

LLMC Web Sites Enhanced

LLMC maintains two coordinated web sites: www.llmc.com, its main corporate presence, and www.llmc.org, its full-text on-line subscription-library. The corporate web site received a facelift recently. In addition, both sites have had significant internal enhancements, and the integration between the two has been made more seamless.

Improvements on *LLMC-Digital*

—A most welcome addition to *LLMC-Digital* is the capacity to print a range of pages. As mentioned in the *April Newsletter*, this improvement was tops among those requested by subscribers. Our partners at the University of Michigan have had their programmers give this priority since April. ([See endnote #1](#)) The basic system is now in place. For the time being the system is set up to permit a printing range selection of from 1 to 20 pages. Going above the 20-page limit would involve some serious tradeoffs in timeliness. So our friends at Michigan have suggested that we live with the 20-page constraint for a trial period to see how well this limit works in the context of our literature. The *LLMC-Digital* Interface Task Force, (see below) has been asked to give this question special attention. One important thing to remember when seeking to use the new printing option is that it is only offered when your “View Page As” menu is set to the “PDF” option.

— A smaller improvement, to be implemented presently, is the elimination of the “splash page” which now greets one as the first screen when signing on to *LLMC-Digital*. The user must then click on the link “Choose” to get to the “Collections Home Page.” Several sub-scribers have suggested that this step is needless, since the remaining LLMC-related information on the “splash page,” is also available via the menu bar on the “Collections Home Page.” So, in the spirit of benign simplification, we agreed that it was best for the “splash page” to go. Thank you Suggesters!

Improvements on www.LLMC.com

The *LLMC-Digital* web site emanates from Ann Arbor and is maintained by

our partners at the University of Michigan. However, two important informational features appear to be on *LLMC-Digital*, but are physically located on www.llmc.com and are maintained by LLMC personnel in Kaneohe, HI. These features are the Short Title Lists and Content Status Table. Both are accessed by link from *LLMC-Digital*, to which one returns automatically when finished using them.

— The Short Title Lists are accessed by clicking on the small circular “i” icons found to the left of each collection name on the “Collections Home Page.” The Short Titles are mostly arranged in the same order as the corresponding titles appear in LLMC’s fiche print catalogs. Since that order reflects function (e.g., all U.S. Labor Dept. titles are grouped together), the Short Title Lists provide a conceptual method for finding obscure titles, something some subscribers have found quite useful. However, many subscribers have asked why we can’t have each Short Title endowed with a link directly to the images for that title on *LLMC-Digital*. It turns out that such links are quite feasible, and so now they have been added.

— The Content Status Table provides full target data, current on-line holdings information, OCLC-Number(s), and URLs for every title which has been mounted on *LLMC-Digital*. While working on providing a direct link from each Short Title to its corresponding *LLMC-Digital* images, we found that it also was feasible to provide a direct link from each Short Title to its corresponding listing in the Content Status Table. So those links are also now in place, and the Content-Status-Table data is more accessible.

— Finally, some of our cataloger friends have asked: “Why not add the URL and OCLC numbers to your logs of past monthly additions to *LLMC-Digital*? Then catalogers will only have to go to one place each month.” That good idea will be implemented from now on.

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Interface Task Force

The LLMC-Digital Interface Task Force ([See endnote #2](#)) now has a convener: Warren Rees, Research Librarian at Notre Dame University Law Library. Over the next year Warren’s group will be looking at, both all aspects of the public face presented by *LLMC-Digital*, and also the related services separately housed on www.llmc.com. The goal of the Task Force is to help LLMC’s Directors refine their priorities for expenditures on site enhancements. Warren expects to have some initial recommendations

ready for presentation at the Board's meeting in early January. For anybody with a personal preference for one enhancement or another, could we suggest contacting Warren at Notre Dame as one way to get your idea into circulation and possibly to the front of the queue.

Linking to a Specific Page on the Site

We got a question from a subscribing library which wants, for pedagogic reasons, to do the following. As their main link from their law library web site to *LLMC-Digital*, they want to establish a link directly to our Boolean search page. However, they worry that doing so might in some way interfere with, or scramble, their institutional use statistics. We checked this out with our technical partners at Michigan and found that there is no problem. As it happens, we think that most patrons would prefer an initial link to the Collections Home Page, which offers the full range of search options. But if you've got a good local reason for linking elsewhere on *LLMC-Digital*, you now have carte blanche to do so.

Archive cites for cataloging /statistics

We still get a smattering of questions relative both to cataloging and also to access to institutional statistics. Some are from people who have been with us for over a year. So, for those who may not yet have done so, we need to point out that past issues of the *Newsletter*, archived on www.llmc.com, cover both these matters in some detail. Persons in your library who have primary responsibility for either of these two areas should definitely check out the cites provided below:

— Cataloging ([See endnote #3](#))

— Statistics ([See endnote #4](#))

One of Our Own Expands Horizons

LLMC Director Richard Amelung, whose day job has been heading up Tech. Services at St. Louis University Law Library, was appointed Interim University Librarian at St. Louis as of Sept. 20. For more info. see <http://www.slu.edu/readstory/newslink/4709>. On behalf of all of us, we extend to Richard our congratulations and sympathy, in whatever measure is appropriate. The good news for LLMC is that, as a condition of his

acceptance, Richard persuaded his University to agree that he will continue to supervise *LLMC-Digital*'s cataloging program, which is housed at St. Louis Law Library.

