

Members Council February 2003
Library Group
Discussion Summary Report

Name of Group: State Academic Libraries 1

Recorder ___Phil Schieber_

1. Summary of topics & discussions

The group discussed unauthorized use of OCLC cataloging records by non-member libraries through Z39.50 software such as BookWhere and EZCat. Topics of discussion included:

1) How do delegates feel about the use of their libraries' cataloging by others?

There was some uneasiness that this was a battle not worth fighting. Concern was expressed about cutting off legitimate use of records through this software. One delegate stated that he did not have a sense that his library was losing something. Any action against this kind of record use would swim against the current of opening up library catalogs to more people. Libraries in Europe may view this kind of activity differently than libraries in the U.S. Delegates noted that this matter should be examined as a record-use issue rather than a pricing issue.

2) How widespread is this activity now and how widespread will it become?

The group noted that more information was needed before a course of action could be recommended. Specific information needed included: realistic estimate of the number of libraries involved; a list of libraries whose catalogs are listed as Z39.50 targets; economic impact on OCLC; international and U.S. implications and what are libraries doing with the records. It was noted that cataloging costs in the U.S. are 10 times higher than in Mexico.

3) What kinds of threats to the cooperative does this unauthorized use of records pose?

The group identified these threats:

- Lost market opportunity
- Loss of resource sharing
- Inhibits OCLC's ability to achieve vision of worldwide cooperative
- Record nabbing is not a cooperative activity
- Potential damage to the image of the cooperative
- Inaction might be viewed as dereliction of duty

4) What actions should be taken?

- OCLC must study the issue, obtain facts and statistics, and develop a story that libraries and regional service providers can tell in their discussions with libraries.
- Any approach must be educational rather than punitive. (carrot, not stick)
- OCLC and regional service providers (networks) should work together on this problem.
- OCLC should find some way to make this a legitimate use of records.

2. List 3-4 significant issues that the group wants to communicate to Members Council and OCLC.

- OCLC must provide more information about the situation.
- The issue must be examined from both a U.S. and global/international perspective.
- Extending the cooperative to more libraries should be paramount.
- OCLC must continue to educate both member libraries and non-members about the benefits of the cooperative.

3. Remembering that OCLC's role is to be the leading global library cooperative, which of the issues in #2 are most urgent and why?

The U.S./international perspective is most urgent because the lessons learned internationally could be applied to local issues in the U.S.

4. Please indicate if the group feels that an issue or presentation should be presented to the full Council.

The group noted that OCLC should develop a presentation that includes factual information, statistics and economic impact on the cooperative. In short, more information is needed before a course of action can be recommended.