



The CONNector

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IN THIS ISSUE

- [*The State Librarian's Column*](#)
a short history of the pioneering of new library services and plans for crucial resource sharing.
- [*State Library Board Notes*](#)
\$3,359,023 in 1999-2000 State Public Library Construction grants was approved.
- *Partnerships*
 - [*Canton Public Library*](#)
expansion for greater accessibility and functionality.
 - [*Electronic Resources*](#)
the Web Reference Resources portion of the State Library's homepage has a new link for on-site users to access popular titles once available only in print.
- *Honoring the Past*
 - [*Children's Services*](#)
A short history of library services for children and attitudes about reading.
 - [*Godard Looks Ahead*](#)
George Godard's perspective on challenges facing the State Library in 1900.
 - [*Preservation/Bindery*](#)
An in-depth report on the process of binding books, paperbacks, journals and periodicals.
- *Creating the Future*
 - [*Connecticut Digital Library*](#)
The reQuest is off and running!
 - [*Information Technology*](#)
A review of the progress made in information technology at CSL.
 - [*Records Management*](#)
Concerns about machine-readable records and long-term and legal implications.
 - [*MLS Online*](#)
The Connecticut State University System (CSU) offers the first opportunity in New England to access an accredited Masters in Library Science (MLS) online.
 - [*Digital Talking Books*](#)
Constantly changing audio technology has required the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) to develop a plan for the production of digital talking books.

This newsletter is published quarterly in January, April, July, November. Your contribution and comments are welcome. The deadline for contributions is the 20th of the month prior to publication. Please send them to Editor, CSL, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford CT 06106-1537 or email [Bonnie Delaney](mailto:Bonnie.Delaney).

- ▶ [Home Page](#) ■ [Hours](#) ■ [Directions](#) ■ [About CSL](#) ■ [Using The Library](#)
 - ▶ [Search the State Library Catalog](#) ■ [Search the State Library Website](#) ■ [CSL Research Resources](#) ■ [iCONN \(CT Digital Library\)](#)
 - ▶ [Government Information Services](#) ■ [History & Genealogy](#) ■ [Law & Legislative Reference](#) ■ [Library For The Blind & Physically Handicapped](#)
 - ▶ [Museum of Connecticut History](#) ■ [Public Records](#) ■ [Services To Libraries](#) ■ [State Archives](#) ■ [Connecticut Heritage Foundation](#)
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The State Librarian's Column

Kendall F. Wiggin
Connecticut State Librarian



As the clock starts ticking down on the 20th century few of us are ready to predict the future, but I venture to say that libraries in Connecticut are at a crossroads.

Back in January 1901 R.R. Bowker did not want to prophesize the future either, but in the January 1901 issue of the *Library Journal* he did write that it was "difficult to imagine that the next hundred years can do more, if so much, in invention within the library field as has been done in the past twenty-five years." He went on to say that the last years of the 19th century had been ones of pioneering and that the years to come should be those of fruition.

Many of the pioneering efforts of the 19th century did come to fruition as the 20th century progressed. But Bowker might be very surprised to see that the pioneering of new library services did not stop with the close of the 19th century. Nor did the invention of exciting new information technologies. Connecticut libraries, in particular, have pioneered many new services in the area of resource sharing and have been early adopters of new information technologies. The Connecticut Union List of Serials (CULS), Connecticard, Connecticar (C-Car), the Cooperating Library Service Units (CLSUs), the Connecticut Library and Information Network (CLIN), the Connecticut Library Network (reQuest) and the regional automation systems are just a few examples of the way resource sharing has been pioneered in Connecticut. The Partnership of Connecticut Libraries (PCL) was the most recent of these efforts.

Several factors have, at times, tempered our pioneering efforts. In his paper, *Steady Habits and Wooden Nutmegs; Connecticut Libraries in the Year 2000* (CSL, 1990), retired UConn Library Director Norman D. Stevens noted that "Connecticut has a reputation for being a conservative state with well established institutions that are slow to change." Connecticut is also a state that is comprised of many independently governed libraries. Neither our reputation for steady habits nor our heritage of local control should hold us back. They just make it more interesting.

