Northwestern University Library

Spring 1987

NOTIS to be restructured

he NOTIS office is a division of the University Library that is unique by any standard. Now a software marketing business, the office originally was established to deal with inquiries about NOTIS (Northwestern Online Total Integrated System), a library automation software package. There are currently 65 NOTIS installations.

Given the success of the NOTIS marketing venture, the administration and several members of the University Board of Trustees are reviewing the structure of NOTIS. There are several plans under consideration. One is the formation of a separate University-owned corporation. The other is the establishment of NOTIS as a division of the University.

NOTIS has had a long and prosperous history at Northwestern University Library. Its development began in the late 1960s when John McGowan, then associate University librarian, recruited James Aagaard, a member of Northwestern's computer science and electrical engineering faculty, and added Velma Veneziano, a systems analyst, to the Library's staff to begin the design of an automated system for a full range of library operations. From the beginning, Veneziano and Aagaard have worked closely with their colleagues in the University Library to develop a system that would support effectively and efficiently the many varied library activities.

The first implementation of NOTIS in 1970 was a circulation module that kept track of the books, journals, and other materials borrowed from the Library by Northwestern students, faculty, and staff. In 1971, additional modules became available that provided computer control over the purchase of new materials for the Library and the cataloging of materials in



Jane Burke, director of information services, pinpoints the latest NOTIS installation site on a special map showing user locations. There are currently 65 NOTIS installations.

its collections. A monumental step forward was the unveiling of Library User Information Service (LUIS), the NOTIS online catalog, in 1980. LUIS eventually will replace completely the traditional card catalog familiar to scholars for generations. Unlike manual cards, LUIS provides library users substantially enhanced access to information about the materials owned by the Library and their current availability. In 1985, a new, state-of-the-art circulation module replaced the original one that had served the Library well since 1970. Future enhancements to NOTIS will include new and expanded searching capabilities that will make it easier to find information in LUIS and many improvements to the "behind the scenes" components of the system used by Library staff.

There is much evidence that NOTIS is an excellent software product. First and foremost, it has served admirably the needs of Northwestern University Library for over 15 years. Further, 65 libraries in the United States, Canada, and Latin America have expressed their confidence in NOTIS by installing it under license agreements with Northwestern. Many

more libraries, ranging from those associated with academic institutions, to public libraries, to information centers serving large corporations, have made commitments to install the NOTIS system in the near future.

Since early 1983, the Library has had a growing staff of librarians and technical personnel assisting the NOTIS licensees in installing and using the software package at their own libraries. Jane Burke, director of this group, was hired by University librarian John McGowan specifically to oversee the Library's NOTIS marketing and support activities.

NOTIS's overwhelming success in the library automation arena is testimony to the courage and foresight of the University Library's administration and its systems development team. A crucial element in this success was the Library's willingness to undertake an enormous and very com-

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Nielsen has created one for modem access to LUIS. Once connected, a "screen dump" utility in PIBTERM makes copying of catalog information for subsequent use with a word processor or other program quite easy. Use of this screen-capture facility, or similar features with other communication software that provide VT 100 emulation, is recommended. The Library's research office can provide advice on PIBTERM configuration for use with LUIS.

BIBLIO is a program for IBM-compatible machines that automatically edits LUIS screens, making them easier to print out quickly or edit with a word processor. Authored by Bill Bliss of Northwestern's Microcomputer Support Group (MSG), the program is available free from MSG through its IBM night-and-weekend bulletin board system (491-3892) or can be obtained by sending a blank formatted floppy to Brian Nielsen in the Library's research office. Enhancements to BIBLIO currently are being developed within the Library, and a Macintosh version will be available soon. Configuration setups that automatically copy LUIS information through PIBTERM, edit them with BIBLIO, and pass them out to a printer or word

processing program can be accomplished easily.

For faculty who would like access to other online catalogs, the research office has information on how to dial in to other area catalogs, such as the University of Illinois-Chicago (another LUIS system) and Evanston Public Library. The Library is interested in hearing from members of the Northwestern community who are using LUIS remotely so that it can continue to develop features that serve user needs. If you have questions or suggestions on communicating with LUIS, call Brian Nielsen, research office, at 491-2170.

Brian Nielsen Head of Reference and Coordinator of Research



plex development project at a time when library automation was in its infancy and there were no models to follow. Another important factor was the entrepreneurial spirit that motivated the Library to make NOTIS available to libraries outside Northwestern. Equally important is the inherent soundness of the NOTIS design and the flexibility with which it can serve the needs of many different kinds of institutions. Northwestern is justifiably proud of the international recognition achieved by NOTIS and of the fact that this locally developed product has been selected by so many other institutions to support their library services.

Peggy Steele Systems Analyst, NOTIS



From left, James Aagaard, director of the Library's information systems development office, Velma Veneziano, systems analyst, and John McGowan, University librarian, discuss plans for implementing major enhancements of the NOTIS/LUIS system. Under McGowan's direction, Aagaard and Veneziano began the design of NOTIS in the late 1960s.

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Channels is published twice yearly by the Northwestern University Library. Editor: Martha Pattee (491-4450) Managing Editor: Aviva Rubin Copyeditor: Pat Jones Designer: Barbara Bruch

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Photographer: Stu Baker