALNET libraries would be sharing a single bibliographic record, decisions would need to be made about how a union authority file would work at the individual database level.