State and federal funds have been a catalyst for many of these pioneering efforts. But the state funding has not been there to sustain these efforts. This has put pressure on the federal dollars, which in turn has limited the funds needed to stimulate and support the development of new resource sharing efforts.

A window of opportunity has opened. Lt. Governor Rell has recommended to the Governor the establishment of the Connecticut Education Network as well as a digital library. Connecticut Public Television is about to move into the digital television arena. The time to craft a new vision for library resource sharing that meets the needs of a 21st century Connecticut is now.

I have asked both the Advisory Council on Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) and the Connecticut Digital Library (reQuest) Board to convene whatever task forces are necessary to draft a blueprint for statewide multi-type resource sharing by this summer. Your feedback to the draft plan will be essential as we work to reach consensus by this fall. This is an aggressive time frame, but we have little time to waste. The challenge will be to develop a plan that allows libraries to adapt quickly to the increasingly rapid rate of technological change, is sustainable and technology neutral.

I encourage your active participation as together we plan for an exciting future.

Connecticut State Library Board Notes

The State Library Board met on November 22, 1999. Judge Joseph P. Flynn was welcomed as the newest member of the Board. Judge Flynn replaces Judge John Ronan as the appointee of the Chief Court Administrator, Judge Robert Leuba. The major item of business was the approval of \$3,359,023 in 1999-2000 State Public Library Construction grants. (See below)

In other business, State Librarian Kendall Wiggin reported on the State Library's Staff Development Day. On November 17th 133 State Library staff members met in Keeney Memorial Hall at the Old Wethersfield Historical Society. The day afforded staff the opportunity to meet each other, work at teambuilding, and to identify areas for improvement. The staff also enjoyed a thought provoking talk by Arnold Hirshon, Executive Director of NELINET. Mr. Wiggin thanked the Board for making the day possible by allowing the State Library to close all of its facilities for that day.

Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) Chair Richard Lowenstein distributed the meeting notes from the October 20th ACLPD Planning Day to the Board for their review. The Council is re-evaluating its priorities in an effort to channel its energies more effectively. Mr. Lowenstein welcomed the Board's suggestions or comments on what ACLPD could do to continually focus in the direction that the State Library Board is moving. ACLPD has decided to have a representative at each State Library Board meeting, in the future. Regular meetings of the Board for the year 2000 are scheduled for January 24, March 27, May 22, July 24, September 25, and November 27.

Towns	Projects	Total Cost Of Projects	Grants Awarded
	CATEGORY #1 PROJECTS (projects that create additional usable library space, such as new buildings, additions and renovations):		
Granby	Renovation of non-library space in Granby Public Library for children's room.	\$485,500	\$160,871.46
Hartford	Expansion and renovation of Goodwin Branch Library.	\$1,553,000	\$500,000.00
Norwalk	Expansion and renovation of South Norwalk Branch Library.	\$2,441,307	\$500,000.00
Old Saybrook	Expansion and renovation of Acton Public Library.	\$2,881,788	\$500,000.00
Oxford	New construction of Oxford Public Library.	\$4,146,500	\$500,000.00
Plainville	Expansion and renovation of Plainville Public Library.	\$4,900,010	\$500,000.00
Waterbury	New construction of WOW Neighborhood Library Learning Center.	\$2,238,215	\$500,000.00
	CATEGORY #2 PROJECTS (projects that make buildings ADA compliant, correct fire or building code violations, remodel to accommodate new technologies or provide for energy conservation):		
Middlefield	Remodeling (new circulation and children's desks)	\$30,000	\$10,000.00
Middletown	Remodeling (Gateway Center and reference)	\$300,000	\$100,000.00
New Canaan	Remodeling (circulation and reference areas)	\$99,623	\$33,207.00
North Canaan	Handicapped access (stairs, elevator, bathroom)	\$165,500	\$54,945.00
Grand Total			\$3,359,023.46

State Public Library Construction grant awards may fund one-third (1/3) of the total cost of a project, with a maximum grant of \$500,000 and a minimum grant of \$3,333. Next year's budget is projected to be \$2.5 million for FY01. Grant applications are due September 1, 2000. If you would like more information about this grant program, contact [Mary Louise Jensen](#), Building Consultant, Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106, phone: 860-566-2712.

