



BY BARBARA FIEHN

Library Automation in K–12

A 2006 Update, Part 2

LAST issue, in Part 1 of my library automation in K–12 update, I introduced some library automation vendors not previously covered in my articles from 2005—Book Systems, Inc.; LIBRARYSOFT; and Surpass Software—and brought you up-to-date on happenings at Innovative Interfaces, Inc.; Sagebrush Corp.; and TLC (The Library Corp.) since I last visited with them. (See “Library Automation in K–12, a 2006 Update—Part 1”; *MULTIMEDIA & INTERNET@SCHOOLS*, September/October 2006.) Now, in Part 2 of the 2006 update, I’ll introduce Softlink and provide news since my earlier coverage of Follett Corp.—including its acquisition of Sagebrush’s library automation products—SirsiDynix, and Mandarin Library Automation, Inc. Also see the sidebar, What’s Happening to the Rest of Sagebrush? on page 32. But first to Softlink.

Softlink

So what is Softlink? The company has a 23-year history in the design and support of its library au-

tomation software. Softlink automation systems are used in more than 108 countries. Somewhat new to the U.S. school market, the Softlink Oliver system allows either a stand-alone or a district automation solution. Oliver is a highly customizable, totally Web-based, integrated automation system.

What makes Oliver special?

Search capabilities. Oliver supports Boolean, proximity, left and right truncation, bracketing, and results-set searching. Guided and Advanced searching screens are available to help novice users carry out complex searches. The federated search function also allows full-text indexing and searching of uploaded PDF and MS Word files.

Integrated software. There are no extra modules to purchase. Oliver provides all basic services such as Circulation, Cataloging, Inventory, Borrower Management, Web PAC (OPAC), and

hundreds of reports. In addition, Oliver provides acquisitions, interlibrary loans, serials management, and bookings. The only add-on is for a Z39.50 cataloging interface. Help screens are integrated into the automation system.

The OPAC. The Oliver OPAC is highly customizable with standard or pictorial view searching. Patrons can receive interest alerts and alerts about newly acquired resources. Using the My Stuff portal, patrons can check the status of requests, renew loans, and manage reserves. The My Stuff features can be customized for or student preference and can be integrated with enterprisewide portals such as Microsoft SharePoint.

Support and Training. Support is available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. PST via telephone, Web chat, or e-mail. Oliver includes a built-in Send for Help feature that allows direct access to Technical Support. The Softlink Web site allows clients to access a personal portal, download reference guides, search the knowledgebase, ask and track questions, request information, and learn about ongoing training Webinars. A quarterly newsletter, *Softlink Times*, includes helpful tips and tricks to using the software. Training options include Web-based and on-site sessions as well as Just-in-Time, Webinar, and video training conducted by M.L.S. or M.L.I.S. degree trainers.

RECONNECTING WITH FOLLETT, SIRSIDYNIX, AND MANDARIN LIBRARY AUTOMATION

Follett Corp.

The big news in July was Follett's acquisition of Sagebrush Library Automation Software. While it was too early for them to talk about their long-term plans for these products, Follett said it intends to provide its new Sagebrush customers with superior service for the foreseeable future and that the company is committed to keeping the Sagebrush customers informed about any future changes or transitions. (For news of the Sagebrush automation products, see my section on Sagebrush in Part 1 of the library automation update series in the September/October 2006 issue of *MMIS*.)

Sales of Follett's browser-based Destiny Library Manager and Destiny Textbook Manager increased in the 2005–2006 school year 300 percent over the previous school year. The 6.5 version update was released in July. My former M.L.I.S. students who are using Destiny in their schools report that they are very happy with the automation system.

Focusing on the changing needs of K–12 education, Follett sees the need for information management, not

Focusing on the changing needs of K–12 education, Follett sees the need for information management, not just library automation.

just library automation. Follett has identified the school library media specialist evolving into the information advocate/manager of the school, working with students and teachers to put quality information at the fingertips of the learner. Providing age- and ability-appropriate, standards-linked materials to support learners and teachers is the new challenge. Follett is focusing on being a partner with education, helping in developing prescriptions to meet the diverse learner needs as both traditional and digital education environments evolve.

SirsiDynix

SirsiDynix was in partnership with Sagebrush Library Automation for the Athena product. Since Follett acquired the Sagebrush automation holdings, SirsiDynix has severed that partnership and launched a new K–12 initiative. I visited with Chuck Leachman, who leads the SirsiDynix K–12 team that is charged with delivering innovative solutions to the K–12 market. He told me Horizon has been designed specifically to meet the workflow needs of the K–12 market with better, more intuitive interfaces.

