

Editorial: A Confession, a Speculation, and a Farewell

John Webb

The authors of "The State of RFID Applications in Libraries," that appeared in the March 2006 issue, inadvertently included two sentences that are near quotations from a commentary by Peter Warfield and Lee Tien in the April 8, 2005 issue of the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. On page 30 immediately following footnote 24, the authors wrote: "The Eugene Public Library reported 'collision' problems on very thin materials and on videos as well as false readings from the RFID security gates. Collision problems mean that two or more tags are close enough to cancel the signals, making them undetectable by the RFID checkout and security systems." Warfield and Lien wrote: "The Eugene (Ore.) Public Library reported 'collision' problems on very thin materials and on videos as well as 'false readings' from the RFID security gates. (Collision problems mean that two or more tags are close enough to 'cancel the signals,' according to an American Library Association publication, making them undetectable by the RFID checkout and security systems.)" (Accessed May 16, 2006, www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/article.cfm?archiveDate=04-08-05&storyID=21128).

The authors' research notes indicated that it was a near quotation, but this fact was lost in the writing of the article. The article referee, the copy editors, and I did not question the authors because earlier in the same paragraph they wrote about the Eugene Public Library experience and referred (footnote 23) to an earlier article in the *Berkeley Daily Planet*. The authors and I apologize for this unfortunate error.

July 1, 2006 marked the merger of RLG and OCLC. By the time this editorial appears, many words will already have been spoken and written about this monumental, twenty-first century library event. I know what I think the three very important immediate effects of the merger will be. First, it is a giant step toward the realization of a global library bibliographic database. Second, taking advantage of RLG's unique and successful programs and integrating them and their development philosophy as "RLG-Programs," while working alongside OCLC Research, seems a step so important for the future development of library technology that it cannot be overemphasized. Third, and very practically, incorporating RedLightGreen into Open WorldCat will give the library world a product that users might prefer over a search of Google Books or Amazon.

I requested and received quotes about the merger from the principals that I might put into this editorial that won't appear until four months after the May 3 announcement. Jay Jordan, president and CEO, OCLC, remarked: "We have worked cooperatively with RLG on a variety of projects over the years. Since we announced our plans to combine, staff from both organizations have been work-

ing together to develop plans and strategies to integrate systems, products, and services. Over the past several months, staff members have demonstrated great mutual respect, energy, and enthusiasm for the potential of our new relationship and what it means for the organizations we serve. There is much work to be done as we complete this transition. Clearly, we are off to a good start."

Betsy Wilson, chair, OCLC Board of Trustees, and dean of libraries, University of Washington, wrote: "The response from our constituencies has been overwhelmingly supportive. Over the past several months, we have finalized appointments for the twelve-person Program Council, which reports to . . . OCLC through a standing committee called the RLG Board Committee. We are starting to build agendas for our new alliance. The members of this group from the RLG board are: James Neal, vice president for Information Services and University Librarian, Columbia University; Nancy Eaton, dean of University Libraries and Scholarly Communication, Penn State University (and former chair of the OCLC Board); and Carol Mandel, dean of libraries, New York University. From OCLC the members are Elisabeth Niggeman, director, Deutsches Bibliothek; Jane Ryland, senior scientist, Internet 2; and Betsy Wilson, dean of University Libraries, University of Washington."

And from James Michalko, currently President and CEO of RLG, and by the time you read this, Vice President, RLG-Programs Development, OCLC: "We are combining the practices of RLG and OCLC in a very powerful way—by putting together the traditions of RLG and OCLC we are creating a robust new venue for research institutions and new capacity that will provide unique and beneficial outcomes to the whole community."

By now, all LITA members and *ITAL* readers know that in 1967, Fred Kilgour founded OCLC; **and** was the founding editor of the *Journal of Library Automation (JOLA—Vol. 1, no. 1* was published in March, 1968), which, with but a mild outcry from serials librarians, changed its title to *Information Technology and Libraries* in 1982. This afternoon (6/15/06), I called Fred. He and his wife Eleanor reminisced about the earliest days, and then I asked him for his comments on the OCLC-RLG merger. Because he had had the first words about both OCLC and *JOLA*, as it were, I told him that I would like for him to have the last. And this is what he said, "At long last!"

Fred Kilgour died on July 31, 2006, aged 92. A tribute posted by Alane Wilson of OCLC may be read at <http://scanblog.blogspot.com/2006/07/frederick-g-kilgour-1914-2006.html>

John Webb (jwebb@wsu.edu) is a Librarian Emeritus, Washington State University and Editor of *Information Technology and Libraries*.