Canton Public Library/Community Center

Mary Louise Jensen, Building Consultant

On December 11, 1999, the Canton Public Library/Community Center was dedicated. Canton is located in the Farmington Valley, 14 miles west of Hartford, with a population of 8,500 living in an area of 25 square miles. The town was established in 1737, and was developed from four distinct villages which remain today. The Canton Public Library/Community Center is located in a residential community across the street from the Canton Intermediate School and within a short walking distance of the high school.



Canton Public Library children's room

The Canton Public Library, which was formerly housed in a 2,998 square foot building in the center of town, shares a converted elementary school of 35,000 square feet with the Senior Center, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Community Center. The library takes up 16,209 square feet of the building. The additional 13,211 square feet will enable the library to provide the services the community needs well into the new millennium. The total cost of the library portion of the project, \$2,408,904, was partially funded with a \$500,000 State Public Library Construction Grant.

It is hard to believe that the open adult service area was previously classrooms with a centralized corridor, and the children's room was a gym, cafeteria, and multipurpose room for the school. Except for the librarian's office and part of the technical services area, the building had the structural advantage of being built on a slab and was therefore capable of supporting the stacks without reinforcement. A structural disadvantage was that the classroom walls were load-bearing. Because the design of the adult services area called for an open area, portions of the walls were removed while sections had to remain.

The architect, Norman Baier from Galliher, Baier, and Best Architects, designed a very appealing library and community center. The high gym ceiling with glass blocks on one side was left in the children's area, and white clouds were suspended to create a sky effect. There is a story hour and craft room attached to the children's room. The library also has two quiet study rooms, a local history room and a meeting room that seats 40. The community center has an additional seven meeting rooms. The entire library is designed to accommodate evolving technology requirements.



Canton Public Library circulation area

Since there is parking in the front and back of the building, there are two outside library entrances opposite each other. An interior entrance runs perpendicular to the outside entrances and provides access to the library from the library meeting room and community center. The circulation desk staff are able to supervise all three entrances.

If you are interested in more information about the Canton Public Library, go to the library's [webpage](#).

Electronic Resources

Joanne Turschman, Law/Legislative Reference Unit

The Connecticut State Library is the principal library for all branches of state government. The Information Services Division provides reference services and research resources to state employees and to the general public. People with State Library cards can access the dozens of computer terminals in the three public areas of the library (to obtain a CSL card, complete an application at the circulation desk and present a CT. photo id). As the trend from print to web-based products gathered speed, the State Library developed selection criteria and procedures to ease the transition and provide opportunities for resource sharing and cooperative purchasing within this new medium.