However, it is the SchoolRooms portal that has the K–12 SirsiDynix team excited. Developed in a collaborative effort with INFOhio, the Information Network for Ohio Schools, SchoolRooms is a comprehensive and integrated multimedia online discovery portal for K–12 schools. This portal allows students and parents to access selected, standards-based content. Teachers, media specialists, and other educators create the virtual Rooms to meet national and state education standards by discipline, providing content in context. The SirsiDynix K–12 team's goal is to help K–12 clients understand how the SchoolRooms portal can facilitate a more collaborative relationship among all interested parties: students, teachers, and parents.

Company	Product
Follett Corp. http://fsc.follett.com	Destiny and now: InfoCentre Accent
Mandarin Library Automation, Inc. http://www.mlasolutions.com	Oasis M3
SirsiDynix http://www.sirsidynix.com	Horizon Unicorn SchoolRooms
Softlink http://www.softlinkint.com	Oliver

Figure 1

Mandarin Library Automation, Inc.

The offering of Mandarin M3 for a free download beginning February 2005 is continuing. This offer has been a big success, making automation financially available to small libraries of many kinds. An annual Service & Update Agreement (SUA) for Mandarin M3 is available for \$575 per site. This is well within the budget limitations of most libraries. M3 is a fully functioning, stand-alone system.

The Web-based Mandarin Oasis offers complete automation functions from a single screen. Brought to market in early 2005, there has been continued development of the system. New upgrades allow deep linking with perpetual links, enhanced OPAC features, easier import and export, and an upgraded reports function that allows printable PDFs.

New add-ons to the Oasis system include Mandarin's PACPortal (OPAC with federated search) and the Pocket Module with Windows Mobile (which offers six primary functions—Loan, Return, Reserve, Renew, In-House Circulation, and Inventory).

Both M3 and Oasis are SIF-compliant applications, which allow M3 and Oasis to interact with other student data applications. It also enables the creation of powerful reports by accessing data from different applications. With M3 or Oasis, you can configure which applications you want to have communication privileges with.

Mandarin will go live with a new Web site during the first quarter of 2007. Both M3 and Oasis will continue to be supported and developed. Future software improvements will include increased wireless environment capability.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE REST OF SAGEBRUSH CORP.?

Sagebrush Books, Sagebrush Library Services, and Sagebrush Viewpoint have not disappeared from the marketplace. They form the core of a new company named Savia LLC.

Savia is focusing on the expansion of the Sagebrush Book and Library services. Their full-service book business includes a user-friendly Web site, dynamic state-standard alignments, a long history of cataloging and processing for school libraries, and a staff of experienced M.L.S.-degreed library professionals available to assist libraries with collection development. Savia plans to make Sagebrush Books better than ever. The book company facilities in Caledonia, Minn., will remain in operation with the same staff as before the sale of Sagebrush Automation.

Savia is also focusing on the growing field of school data management with its information management product Viewpoint. This Web-based tool is designed to help educators manage and interpret student achievement data at the classroom, building, and district level within a secure environment. At the student level, Viewpoint offers management for IEP and 504 and Health AIP, as well as Academic Improvement Plans for students needing targeted instruction to meet AYP. The Reports function provides aggregated and disaggregated data by student, class, school, and district.

The Savia leadership has enthusiastically embraced the new company focus and it is committed to providing outstanding service to book, library, and school customers.

At press time for this article, a new Web site was expected to go live in late September. Check via the old Sagebrush URL, <http://www.sagebrushcorp.com>.

Barbara Fiehn is an assistant professor at Northern Illinois University, College of Education, department of educational technology, research, and assessment. She teaches online searching and school library science classes including MARC cataloging and automation. She may be reached at bfiehn@niu.edu.

A vertical bar on the left side of the page, consisting of a yellow-to-white gradient with a small red diamond at the top.

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

TITLE: Library Automation in K-12: A 2006 Update, Part 2
SOURCE: MultiMedia & Internet @ Schools 13 no6 N/D 2006
PAGE(S): 30-2
WN: 0630508798006

The magazine publisher is the copyright holder of this article and it is reproduced with permission. Further reproduction of this article in violation of the copyright is prohibited.

Copyright 1982-2006 The H.W. Wilson Company. All rights reserved.