

January 19, 1999

MEMORANDUM

TO: LRC Directors
Community Colleges

FROM: Pamela B. Doyle, Director
Library Resources

SUBJECT: Contract Extension and Preparing for the New Library System Contract.

On January 7, 1999, the Division of Purchase and Contract gave us verbal approval to extend our contract with Ameritech Library Services for an additional year through June 30, 2000. The extension will allow us more time to complete the bid process for a new library system contract and provide us some much needed time to more adequately plan and prepare for any changes that might be required as a result of the bid process.

Vendor responses to the Request for Information (RFI) and current vendor literature indicate that vendors are currently marketing software which is designed for PC-based access by both staff and the public. They will sometimes provide a terminal-based access method for the public even if staff functions require the use of a PC. This terminal-based access does not usually contain the full range of features available in the public PC interface. Vendors who design their systems for PC-based access almost never provide a terminal-based access method for staff functions.

Some vendors continue to sell products which are in the "mature" stages of development and which do provide terminal-based access to staff functions. Dynix is such a product. However, not all of these vendors intend to continue marketing or supporting such products in the long-term. Ameritech Library Services made us aware in February 1998 that they will be merging the features of Dynix and Horizon software into a new software product that they are currently calling NextGEN. Before we learned from the Division of Purchase and Contract that we had to re-bid the Data Automation Center (DAC) contract, Ameritech was encouraging us to consider converting the DAC from the Dynix software to the new product within 2-3 years.

CC99-021

In a recent survey of the 39 colleges participating in DAC to determine the number of PCs available for library automation software access as of July 1, 1999, results indicated that 50 per cent of the 30 colleges responding will not be minimally prepared for migration to the widest range of new library automation systems as of July 1, 1999. The 15 colleges which are not minimally prepared are those where at least half or approximately half of the available staff access is still terminal-based or available only via PCs not meeting minimal specifications.

Within the next few months, colleges will begin making plans for the next fiscal year and preparing budget requests. If you are currently a DAC college or anticipate becoming a DAC user in the near future, we encourage you to include in your budget needs funding to upgrade your current technology to better prepare your library for any changes that might be required as a result of the bid process. The State Library has defined a minimum level of technology needed for Internet and NC LIVE access, which is used in making decisions about hardware being purchased with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds. (These specifications are available at <http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/lsta/beg9899.pdf> on page 9 of the Acrobat document.) Because of the technology required for the library systems proposed in response to the RFI, libraries are encouraged to specify, at a minimum, computers running at 300 mHz with 64 MB RAM.

The Library System Contract Team anticipates having a decision about a new library contract by June 30, 1999. Preliminary plans are to work with the new contract vendor during next fiscal year to prepare for migration, complete staff training, and complete the migration within a timeframe that will allow the new system to be operational on July 1, 2000. Colleges must be technologically prepared to make the move to the new library system in order to prevent interruption of access to the online library system.

As the Library System Contract Team continues its work and more information becomes available it will be shared with you. If you have questions or need additional information about the suggested library technology specifications, please contact Grant Pair at (919) 733-7051 ext. 633 or pairg@ncccs.cc.nc.us.

cc: Presidents
Business Officers
System Administrators

CC99-021