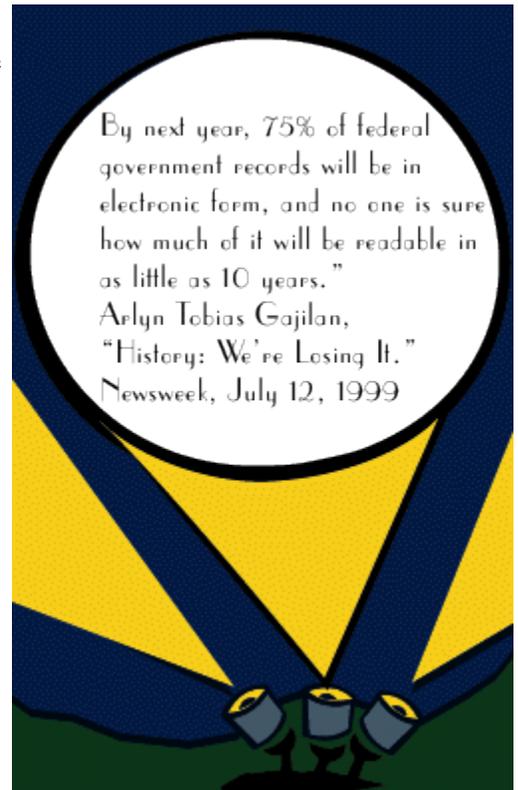
Electronic Aids

The Web Reference Resources portion of the State Library's homepage is the link for on-site users to access some of the more popular titles once available only in print. Aside from having Internet access, public workstations are currently loaded with ReQuest (our statewide catalog), *The Hartford Courant*, *Biography & Genealogy Master Index*, *Britannica*, *CIS Congressional Universe*, *Ebscohost*, *Encyclopedia Americana*, *Firstsearch*, *Gale Ready Reference Shelf*, *Reference USA*, *Contemporary Authors*, and *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*.

CSL Services

Some terminals are designated for the card catalog (CONSULS), or CD products specific to the needs of the department in which they are located. For example, The History & Genealogy Unit features *Family Search*, *Social Security Index*, and *International Genealogical Index*. Government Information Services, a depository for State and Federal documents, has compact discs on every subject relevant to government interests, as well as CIS Congressional Master File, US Government Periodical Index, and Connecticut Data Manager. The Law & Legislative Reference Unit has *LegalTrac*, *Law Office Information Systems*, *UPA Major Studies & Issue Briefs of the Congressional Research Service*, *Medicare/Medicaid Guides*, and *Tax Analyst*. Print requests other than those from the card catalog are sent to dedicated high speed printers and are paid for with a copy card at fifteen cents per page.

While the State Library is committed to providing information services in current and emerging electronic formats, the challenge to preserve primary sources in Law, Archives, History & Genealogy, and Government publications leaves the patron in the enviable position of having the best of both worlds.



By next year, 75% of federal government records will be in electronic form, and no one is sure how much of it will be readable in as little as 10 years."
Arlyn Tobias Gajilan,
"History: We're Losing It."
Newsweek, July 12, 1999

"As a Rule, They Read Too Much"

Linda Williams, Children's Services Librarian

As we glide, more easily than we had expected, into the 21st century it seems time to reflect upon the road we have traversed in library services to children. Where were we 100 years ago? And where are we now?

The latter half of the 19th century was the time for coming to terms with the fact that children were a unique population requiring different books and a different type of library service. Until the end of that century, most libraries of any kind did not even allow anyone under the age of 14 to cross their thresholds. Most children had access to very few books and what books *were* available to them were primarily religious and moral texts available through the "Sunday School" libraries.



Robin Hood and Little John
retold by Barbara Cohen,
illustrated by David Ray
(Philomel 1995, cover art
reprinted with permission)

Spotty attempts at library service to children took place around New England over the century, but it was only after the formation of the American Library Association in 1876 that serious discussion among librarians rooted the idea. Between 1880 and 1910 many city libraries planned separate rooms specifically for children's materials.

One pioneer in this new library development was Caroline Hewins (1846-1926), daughter of a Boston haberdasher. Hewins was librarian from 1875-78 at the Young Men's Institute in Hartford which merged with the Hartford Library Association in 1878 and in 1892 became a free library - the Hartford Public Library. She was a member of the new American Library Association. In 1882 Hewins's list of recommended reading entitled *Books for the young : a guide for parents and children* was published. Hewins enticed children to read good books by including clubs, booktalks, storytelling, nature walks, a doll collection and dramatics in library activities. She led in the movement for school/public library cooperation by providing classroom libraries and reading lists for teachers.

In an article written in the 1878 *Library Notes* Hewins said "Much time and thought have been given to suggesting in this bulletin good books for boys and girls. **As a rule, they read too much** (emphasis added). Our accounts show that one boy has taken 102 storybooks in six months, and one girl 112 novels in the same time. One book a week is certainly enough, with school studies."

