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Joint Project Between Dartmouth and OCLC

A significant and novel approach to the advancement of library technology, combining inputs from such geographically separated points as Washington, D.C., Columbus, Ohio, and Hanover, New Hampshire, will be undertaken during the next six months. Part of a joint endeavor of the Dartmouth College library and the New England Library Information Network (NELINET), a project of the New England Board of Higher Education, the experiment involves the practical application, through long-distance operation and testing, of a computer-based system designed to achieve a cheaper, more efficient production of catalog-card records for library use.

The 725-mile gap between Dartmouth in Hanover and the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) in Columbus, Ohio, where OCLC has facilities for producing library catalog cards from magnetic tape input to a computer, will be spanned by a special telephone line. At the Dartmouth end, in the college's Baker library, will be a cathode-ray-tube computer terminal, and at the Ohio end will be OCLC's Xerox Sigma 5 computer. Stored in the OCLC computer are cataloging data from magnetic tapes prepared by the Library of Congress in Washington, covering all English-language books published since 1969, approximately 200,000 in number.

An operator sitting at a typewriter-like keyboard in Hanover will ask the computer for desired cataloging entries for new acquisitions in one of three ways: By use of the Library of Congress card-identification number for the

volumes, by typing the first three letters of the author's name and the first three letters of the first word of the book's title (disregarding articles), or by inputting the first three letters of the first word and the first letters of the next three words of the title. In a matter of seconds, the cataloging information will be relayed from Columbus and flashed on the "screen" of Dartmouth's cathode ray tube. The Hanover operator can then signal Columbus that he wishes to be supplied with catalog cards for the particular item being displayed. Through computer programming tailored to the precise needs of the Dartmouth library, the requisite number of cards, arranged for filing directly into the library's catalogs, will be produced at Columbus and promptly dispatched to Hanover. Catalog cards may also be obtained when a record is not already present within the OCLC system, simply by Dartmouth's inputting its own cataloging, according to prescribed format, thus enlarging the OCLC data base and thereby benefiting other libraries in the Ohio program.

The six-month test at Dartmouth began on January 1. OCLC has for some period of time been operating a remote-access computer service for an existing consortium of approximately fifty academic libraries in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania, and the Dartmouth link represents the farthest long-distance tie outside Ohio. The present experiment is being made under a grant to NELINET of \$53,589 from the Council on Library Resources in Washington. ■ ■

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