

MEMO

To: State Library Commission
From: Bruce Newell
Re: Montana Library Network Report
Date: July 26, 2000

The last several months have been a fairly active time for the MLN.

- The MLN web gateway is up and running, providing catalog access to Montana Z39.50 libraries, access to OCLC's WorldCat, and Gale's InfoTrac databases.
- Each Montana library has been mailed a copy of a password granting access to the entire MLN web gateway.
- We've negotiated the first-ever statewide fixed rate contract with OCLC.
- An MLN/OCLC enrollment packet (with brochure and enrollment form) has been sent to each Montana library and school district.
- The MLN web site has been updated to reflect both new material and secure access to the web gateway.
- The shared catalog project on the Highline has moved forward. We anticipate the Havre-Hill Library will share their catalog with four public libraries, in: Big Sandy, Harlem, Chester, and Chinook.
- Montanaiana re-grants have been awarded to the Yellowstone Art Museum, Renne Library, MSU-Billings, and the Mansfield Library. Projects include (in the order of the previous sentence): an online catalog of western art, photographs of the Haynes family, now-and-then photographs of Yellowstone County, and digitizing the book, *Progressive Men of Montana*.
- Training venues for ten MLN/OCLC training sessions have been selected and preliminary information has been sent to Montana librarians via the MSL Big Sky Libraries newsletter and wired-mt listserv.
- I've traveled to the Highline several times, and to the Pacific Northwest Library Association meeting in Kelwana, B.C., to speak about the MLN and our progress.
- I've been elected to the OCLC Users' Council. This group advises the OCLC Board of Trustees. This will be an opportunity to press for more 'Montana-friendly' services and fee structures.
- We're still trying to hire a programmer to assist with the web gateway, with shared catalogs and with the Montanaiana projects. We gave up trying to hire a nerdy librarian and are aiming now for a programmer analyst.
- I've been charged by the Networking Task Force to draft a 'business plan' for a statewide server-farm version of the shared catalog component of the MLN; my deadline is December.

All in all, a fairly active time. But just a beginning; I feel that we're just tooling up. The really fun stuff is just around the corner.