This quote provides strong contrast, in attitudes about reading, between the 19th century and the end of the 20th. While the late 19th century found libraries in the early stages of providing service to children who "read too much," the dawn of the 21st finds us struggling to entice them to read because they don't read enough. We who dedicate ourselves to serving children in libraries are committed to the belief, well supported by current research, that children need to read *more* in order to adequately prepare themselves for life in the 21st century. We do many of the same things innovated by Caroline Hewins book talks, clubs, storytelling, - for many of the same reasons. But we do them for children changed by decades of "other media." While the children of the latter 20th century have many enticements to keep them from reading, reading *was* the enticement of the late 19th century.

Our challenge as we embrace this new century filled with the sparkle of "other media" will be to convince children that that sparkle cannot compete with the dazzle they create by combining the reading of books with the sparkle of their own imaginations. In this effort we are still of the same mind as Caroline Hewins was a hundred years ago.



The Merry Adventures of
Robin Hood by Howard Pyle
(Scribner's 1911, c1883)

Editor's note: Caroline M. Hewins was noted in the December 1999 edition of *American Libraries* as one of the 100 most important leaders we had in the 20th century.

Godard Looks Ahead

Mark Jones, State Archivist

In this issue, it is fitting that we look back at the 1900 report of the state librarian written by George S. Godard. In 1898, Charles J. Hoadly hired George Godard as an assistant. In 1898, Hoadly became very sick, and Acting Librarian Godard wrote the report for the year ending September 30, 1900, intended as a special brief to the legislature for more support. In it, he gave his perspective on challenges facing the State Library. A couple excerpts will show that problems often get recycled. At the end of this century, we are still faced with similar challenges. Remember that in 1900 the State Library was in the Capitol.



The old State Library; this room currently serves as the Senate Chambers of the Capitol

Collecting Policy

"The process of specializing our libraries to increase their utility is a necessary step of human progress. As the wants of society become more complex and new centers have arisen each possessing its own libraries, the State Library which might in the early days receive everything, can make itself more useful by selecting its specialties and leaving to others more favorably situated to be more general in their aims."

In other words, Godard addressed the issue of a need for a specific collecting policy. "There are two lines" of collecting, he wrote that "have a peculiar and special place in a State Library, viz:-Whatever pertains to the science of government for the aid of those who are to administer government, and whatever illustrates the history, character, resources and development of the State."

Space

"When the library was brought [sic] to its present spacious room from its congested quarters in the Old State House, it was believed that abundant provision had been made for the shelving of books for years to come. Not only has all the shelving then provided been occupied, but other cases since added are also filled to overflowing, to such an extent, that for some time the work of the Librarian has been not only much increased and seriously handicapped but as many of the books are arranged in heaps or in two or more rows upon a shelf they are thereby exposed to much extra handling and wear."

Elsewhere in the report, Godard mentions that the books and pamphlets "are stored in four rooms" in the Capitol. He drops the hint in 1900 that a separate building is needed. It took ten years to fund and construct the current structure at 231 Capitol Avenue.

Connecticut History

"The fact that a large amount of historical matter relative to the State and its people is fast disappearing, either by destruction or by purchase by persons and institutions outside of the State, emphasizes the fact that Connecticut is not living up to her opportunities and duty."

"The State Library is the center [for Connecticut items], and in it should be collected not only records of the past, but also of the future. As the value of this record depends upon the completeness of the material collected, too much attention cannot be given to it."

Charles J. Hoadly died on October 19, 1900. Nineteen days later, George Godard became the State Librarian. In this year, therefore, we acknowledge the century anniversary of Godard's appointment.

Preservation Office Sends New and Old Books To The Bindery

Jane Cullinane, Preservation Librarian

Binding and rebinding are used by the Library to help preserve information. Paperbacks, journals and other periodicals, as well as books needing new covers, are sent to a commercial bindery to get hard cover bindings. An entire year or volume of a periodical is collected before sending the issues to be bound together. Binding issues together helps insure that none will get lost over time. Also, the bound volume's hard cover supports and protects the text, helping the information to remain available for much longer.



