

has shown that interactive television programs:

1. serve as an initial introduction to naive audiences of what a truly interactive system is all about;
2. are difficult to implement;
3. really aren't democratic;
4. are basically polling devices.

It has been said that the reason that railroads went out of business was because they insisted that they were in the railroad business and wouldn't admit that they were in the transportation business. If cable operators insist that they are in the television business, they may well miss the opportunities that are possible in the communications business or, in fact, in the information business.

By the same token, if *libraries* miss the significance of what cable television is bringing to *their* business, their role in the community will be diminished and libraries may go the way of railroads. Modern communications and computers offer an opportunity for libraries to become the information choice in their community. In the near future, applications such as the Home Book Club may well be a way to provide increased accessibility of library services to library patrons, and to "condition" those patrons to the coming electronic nature of libraries. Over the long term, libraries, if they have the courage and the foresight, can be the focus of the coming information and telecommunications revolution. The message is quite clear: opportunities abound.

REFERENCES

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3. Jonathan Black, "Brave New World of Television," *New Times* 11:41 (24 July 1978).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
5. "Warner Cable's QUBE: Exploring the Outer Reaches of Two-way TV," *Broadcasting* 95:28 (31 July 1978).
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An Informal Survey of the CTI Computer Backup System

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In order to help decide whether or not to purchase computer backup systems from Computer Translation, Inc. (CTI),* for use when the CLSI LIBS 100 automated circulation system is not operating, Great Neck Library conducted an informal survey of libraries using both systems. Eleven institutions, including both public and academic libraries, responded to a brief questionnaire. They were asked what size CTI system they had purchased and why, how easily it was installed, how well it performed, how it was maintained, and if CLSI acknowledged that the addition of the backup did not affect their LIBS 100 maintenance agreements.

Before summarizing the responses, the structure of the two systems and how they interact should be outlined.

CLSI LIBS 100

The CLSI automated circulation system consists of a stand-alone minicomputer console with local and/or remote terminals connected to it through individual ports by means of electrical and/or dedicated telephone line hookups. When it operates, the terminals are online and interactive with the database, which is stored on one or more multiplatter disc packs.

CTI BACKUP

The CTI backup system is based on an Apple II microcomputer with two minidisc drives, which take 5¼-inch floppy discs, a TV monitor, and a switching system that can be connected to the LIBS 100 console or its terminals. The CTI system can also be used alone. When the LIBS 100 is down (inoperative), the CTI system is connected to a terminal, and data is recorded on its discs for later dumping (data entry) into the database via a port connection. It

*CTI is a profit-making company wholly owned by Brigham Young University. The CTI backup system was originally developed to support the CLSI installation at BYU.

appears to the public and the library's staff member operating the backup-terminal combination that the terminal is working. There is, however, no connection between the backup unit and the database in this mode. When the LIBS 100 is up (operating) once again, the backup is connected and data is automatically dumped. Naturally the port cannot be used by both the CLSI terminal and the backup unit at the same time without the addition of other hardware. The terminals attached to other ports may operate normally while dumping is completed.

The CLSI and CTI software, which operate compatibly, are owned by the respective companies, not the library.

