THE NEW LIBRARY SYSTEM – UPDATE ON PROGRESS SO FAR

Unicorn, the new web-based Integrated Library System, is set to replace the present URICA system in November this year. This system is a product of the company Sirsi and has been selected by the Libraries of the tertiary education institutions that form the esAL Consortium (eastern seaboard Association of Libraries).

In February 2005 project coordinators and representatives of working groups from all esAL libraries attended an eight-day implementation workshop conducted by two Sirsi staff from the UK. This was followed by intensive and collaborative work writing configuration policies for the new system and detailed mappings for data conversion from the old databases to the new.

Intertwined with this process was the need for Library cataloguers to engage with and learn the international MARC21 (Machine Readable Cataloguing) standards and conventions that replace the old SAMARC. This culminated in a two-day workshop conducted by a MARC21 specialist attended by all cataloguing staff. This was followed by another two-day meeting at which senior cataloguers agreed on minimum standards and discussed workflows for cataloguing appropriate to the new Library system.

Presently the Library staff are planning the intensive test phase while Sirsi staff are configuring the policies to be followed by data conversion from the 6 databases, or catalogues (3 of these being the present UKZN Library catalogues) that will be merged into one. Although there will be one catalogue, users will be able to choose how to search it, for example by Library or Institution or All, and will also have a great deal of flexibility to choose, for example, a specific material format to search by such as video/DVD only or atlases only.

The project plan is that by June the test data will have been loaded to a central server, key users from all the Libraries will be trained by a Sirsi trainer and an intensive period of testing both the configuration and the data conversion will commence, with opportunities for feeding-back to Sirsi so that errors can be corrected. A second test phase will take place before cascade training (involving all Library staff) commences.

The go-live date is scheduled for mid-November. In the meantime there is much to learn and much to be done. The process is proving to be more detailed and intensive than we imagined and has been made even more complex by the co-operation across four institutions and six databases. Although in some respects this complexity has added to the workload, overall we have benefited from working collaboratively. Ultimately Library users will benefit from a better-integrated system using up-to-date technology with a web-based interface that will be more familiar to users of the Internet. In the meantime, if you see hollow-eyed librarians muttering about spreadsheets and sleepless nights – this is only a phase!

Carol Brammage
New Book and Journal Orders

- Libraries have been allocated monies so orders for new books and journals may now be submitted.
- **Please note:** this year: the cut-off date for new journal subscriptions is **31 July** and for new book orders **31 August 2005**. This is due to the time needed for the installation and testing of our new library system, Unicorn, and concomitant staff training.
- Your patience and cooperation during this critical period is appreciated.

Relocation of Education Books from Westville Campus to Edgewood Campus

All education bookstock held by the Westville Campus Library will be relocated to the Edminson Library at Edgewood in December of this year.

Richard Beharilal

New “Umbrella” Library Web page

The new UKZN Library website routing page, [www.library.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.library.ukzn.ac.za), provides access to all campus library websites: Edgewood; Howard College; Medical School; Pietermaritzburg; Westville.

New Databases

- *Chemical Abstracts* via SciFinder Scholar, is currently on trial till 31 May. Thereafter, access will be on the basis of 5 simultaneous accesses across campuses.
- *Kirk Othmer Encyclopaedia of Industrial Chemistry* is now available online on the Pietermaritzburg campus.
- *DATAD – Database of African Theses and Dissertations* of the Association of African Universities is now accessible from [www.aau.org/datad/database](http://www.aau.org/datad/database)

Proxy Settings Changed

Access to databases on the Edgewood, Howard College and Medical Campuses is now via **proxy.ukzn.ac.za**. The port remains the same (8080). Users are requested to check their proxy settings (Tools, Internet Options, Connections, LAN settings).

How to find e-journals

UKZN Libraries provide electronic access to a wide variety of journals, some of which are available on campus in print as well. Depending on subscription, e-access is provided to tables of contents, abstracts or full text. Off-campus access is not often available.

To access e-journals, use the **UKZN Libraries web page**. Connect to the campus library of your choice, and choose the **e-journals option**. A guide on how to find e-journals is available on the **Guides** section of the Howard College web page.
Congratulations to Our Recent Graduates and Diplomates:

- Ms Brenda Bosman (ILL, PMB): Post Graduate Diploma (Information Studies) with distinction, UKZN
- Mrs Carol Davids (Life Sciences, PMB): Post Graduate Diploma (Information Studies), UKZN
- Mrs Bobby Eldridge (Campbell Collections): BEd. Hons (Adult Education), UKZN
- Mr Ravi Govender (Acquisitions, W): National Diploma in Library and Information Science, Unisa
- Mr Dees Hurriparsad (Periodicals, W): NDipl. Lib. Inf. Sc., Unisa
- Mr Mark Moonsamy (Acquisitions, W): NDipl. Lib. Inf. Sc., Unisa
- Mrs Rebecca Msomi (Music Library, HC): PGD (Inf. Studies), UKZN
- Mrs Roshini Pather (Inf. Services, HC): MIS (summa cum laude), UKZN
- Mrs Anita Somers, (Management Services, W): B.Com, UKZN
- Mrs Rebecca Somers (Music Library, HC): PGD (Inf. Studies), UKZN
- Mrs Roshini Pather (Inf. Services, HC): MIS (summa cum laude), UKZN
- Mrs Liz Van der Berg (Cataloguing, PMB): MA (cum laude), UKZN