Jamie Ortiz of the Preservation Office prepares books for binding.

The State Library also binds the hearings and proceedings of the Connecticut General Assembly. Many documents produced by Connecticut State agencies are bound to preserve them for future researchers. New paperback publications, such as city directories, are bound to increase their shelf life. All of these are examples of reference materials the State Library intends to keep permanently.

Old books and books with worn bindings are sent to be rebound because it is cheaper to rebound a volume than to replace it. Old, rotted leather bindings, worn-out cloth bindings, and books where some pages or the entire text block has fallen out of the cover are all candidates for re-binding. Before rebinding a worn out book, several factors must be considered. The original paper must still be flexible and the inner margin must be large enough; usually one half inch is sufficient. If the paper is too brittle, or the margin too narrow, or if the original binding should be kept for its aesthetic or historical value, the Preservation Office will not rebound the book.

While a new book bound by the publisher might be worn out after circulating 25 times, a book with a library binding is expected to circulate at least 100 times. Today's library bindings are sturdy, durable and flexible. The library binding industry adheres to a standard that specifies the durability of the materials used when making a binding. A well-bound book will open easily and lie open unaided.

The 9th edition of the standard for library binding is due soon. Look at the [National Information Standards Organization \(NISO\)](#). Search for the keyword "binding." For a list of binderies that adhere to the standard, look at the [Library Binding Institute's homepage](#) and click on "Members."

During December 1999, 472 volumes were prepared and sent to the commercial bindery. For every volume sent to the bindery, two information entries are made. One, on the bindery software, tells the bindery what we want done. The other, on the State Library catalog, tells CSL staff and patrons when the item is due back from the bindery.

If you have questions about binding and rebinding call 860-757-6524 or e-mail jcullinane@cslib.org.

Connecticut Digital Library Update

Sharon Brettschneider, Director, Division of Library Development

The Connecticut Digital Library is off and running! As of January 1st, 188 libraries are participating in reQuest. This includes 111 public, 45 school, 20 academic and 12 special libraries. Check out the [reQuest statewide catalog](#).

Statewide Catalog

One hundred and forty-five libraries have been trained and have begun offering interlibrary loan through reQuest. This service allows their patrons to search our statewide catalog, place requests for materials, and track the status of those requests, all on the web. Over two thousand ILL requests were placed during the month of December. We expect this number to grow as libraries publicize this service to their patrons. One hundred libraries are using cataloging services: WebCat allows them to use the statewide catalog to add, delete or update their holdings and download MARC records into their local automation system; CAT allows for full cataloging and MARC editing capability with access to the 3.2 million records in the statewide catalog as well as the 8 million records in the LC MARC catalog. [View information on how your library can participate](#) as well as a reQuest *Frequently Asked Questions*, or call Bill Sullivan at 1-888-reQuest-1222.

reQuest Database Program

The Statewide Commercial Database program is saving Connecticut libraries over \$1.5 million this year. Three hundred and sixty four libraries are taking advantage of discounted subscriptions to commercial databases for a total saving of \$254,000. Discounts are currently available for the *Associated Press/Photo Archive*, the *Britannica Online*, *Electric Library*, *Galenet* databases and *Grolier Online*. In addition, two hundred and seventy-seven libraries are now participating in the free, state subsidized access to the following *Galenet* databases: *Contemporary Authors*, *Discovering US History*, *Discovering Science* and the *Gale Ready Reference Shelf*. The savings realized under this program totals \$1,381,983. [Find out online how your library can participate](#) or call Jane Emerson 1-888-reQuest-1222.

