

---

# The faculty electronic research center

By Juliann Rankin

---

## *A new service addresses the problems of shrinking budgets*

---

**T**he demand for journal articles continues to increase because journals are still the media for exchanging ideas and thoughts among professionals and scholars.

Over the last few years, substantial increases in the cost of serial publications and decreases in our budget have forced the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico (CSUC), to cancel subscriptions to journals in many disciplines. The libraries developed a process to meet the cancellation goals and began an investigation of alternatives to mitigate the impact of the cancellations. A pilot project has been implemented to test the feasibility of document delivery via fax.

### **Cancellation process**

The goal of the project was to cut 25% of the budget (in dollars) and to identify an additional 25% to be considered for cancellation if the budget worsened. In addition to the library personnel, participants included the departmental and college book chairs. (A book chair is selected for each academic department by faculty and department chair; the college book chair works with all departmental book chairs and is selected by the dean of the college.) The library provided a list of all periodicals in call number order that were related to each department. Unfortunately, library fortunes did not improve and a second cancellation project was undertaken in the spring of 1993. The library will cut about 15% of its titles due to the inflation that periodicals are experiencing now.

### **Faculty demands increase**

At the same time, faculty have been demanding greater access to more publications and libraries are challenged economically to provide access for research to faculty who have ongoing needs for information. Our cancellation process was painful and perceived to have a devastating impact on faculty research. In reality, the on-site collection never adequately served research needs and now was even worse. Faculty members relied on the traditional interlibrary loan service to support their need for research materials not available in our library—a service which was not always free nor timely.

### **Meeting the challenge**

To meet the challenge, the Meriam Library created a new service called the Faculty Electronic Research Center (FERC). It was envisioned that this center would provide faculty with the full array of electronic resources offered by the library. This included full-text services such as Lexis/Nexis. In addition, as part of the FERC, the Meriam Library is embarking on an experiment to support faculty research by offering self-service document delivery through CARL (Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries) called Uncover II. The service allows faculty online access to over 14,000 periodicals (soon to be extended to 20,000+ through a partnership with Blackwell). Faculty can search for articles contained in these journals and then place an electronic order for 24-hour fax delivery. As an experiment, the Meriam Library offered this service, which was built into our current periodical structure, at no cost to our faculty through spring 1994. At the end of this semester, the library will evaluate the use, cost, and benefits to our faculty, making sure it is serving our

---

*Juliann Rankin is periodicals librarian at California State University, Chico; e-mail: Juliann\_Rankin@macgate.csuchico.edu*

faculty's research needs and is within our budget.

### Cost factors

The service called Uncover II charges \$6.50 for an article, plus a variable copyright fee when one is required, and delivers facsimile copies within 24 hours. The Meriam Library set up a deposit account in the amount of \$7,500 with CARL to cover the cost of the articles requested. This amount was arrived at by considering the overall periodicals budget and reviewing the costs of the canceled titles.

This experiment will allow faculty to order articles from periodicals that our library does not carry, including those that have been canceled. Faculty members can order as many articles as they like but not to exceed \$50 per article. The cost of each article is displayed on the system before an order is placed and a sign on the terminal reminds the faculty of the \$50 per article limit. Also a monthly Transaction Details Report from CARL is sent to the library listing each placed order by unique order number, date and time order was placed, date and time order was sent to the requester, article citation including author, title, volume, year, number of pages, cost, and name of requesting faculty. This report is used to monitor the process.

### Physical facility

The Faculty Electronic Research Center is located in the Current Periodicals Faculty/Graduate Reading Area, a closed-stack area. The center consists of two printer-equipped workstations dedicated to faculty access to such network resources as Lexis/Nexis, CARL Uncover, Melvyl (UC catalog), Wildcat (CSU Chico catalog), Libs (catalogs from around the world), and most of the library's CD-ROM indexes or databases. A fax machine is also located nearby in the same area to receive the articles ordered. Staff are on hand to help with questions pertaining to the equipment and librarians help with the instructions on usage.

