



March 15, 2000

Dear Focus Group Participant:

Thank you for being part of the *epixtech* Academic Focus Group last week. We appreciate your candid feedback as we work together to serve the needs of the academic community.

Some highlights and key points from our discussion are summarized in the following paragraphs:

**Collaboration** - Academic libraries are being required to collaborate in a variety of new ways. Different types of databases need to have common interfaces, various disparate systems must interface with each other, and large volumes of data from a variety of sources must be loaded into catalog or other types of databases. To address these needs *epixtech* systems must be open and adhere to current industry and library standards.

**e-everything** - The campuses are readying everything for the Web or other digital form. Universities are moving course material to the Web in the form of electronic reserves and are undertaking distance learning initiatives which will grow in the coming years. The e-everything environment is accompanied by an attendant set of challenges including authorization and authentication issues.

**Patron empowerment** applications of all types are important to academic libraries with a goal to provide more services, more quickly and with a savings of staff time. These applications must not only be bug-free, they must "shine" as there is no longer an intermediary between the patron and the information or desired task.

Some of the areas that you would like to see *epixtech* attend to:

**Customer Support, Communication and Documentation** - Large academic libraries have staffing to run the system, tweak the system and ensure it runs efficiently. Horizon customers require more technical documentation, an academic training session on tuning and tweaking for the large site. Libraries need additional information on release contents and technical requirements well before release date. We discussed the best way to provide a forum for sharing local developments, discoveries and "how-to" information.

**Specific Horizon Problems** - Fix bugs particularly in software destined for public use. Improve operator security at a task level to accommodate workflows in large libraries and at consortia.

**Optimize for large site operation** - The huge volume of activity and number of libraries (consortia or departmental libraries) makes this an issue that is not a concern for smaller installations. *epixtech* should consider carefully the balance of client operation vs. server operation and the effect on response time and workflow at large sites. Needs of outlying libraries in the consortia setting must also be considered.

Acquisitions, including serials and binding should be addressed to improve both online workflow for high volume operation and batch processes. Loaders for acquisitions data

should be provided (aka VITLS to NOTIS folks) to streamline processes and minimize staff intervention.

Security concerns for the larger sites are magnified. Greater control at operator and library level (for consortia) is desired in the Horizon system.

**WebPAC** - concentrate on WebPAC, IPAC and all Patron Empowerment applications to ensure they are reliable and "really shine". Work on electronic reserves and Reserve Book Room.

Other items of guidance:

***epixtech* vision** - communicate vision and involve large academic libraries in the planning from early stages.

**Delivery** - improve track record for delivery on commitments. Be sensitive to the planning needs at the customer sites and the impact of late releases on library staff. Work on union catalog.

Should you have further thoughts on our discussions at any time please feel free to send them on via phone or email.

Each and every one of us on the *epixtech* team thanks you wholeheartedly for traveling many miles to join us and investing a day of your very valuable time with us in Chicago.

Sincerely,

Linda Scott Zaleski  
Product Manager