Information Technology at Connecticut State Library

Rich Kingston, Director, Administrative Services

Often in government, we do not take the time to review how far we have come. We are most concerned with where we are going. This is especially true in the case of information technology (IT). With ever evolving information technologies, we sometimes feel we cannot afford to take the time to look back at where we were just a few short years ago. However, we cannot predict how we will do in the future if we have no idea of how well we did in the past.



The most recent Connecticut State Library (CSL) planning document outlined the IT status of the State Library in 1996 and set forth its development plans for the following three years. In addition to meeting the challenges of the Year 2000, CSL needed to clearly define how automation technology could best be used and how best to meet the ever growing need for accurate and readily available information.

After defining where the Library wanted to go and how it wanted to get there, the need to set objectives became the priority. As government often works, not every one of these objectives was funded and it was often left to

the Library staff's imagination as to how all of the objectives could ever be met. With more of a will than a way, CSL set about trying to get ready for the 21st century.

The funded projects moved along at a good pace. CSL participation in the Connecticut State University Library System (CONSULS) was made possible through bonding funds.

The reQuest/Online Pilot, a project to deliver the reQuest statewide library catalog with associated interlibrary loan and cataloging services in an online environment (services which were previously available only on CD-ROM), was successfully implemented. The reQuest/Online Pilot has also led the way to the development and implementation of the Connecticut Digital Library (reQuest). [See separate article.](#))

The final funded project, the creation of an Information Technology Training Laboratory, was completed in 1998 and has offered training to library professionals throughout the state.

The State Library was not content with accomplishing those objectives for which money was available. CSL took on the challenge of meeting its unfunded objectives through the creative use of emerging technologies and the existing, although limited, funding. Although the reQuest project was fully funded, reQuest was not. Nevertheless, skillful application of existing state and federal funding has allowed reQuest to become a significant presence on the World Wide Web. The Library's electronic connection to the State Legislature has allowed both bodies to benefit significantly. Conversion of agency information resources into digitized format, although in its nascent stages, is progressing and will be in both our short and long-term futures.

The State Library has also managed to upgrade its entire fleet of desktop computers and peripherals. Scanners, high-speed printers, and digital cameras once thought beyond our reach, are now commonplace. Not only has the Library established the Pentium class of computers as its "low end" of desktops, we have also been able to upgrade and expand our computer backbone with new servers, routers, hubs, etc. Both staff and patrons have benefited from this modernization effort.

With all that lies ahead, let's at least take this moment to appreciate how far we have come!

Web Sites to check out:

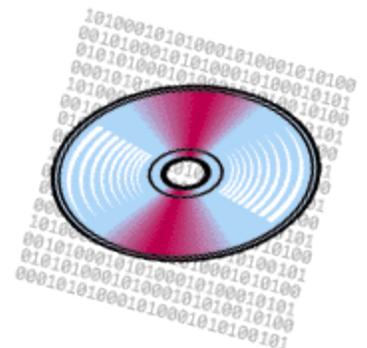
- [reQuest](#)
- [CSL](#)
- [reQuest](#)

Records and Information Management in the New Millennium

Eunice DiBella, Public Records Administrator

The new millennium is a metaphor for progress, change, and doom. As our own millennium ends, many are caught up in the hope and foreboding of continuing technological change. We know that progress is good, but we have a feeling that the pace of technological change has increased beyond anyone's capacity and skill to manage it. Y2K is a technological issue that concerns records managers and the public alike.

Information is a valuable commodity, but records creators who utilize technology are losing control of the data they create and manage. Let us take, for example,



machine-readable records. These can come in a variety of formats, but all share one common element: the need for a machine and in the case of electronic records, software and software documentation, to retrieve, read, and interpret the data. Technological obsolescence, therefore, becomes a crucial issue for records creators and managers but must be dealt with at the stage of planning for new technology.