THE RESPONSES

1. *Size of System:* CTI systems are available in two sizes, 32K and 48K. Two libraries purchased the smaller system, nine purchased the larger system, and one purchased both. Greater programming capabilities of the larger system were considered its greatest asset.
2. *Reason for Purchase:* Five libraries indicated they use the backup for other purposes in addition to substituting for the LIBS 100 when it is down. Among these other purposes were development of a community information database, personnel and financial reports and files, use as an RLIN terminal, as a bookmobile terminal, and as an aid in converting short-title bibliographic records to expanded format.
3. *Installation:* Respondents were unanimous in having no problems with installation. Seven did their own installation, while CTI gave instructions over the phone. Three were installed by CTI, who also trained the library staff in its operation. One library indicated the accompanying documentation was enough to install the system without assistance.
4. *Performance:* All eleven respondents were enthusiastic about system performance. Some comments were, "It's the best thing since buttered popcorn," and "We love it dearly It saves hours . . . works just fine." Many commented on the slow dumping time as the biggest drawback, but noted that increased accuracy over manual entry and decreased pressure on their circulation staff during downtime were assets.
5. *Maintenance:* Backup system maintenance is not uniform. Six respondents said that software was maintained by CTI, but hardware was maintained by an Apple dealer; or they were undecided about who would be responsible for hardware repairs. A seventh library contracted with an Apple dealer for hardware repairs, but was contending over software maintenance with CTI. Three libraries answered that CTI was maintaining the system, but did not specify both hardware and software. The last respondent expected to take hardware repairs to an Apple dealer and did not mention software.
6. *CLSI Maintenance Agreements:* One library stated that they had written assurance from CLSI that the installation of the backup system would not affect their LIBS 100 maintenance contract. Three more said they had verbal assurances. Five respondents indicated no assurances from CLSI that the LIBS 100 contract was not affected. One library sent a copy of a CLSI letter defining company policy in this area. It said, in part: "CLSI does not prohibit the attachment of foreign devices to the systems. . . ." Qualifications to this statement involved an institution's attempt to repair the LIBS 100 itself, to hold CLSI responsible for damage resulting from the attachment of the device, or to have CLSI maintain the device.

The Great Neck Library decided to purchase two CTI backup systems for use when the LIBS 100 is down. Experience bears out the findings of the survey; i.e., it is easy to install the system with only telephone assistance; it works well, and, though data transmission to the main unit is slow, it is accurate and removes some of

the desperation from a downtime situation.

Great Neck Library is also planning to use the Apples for other functions, which, it is hoped, will be implemented soon.

Multimedia Catalog: COM and Online

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Like many public libraries, the Tucson Public Library (TPL) is closing its card catalog and implementing a vendor-supplied microform catalog. Unlike most of these other libraries, however, the TPL microform catalog will not include location or holding information. The indication of where copies of a particular title are actually available (i.e., which of the fifteen possible branch locations) will be available only by accessing a video display terminal connected to the online circulation and inventory control system.

Conceptually, the TPL catalog will be in two parts with each part intended to serve different functions.¹ The microform catalog (copies available in both film and fiche format) will fulfill the bibliographic function of the catalog. This catalog will contain bibliographic description and provide the traditional access points of author, title, and subject. The online catalog (online terminals are in place at all reference desks and a few public access terminals will also be available) will fulfill the finding or locating function of the catalog. This catalog will contain very brief bibliographic description and will only be searchable by author, title, author/title, and call number, and will contain the current status of every copy of every title in the library system (i.e., *on shelf, checked out, at bindery, reported missing*, etc.).

Why did the Tucson Public Library make this decision? There are two major reasons:

1. *Accuracy.* The location information, if provided in the microform catalog, would *always* be inaccurate and out of date. Assuming that the locations listed in the latest edition of the mi-

croform catalog were completely accurate when the catalog was first issued (an unrealistic assumption to begin with as anyone who has ever worked with location information at a public library with many branches well knows!), the location information would become increasingly less accurate with each day because of the large number of withdrawals, transfers, and added copy transactions that occur (more than 100,000 a year). In addition, at any given time, one-quarter to one-third of the materials in busy branches are not on the shelf because they are either checked out or waiting to be reshelved. Thus, the microform catalog would indicate that these materials were available at specific branches when a significant percentage would in fact *not* be available at any given time. In short, even in the best of circumstances, easily half of the location information would be incorrect in telling a user where a copy of a title was actually available at that moment.

2. *Cost.* A study done at the Tucson Public Library indicated that close to half of the staff time of the cataloging department was spent dealing with location and holding information. This time includes handling transfers, withdrawals, and added copies. All of this record keeping is already being done as a part of the online circulation and inventory control system (the Tucson Public Library has no card shelflist containing copy and location information but rather relies completely on the online file for this type of information). To "duplicate" the information in the microform catalog would cost an estimated \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year and the information in the microform catalog would never be accurate or up to date for the reasons outlined above.

Figure 1 is a brief summary of how the bibliographic system will work.

Would the system in figure 1 be improved if holdings were included in the microform catalog? On the surface, the obvious answer is yes—more information is