Minutes of July 27 DALNET Steering Committee

Present: D. Adams, K. Bacsanyi, L. Bugg, J. Flaherty, J. Houser, P. Jose, H. Masek, M. Sheble

Minutes of the July 13 Steering Committee meeting were approved.

L. Bugg reported that contract negotiations are in progress and that the DALNET/Ameritech master contract and the DALNET/member library contract addenda are awaiting legal review at Wayne. DALNET staff are also awaiting notification that they can return the IBM test server which is to be replaced with a Sun test server.

1a.   The recommendations of the Index Task Force went to Jan Sheppard for implementation at UDM. M. Sheble reported that some minor changes to the MARC maps and other specifics would be necessary. The final index tables and MARC maps will be distributed to the Steering Committee when they are stable.

M. Sheble raised an issue pertaining to indexes that the Committee agreed needed some follow up. She asked whether a library might choose not to display an index that is among the core set agreed upon by the consortium. UDM has some records that contain MeSH headings that are either invalid or out-of-date which the Library would rather not display. A general discussion of this issue followed. Some of the questions raised in discussion follow.

The questions can be divided into two groups, those dealing relating to broadcast searching, and those related to searching the union file: 1) What happens when a broadcast search is performed on the index which a library has chosen not to display? What is the error message to the user if an index is unavailable? 2) What would happen when a patron performed a union catalog search on an index that one library did not support? Is it possible for one library to suppress display of all records from an index included in the union database? Is it possible not to index records coming from a particular library? L. Bugg agreed to raise these and related questions with Ameritech and to forward them to the Index Committee as necessary.

1b.   L. Bugg reported that she expected the order to go out for the Sun test server and the first WebPAC server either July 27 or 28. The WebPAC server will be delivered to WSU and configured on-site. The test server will go to Provo, UT to be configured and loaded by Ameritech personnel. Both are to be Sun 450s.

2.   L. Bugg discussed some questions received from Margaret Auer on the Committee's recommendation that the Board establish a Technology Policy Committee. She shared some preliminary answers she had already submitted to M. Auer and asked for additional input. J. Houser commented on the need to obtain input from DALNET member institutions on technology policy issues such as what networking protocols will be supported on the DALNET WAN and whether a member library will be allowed to attach to both TLN and DALNET from the same frame-relay connection. P. Jose supported the need for a DALNET Board representative on the Technology Policy Committee. D. Adams voiced a concern about the staff time involved in participating in the meetings of a new technology committee. J. Houser pointed out that many decisions would have to be made in any case; wouldn't it be better to have a formal means of creating recommendations on technology issues for the Board?

The Committee recommended changing item 4 in the proposed committee charge to "informing and getting input from network and systems administrators and/or other persons responsible for providing systems support to DALNET libraries." More Committee discussion followed. L. Bugg will convey the Committee's answers to M. Auer.

The Committee also recommended that representatives from the Steering Committee, DALNET Board, WSU and UDM attend an upcoming meeting with Ameritech at DPL on network design. P. Jose agreed to attend for the Board. H. Masek also indicated his intention to participate as well.

3a.   The Committee endorsed without changes the document drafted by J. Houser and distributed June 20 by e-mail which describes proposed concept searching and automatic spell checking features for the Horizon children's OPAC interface. The Committee expects these features will eventually be available to patrons using the regular WebPAC interface. J. Houser noted that a copy of the document had been given to Bill Easton and Tyler Gingrich at the ALA Annual Conference.

3b.   L. Bugg announced that Bill Easton planned to attend the August 24 Steering Committee meeting and talk about the enhancements to the Horizon system at that time.

4.   L. Bugg asked about the DALNET Webmaster position to be hired and housed at DPL J. Houser indicated that permission (from DPL) had not yet been received to post the position, but that he would raise the issue at the next Cabinet meeting (August 5.) L. Bugg offered to share a draft position description created at WSU with DPL to help speed along the posting process. D. Adams also offered to supply some language from Botsford Hospital's webmaster job description. J. Houser agreed to put together a draft position description for review during the August 10 Steering Committee meeting.

5a.   M. Sheble provided an update on the UDM migration to the Horizon system. She mentioned that serials holdings were not yet displaying correctly but that Ameritech was working on it. Also, open orders and vendor records were not being converted yet. A final issue was that it was still an open question whether UDM would come up right away with acquisitions, especially since UDM would prefer to come up with the Horizon 5.1 acquisitions module.

5b.   J. Houser reported that he had had a number of productive sessions with Jim Grant and John Meiers of Ameritech on the design of the DALNET WAN, but he reiterated that he was uncomfortable with the design process because it was not proceeding with enough input from DALNET libraries other than DPL. He welcomed the participation of other DALNET member staff at the next planning session July 29. (See item 2.)

5d.   H. Masek suggested that since things were moving quickly and changes to the production schedule were frequent, he should post any schedule changes to the Steering Committee via e-mail. The Committee concurred.

6a. and 6b. L. Bugg suggested that she communicate to the DALNET Project Managers that UDM is due up shortly, and WSU, DPL, and Botsford in March 1998. Should composition of the remaining groups remain unchanged? D. Adams suggested that the remaining groups would need to come up one group per quarter in able to have all libraries up by January 1, 2000. L. Bugg will propose a new schedule and ask for input at the next DALNET Project Manager's meeting.

7a.   J. Houser agreed to work with H. Masek to schedule a meeting to discuss network management software with staff from DPL, WSU, and any other interested parties.

7b.   L. Bugg reported on the progress of the DALNET Project Leader hiring process. Telephone interviews were scheduled with the DALNET Project Team for July 28.

7c.   The Committee agreed that the issue of how to provide access to databases and information services after migration from the MDAS system should be addressed by the DALNET Collection Development Committee. The Committee will need to look into a number of alternatives including access via MLC, Access Michigan, direct connection to web-based services, or expansion of the Silverplatter server at WSU.

7d.   The Committee reviewed the StafPAC Displays Task Force Charge and agreed that item 3a. needs review and revision by the Task Force. The Steering Committee was uncertain why the StafPAC Task Force would determine who can view individual StafPACs and displays within individual libraries.