The Office of the Public Records Administrator and State Archives has produced or has been engaged in efforts to produce usable policies in the areas of optical imaging and electronic communication (e-mail). The office's optical imaging statement is entitled, "[Optical Imaging Technology and Public Records: Policy Statement](#)," and can be found online. The office has also issued a policy for the retention of e-mail by state and local governments entitled, "Electronic and Voice Mail, A Management and Retention Guide for State and Municipal Government Agencies." It can be found at the same URL. In addition, the Public Records Administrator has served on a State government committee to establish guidelines and minimum requirements for the acceptable use of state-provided (e-mail) services. The "[Electronic Mail Acceptable Use Policy](#)" is available online.

Numerous legal issues have appeared as a result of the creation of electronic records. For many years, for instance, the State of Connecticut did not recognize the legality of electronic signatures, but in 1999 the General Assembly passed Public Act 99-155, "An Act Concerning Electronic Records and Signatures." This bill authorizes the use of electronic signatures on state government records.

Our century inherited the previous millennium's faith in technological development. As our era ends, people are more skeptical than their forbears about the promises made with each new invention. Records Managers, archivists, and librarians are beginning to understand the problems posed by machine-readable records and their long-term implications. This office will continue to look for practical solutions. No one can predict the future, but technological change will continue. The new millennium is here.

A Masters in Library Science On Grounds, Online or Both?

Bonnie Delaney, Editor

The Connecticut State University System (CSU) offers the first opportunity in New England to access an accredited Masters in Library Science (MLS) online. This program integrates library science, information science, instructional technology and offers preparation for careers in various types of libraries. Southern Connecticut University's MLS program, whether taken online or on ground, is accredited by the American Library Association.

At present there are several **online** degree programs offered in Connecticut, and this is one of two master's level degree programs offered through the World Wide Web. Students have a choice; they can take their MLS courses fully on ground, fully on line or in a combination that best fits their schedule. Students can log on at any time, and not necessarily at the same time as their classmates or instructor. Class discussions can be held through e-mail, chat rooms or threaded discussions where the professor posts a question or topic and students respond at a time that fits their schedule.

School library media specialists are in short supply. Perhaps the services of *OnlineCSU*, the electronic classroom for four Connecticut State Universities will help to close this gap. This service first appeared on the Internet for the fall 1998 semester with 71 students. By the fall 1999, 377 students enrolled - a 531% increase. And the information age has taken yet another turn. For more information stop by:
www.OnlineCSU.ctstateu.edu.

Digital Talking Books and the Future

Carol Taylor, Director, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The constantly changing audio technology has required the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) to develop a plan for the production of digital talking books in the future. A digitally based system will improve the sound quality and give the talking book user the ability to move through the recording with ease and access the full text of a book in electronic form to allow for keyword searching and spelling of the words.

The first major step by NLS in its move toward the digital format was to establish a committee to oversee the development of a national digital talking-book standard under the auspices of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO). The full committee is made up of consumers, talking book producers, service providers and other interested parties. Another major step in the development has been the installation of a digital duplication system in a new state-of-the-art digital recording facility in Cincinnati. Wells B. Kormann, chief of the NLS Materials Development Division and chair of the Library's Digital Audio Development committee says that, "... there remains much work to be done in determining how and with what delivery mechanism digital talking books will eventually become available to users. Having digital recording and duplication standards in place within the next several years will allow NLS to build digital archives of talking books and magazines. This will be important when we are able to offer patrons access to digital recordings in the future."

Last year NLS began offering braille readers of the service digital braille books accessed on the Internet. Individuals, schools or libraries may download or read on-line more than 2,700 braille titles using braille embossers and/or refreshable braille displays. "This is the first massive effort internationally to make braille book collections accessible on the Internet," says Frank Kurt Cylke, Director of NLS. This achievement reflects the Library of Congress commitment to make its collections more usable and accessible to eligible users. It also reflects the first initiative by NLS to distribute its collections of books and magazines in digital formats to its borrowers."

A detailed report, "*Digital Talking Books: Planning for the Future*", is available upon request, in Braille, large print or cassette formats, from the NLS Reference Section, Washington, D.C., 20542; (202) 707-9275; E-mail: nls@loc.gov; Fax (202)707-0712.