When the requests are received, it seemed appropriate that the bindery library assistant, who is a staff member in periodicals, be in charge of the received articles and call the faculty for pickup or mailing instructions. Uncover is also available to our students and faculty in other areas of the library and from their offices or homes if they have the requisite equipment. However, only faculty using the FERC receive

the articles free-of-charge. Others using Uncover, or faculty using it at other locations, pay for the service with a credit card.

### Conclusion

The Faculty Electronic Research Center was introduced to the faculty in conjunction with a Network Resource Fair held in the Meriam Library in April 1993. It was received by the faculty with enthusiasm. From April through December 1993, 46 faculty participated. A total of 385 articles were ordered, with 365 of those requests filled. The total cost of filled orders was \$3,373.72, an average cost of \$9.24 per article.

While continuing economic pressures are causing the Meriam Library to cancel periodical subscriptions, the Uncover II service should make those cancellations less damaging to faculty research.

The Meriam Library considers the Faculty Electronic Research Center an experiment at these early stages. After the needed statistical data has been gathered and analyzed, a true evaluation of this document-delivery service will be possible, answering whether or not our "Meeting the Challenge" was successful.

### Resources

Brophy, Peter. "Introduction to the Use of Workstations for Library and Information Management." *Aslib Proceedings* 42:10 (October 1990): 245-50.

Dougherty, Richard M., editor. "Electronic Document Delivery Alternatives: Part I." *Library Issues* 13:1 (September 1992): 1-4.

———. "Electronic Document Delivery Alternatives: Part II." *Library Issues* 13:3 (January 1993): 1-4.

Getz, Malcolm. "Document Delivery." *The Bottom Line* 5:4 (Winter 1991/92): 40-44.

Khalil, Mounir. "Document Delivery: A Better Option?" *Library Journal* 118:2 (February 1, 1993): 43-47.

Leach, Ronald G., and Judith E. Tribble. "Electronic Document Delivery: New Options for Libraries." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 18:6 (January 1993): 359-64.

Sabosik, Patricia E. "Document Delivery Services: Today's Electronic Scriptoria." *Computers in Libraries* 12:11 (December 1992): 16-18.

Wessling, Julie. "Document Delivery: A Primary Service for the Nineties." *Advances in Librarianship* 16 (1992): 1-31. ■



**COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS IN FORMER EASTERN BLOC COUNTRIES  
HAVE DISCOVERED A CURRENCY FAR STRONGER THAN THE RUBLE.**

Companies venturing into former Eastern Bloc countries are met with virtually limitless opportunity—and virtually nonexistent hard currency. So, those eager to forge new markets are willing to accept some unconventional forms of exchange. Pepsi Cola, for example, gets paid in the most liquid of assets, vodka.

The precarious state of Eastern Europe's economy and the innovative ways Western businesses are working within it are topics of tremendous interest. And they're just two of the thousands of important subjects covered by PAIS International.

**Easy access to hard-to-find data**

From shifting global politics and international statistics, to domestic legislation and import/export regulations, PAIS offers you information you won't find anywhere else. PAIS online and CD-ROM indexes provide access to over 350,000 journal articles, government documents, statistical directories, monographs, conference reports and more. And to provide an unrivaled international perspective, PAIS references literature published around the world in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

So the next time you're thirsty for straight information, go for the strong stuff. PAIS.

*Public Affairs Information Service,® Inc.*

521 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036-4396

800-288-PAIS, 212-736-6629 (in NYC)

Fax: 212-643-2848

**PAIS®**

**No one looks at the world like PAIS**

**In Print:** PAIS INTERNATIONAL IN PRINT® • PAIS SUBJECT HEADINGS **Online Through:** DATA-STAR • DIALOG • OCLC • RLG  
**On CD-ROM:** PAIS ON CD-ROM • PAIS INTERNATIONAL ON SILVERPLATTER **On Magnetic Tape:** CONTACT PAIS FOR INFORMATION