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A Short History of SUNY-Wide Library Automation Programs

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OLS -- LAIP -- SLSC -- OLIS



SLAM



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A Slightly Longer History...

The SUNYergy "[Editorial Review Board](#)" (!) felt as if it might be useful and instructive to review briefly where we've been vis-a-vis SUNY-wide library automation efforts. This view of history is solely that of the SUNYergy editors; additions and corrections to this historical view are hereby enthusiastically solicited.

First there was Glyn Evans' Office of Library Services and SUNY/OCLC. (As of April 1, 1999 SUNY/OCLC is called [Nylink, New York Library Network](#).)

In the later 1980s efforts were underway to organize the Library Automation Implementation Program (LAIP). LAIP eventually involved 40 of the SUNY libraries utilizing a common software/hardware "platform". One of the requirements of LAIP was to take advantage of existing technical infrastructure. This included Digital hardware (eventually Alpha processors), the VMS (now OpenVMS) operating system and the [SUNYNet](#) telecommunications network.

A significant development occurred early on in LAIP history when provisions were made for the community colleges to participate. Several SUNY library directors including Ed Rivenburgh (now at SUNY Geneseo, previously at Community College of the Finger Lakes) were instrumental in seeing that LAIP participation was opened up to the community colleges. Twenty-two of the 40 LAIP libraries are at community colleges.

Members of the SUNY Library Support Center worked with the software vendor (Multilis) to provide implementation, training, documentation and support services. But LAIP resulted in more than just financial

assistance (for hardware, software, and network connections) and implementation services. Participation in the program resulted in a strong sense of community: librarians were working together on common problems and sharing solutions. Feelings of isolation that can overwhelm librarians at smaller institutions were mitigated by that sense of community. SUNY folks at one library learned of commonly shared and unique circumstances found at other SUNY libraries. The collaboration and cooperation developed in LAIP produced both tangible benefits and less tangible, but no less valuable, effects

The SLSC was not permitted to replace staff members that left SUNY. Down to two people, the day-to-day technical support of the LAIP libraries' use of the Multilis software became infeasible. This ongoing support was transferred to the vendor (now DRA). The SLSC, now Office of Library and Information Services, continues to provide implementation services (new software modules, software upgrades, training, database maintenance and enhancement, authority control services, etc.) but not day-to-day technical support.

[LASG](#) began SLAM. The SUNY Library Automation Migration process was never envisioned as "LAIP's new system". The intention has always been to have as many SUNY libraries using the same LMS as possible. This notion received considerable impetus on April 28, 1998 with the SUNY Council of Library Directors' [resolution](#) urging the adoption of a common library system. As [reported elsewhere](#) in this issue of SUNYergy -- significant momentum in this regard has been seen.

With an overwhelming majority of SUNY libraries using the same LMS a major part of *SUNYConnect* would be in place: fully utilize the SUNY library collections by allowing any and all SUNY students, staff and faculty to have access to and borrowing privileges for library resources across the whole SUNY system.



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