



SUNY Connect Core Database Selection and Recommendation Process *by Larry Randall, SUNYConnect Project Coordinator*

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It was 1995 when the SUNY Office of Library and Information Services first began to subscribe to selected electronic resources for SUNY-wide use. Since then, the trickle of such resources available has grown to a flood, and it has become considerably more complicated to evaluate and select from among the burgeoning list of products.

By the beginning of 2001, it was evident that the SUNY Library Contracts Advisory Team (SLiCAT) needed to step back and take a more systematic and comprehensive look at the e-resource market place in an effort to identify a set of core resources that would meet the needs of the broadest possible range of SUNY campuses and users. This involved reexamining current SUNYConnect offerings as well as looking at newer products or products not previously considered.



By mid-2001, SLiCAT had compiled a master list of some 280 electronic resources to review for possible addition to SUNYConnect. It also identified factors to be used in selecting candidates from among those resources for a core database list. Among these factors were: 1) the relative strength and breadth of SUNY programs in dozens of subject areas as indicated by degrees awarded, and 2) the pattern of existing SUNY library procurements of electronic resources and the collection gaps those libraries thought important to fill, as indicated by two different surveys carried out in Fall 2000 and Fall 2001.

Working from the master list, SLiCAT identified a core of 57 electronic resources believed to be of greatest importance to SUNY library users. SLiCAT further refined the core list by assigning a priority to each product on a scale of 1 through 4, with 1 indicating the highest priority. Chief among the top priority resources on the list were general full-text journal databases available from such major vendors as EBSCO, Gale Group, and ProQuest. These vendors also offer other products of high interest to SUNYConnect in areas such as business, nursing and allied health, the social sciences and education.

At its January 2002 meeting, the SUNYConnect Advisory Council (S.A.C.) reviewed the core database list and requested that SLiCAT develop criteria and a process for selecting and recommending specific top priority products. In response, SLiCAT has begun developing a set of criteria to be used in evaluating the products to be reviewed. To this end, SLiCAT is examining existing criteria for possible modification and use. These include documents used by the University at Albany, and by the [California State University system](#).

It is expected that the criteria will be in place by early April, enabling the review process to proceed through the remainder of the spring into early summer. Currently subscribed SUNYConnect e-resources will be evaluated along with others on the core list to insure that, if continued, those resources are most suitable to meet SUNY needs

within budgetary limits. Wherever possible, SLiCAT will prefer packages of e-resources, i.e., combinations of two or more products from the same vendor, which in toto most completely meet the requirements of the *SUNYConnect* "core." Also, as a result of SUNY/NYS contracting requirements, procurement preference will be given to those electronic resources already available through the [Nylink Cooperative Purchasing Program](#). Although Nylink has had a liaison to SLiCAT for some time, additional regular meetings with Nylink are being scheduled to insure that it is fully informed as to the resources under review and to provide Nylink with ample lead-time for any vendor negotiations that may need to be undertaken.

[SLiCAT seeks comments](#) and suggestions from the SUNY library community in the course of its decision-making process. In addition, recognizing the economic benefits of coordinating with other major groups in New York State, OLIS and SLiCAT have been working closely with their counterparts in the City University of New York to achieve maximum possible agreement on the selection criteria developed and the recommendations put forward. Similarly, efforts are being made to remain current with the [State Library's EmpireLink](#) program to reduce to a minimum the possibility of duplication or overlap.

SLiCAT plans to complete its evaluation process in time to submit its recommendations to S.A.C. for its August meeting with changes to the *SUNYConnect* database offerings being made in the subsequent year.



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