Farewell to Mrs Umashanie Reddy

Mrs Reddy, Subject Librarian for Humanities (Social Sciences), Howard College campus, resigned at the end of April after 17 years’ service. She will be emigrating to Canada at the end of May. She joined the Music Library in 1988, obtained her professional qualifications with distinction and worked from 1999 as a subject librarian in the EG Malherbe Library. Her initiative and expertise will be sorely missed. We wish Mrs Reddy all the best for her new life. Until her post can be filled, queries should be directed to Ms Catherine Dubbeld at 2318 or dubbeld@ukzn.ac.za

Library Orientation and Instruction, 2005

Over all our libraries, orientation and library instruction has been provided throughout the first semester, using a wide variety of methods and covering all years of studies and disciplines. Some sessions were voluntary, others compulsory.

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Catherine Dubbeld

Newsletter committee: Catherine Dubbeld (dubbeld@ukzn.ac.za, extn 2318); Pretty Nkosi (nkosip2@ukzn.ac.za, extn 2299) Howard College campus; Rani Moodley (moodleyk@ukzn.ac.za, extn 4372) and Nonhlanhla Ncobo (ncobon15@ukzn.ac.za, extn 4260) Medical School campus; Richard Beharilal (beharilalr@ukzn.ac.za, extn 7450) Westville campus and Rose Kuhn (kuhn@ukzn.ac.za, extn 5904) Pmb campus.

Please contact Gita Ramdass (ramdass@ukzn.ac.za, ext. 5896 (mornings only) Pmb campus if you would prefer a print copy of the newsletter.
Book review

Hayden, Deborah. Pox: genius, madness and the mysteries of syphilis
New York: Basic, 2003
(Pietermaritzburg Campus Main Library) 303.485 HAY E.G Malherbe, Durban Library – on order

At a time when we are fighting a battle against HIV/AIDS with limited resources at our disposal it is interesting and pertinent to look back to the time when another sexually transmitted scourge cut swathes through the population of the world. I refer, of course to ‘the pox’ or syphilis – a malady that was called by Carl Jung “the poison of the darkness” (Hayden, 2003: xviii) - which had no known cure and whose end result was inevitable. Parallels to our own situation in South Africa are unavoidable and that is perhaps why I was interested in reading Pox: genius, madness and the mysteries of syphilis in the first place. Whilst reading, I found myself making comparisons throughout and wondering what history will make of our own management of HIV/AIDS 500 years down the line. Often statements leapt off the page, making me wonder if ideas had indeed changed since the first recorded case of syphilis in 1493. For example, rumours circulating at the beginning of the seventeenth century assured the afflicted that “intercourse with a healthy virgin of either sex” (Hayden, 2003:45) would cure them of disease – a myth we are all too familiar with in South Africa and to which the author alludes.

Moreover, the stigma that our society places on HIV/AIDS sufferers was replicated in the past where syphilis patients faced similar societal castigation. In the nineteenth century, diagnosis of syphilis was a well-kept secret. The disease was socially unacceptable and never named publicly. Allusions were made, hints were hinted at but the name was never mentioned. Often the patient or the family was never given a diagnosis of this disease that would last a lifetime.

There was no known cure for syphilis until the discovery of Penicillin during World War II. One can only hope that modern researchers will find a cure for HIV/AIDS faster than it took to find a cure for syphilis sufferers!

The book begins with an interesting history of the disease, discussing its treatment, cure and management right up until present times. The author then goes on to examine well-known public figures who influenced Western thought and culture to determine how much of their artistic output was influenced by syphilis. In some cases, those discussed in the book (Beethoven, Wilde, Joyce amongst others) were not known syphilitics and this diagnosis is controversial and contested. As no tissue samples are available for testing, Hayden has had to rely on circumstantial evidence and behavioral patterns to link them to the disease. Some known syphilitics considered themselves cured. The author disputes this, endeavoring to prove that the disease, being incurable, resurfaced throughout their lives and had direct bearing on their creative output. Hayden attempts to prove a link with genius and the progression of the disease. However, if conclusive proof is desired, this book won’t supply it.

For example, there is no clear documentary evidence that Hitler suffered from syphilis and the author relies on dubious sources to suggest this. She suggests “the possibility exists that syphilis could have intensified Hitler’s fanaticism, supercharged his brutality, distorted further his already twisted moral sense, and fuelled his terrible temper”(Hayden, 2003: 281). It bothers me that culpability is so easily diverted!

While each story is fascinating, it is difficult to place so much weight on some of the sources the author uses. However, the author does manage to convey the enormity of this disease and how widely it spread across all of society regardless of nationality and class. Deborah Hayden enables us to engage with a controversial topic and stimulates us in the best possible way; to think and to read further.

Margaret Bass