Building Up Our Equipment Base

Doing everything we have to do here, plus getting the *LLMC-Digital* program up to its target of 10-million new pages added per year, means that between the years 2003 and 2006 we will have about doubled the FTE count at our headquarters in Kaneohe. The good news is that, due to your enthusiastic support, we will have the money to pay these labor costs. The bad news is that this is a slogging process, hiring and training all those people, and that this takes time. However, if one has a lemon, it provides an

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opportunity to make lemonade. The lemonade in this picture is that, given the time lag for hiring and training during 2004 and 2005, we aren't spending as much on labor costs now as we will be spending when everybody's on board.

We're using this one-time "window of opportunity" to look ahead and pay for the main pieces of equipment we need to change over from a film-based operation to one with a foot in both digital and film. The full ensemble of basic equipment will cost about \$352,000; which happens to be almost as much as is being freed up by the time lag in bringing on the full labor force ([See endnote #5](#)). Some additional extra money is being generated by continued fiche sales. This extra money has been, or soon will be, spent in the following program under which we will fully own all of our production equipment.

— All of our microfiche data-capture equipment has now been deactivated. The last two cameras and our film processor went off line this month. Unfortunately, they had no resale value. Not to worry. They were over 20 years old and had long been depreciated off the books. We got our money's worth.

— Two "step-and-repeat" ([See endnote #6](#)) Zeutschel, digital book scanners (purchase price \$76K) already are in place producing digital images (TIFFs). The first of these began to appear on *LLMC-Digital* this month.

— Now that we are producing digital-origin images, we need to "write" those images back to microfiche to fulfill our commitment to you to maintain an analog preservation copy on archival-quality, silver-halide microfiche. The one system that does that (dubbed the Staude DigiFiche, \$85K, another German-made product ([See endnote #7](#))) is being installed

this week.

— In addition to our present two step-and-repeat scanners, we need a third to get to the necessary level of production, and also to handle larger books. A third step-and-repeat book scanner (SMA21, \$36K, also German built), with big-book capacity, will be installed in January.

The last major piece of data-capture equipment needed in our basic equipment portfolio is a high-speed digital scanner able to handle unbound paper. The fodder for this machine will come, either when we handle original loose-sheet stock, or in those cases where, because, books will be discarded, we can de-bind them. The machine we have chosen (a Staude HQ-G Auto Scan, \$49K, German made) will also be installed in January.

— Two pieces of equipment which we are dragging over from the fiche-era are our two microfiche duplicators. Both are over 20 years old, limping, and near-obsolete. Somewhat surprisingly, fiche

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sales still continue very strong ([See endnote #8](#)). If that trend persists, we will have to get a new fiche duplicator (possible choice is an OMS 1200, \$52K, German made) sometime toward late 2005 or early 2006.

— Peripherals were something that we sort of handled with petty cash in the fiche era. Early on we bought a few word processors. Later we got a few computers; mainly for office, rather than production, purposes. Computers were not central to the life of most production employees. Has that ever changed! Our only remaining employee not sitting at a real computer station is the fiche duplicator operator. Every other piece of production equipment described above has a supporting computer and monitor. In addition to those, we already have eight computer stations in related production and supervisory operations (roughly \$30K spent), and will need an estimated eight more (\$24K) at full production.

Blue Versus Blue-Black Microfiche

Having mentioned fiche sales above, let us take this opportunity to spread the word that we are now using blue rather than blue-black film stock for all consumer fiche sold. This is not by choice. We think that the old blue-black fiche stock handled natural light and dark image variances better. However, the world of film has shrunk astoundingly since big industry went heavily digital. The few remaining manufacturers of film have pulled in their horns, and blue-black fiche film stock is no longer made.

Using Our High-Speed Scanner

As mentioned above, our high-speed scanner is designed to handle single sheets or de-bound books. In the fiche era we didn't see a sufficient quantity of raw material in those two formats to justify automatic, high-speed equipment. That explains why for some 28 years we used only step-and-repeat data-capture equipment.

For the future, we still expect that a large number of the books lent for scanning purposes will have to be returned; i.e., cannot be de-bound. However, we also believe that, for large classes of material, a new paradigm is emerging.

Let's run with just one example. There are 192 law school libraries in the U.S.. If one adds to that number some obvious holders like L.C., Jenkins, etc., it's probably safe to say that among themselves the U.S. libraries hold something over 200 copies of the Alabama Reports ([See endnote #9](#)). Once that set is digitized to a satisfactory level, and provided on-line to all of the present library holders, will the entire world, much less just the U.S., really need 200-plus hardcopy versions of that title? We think a very large number of present holders are going to conclude not.

In short, we believe that the phenomenon, which started during the fiche era, where some libraries discarded their dupes and even their sole copies in certain subject areas, in deference to fiche backup will continue. However, with the more popular and accessible digital format now providing the alternative, we expect that the hardcopy-discard phenomenon will accelerate. A lot of deans are finally going to get their longed-for "digital dividend."

If we are right in the above, then there are going to be a fair number of titles where we will be able to solicit the donation of hard-copy for guillotining and high-speed scanning before discard. Since images can be scanned at high-speed at something like one fifth the cost of step-and-repeat scanning, LLMC will seek to milk this discard phenomenon for all that it's worth.

Endnotes:

1.) Issue #6, p.3

2.) See *Newsletter*, Issue #9, p. 4

3.) Our party line on cataloging. We have committed to our subscribers that nothing will go up on *LLMC-Digital* unless it is cataloged up to contemporary OCLC standards. The work is being done by St. Louis University Law Library, an institution with a deservedly high technical

reputation in this area. All *LLMC-Digital* records are available from OCLC. Anybody, even RLIN people, can buy records from OCLC. Records can be purchased separately or under a subscription plan tied directly to the pace of LLMC's mounting of new titles on *LLMC-Digital*. Additional information of interest to catalogers can be found in back issues of the *LLMC-Digital Newsletter*, which are archived on LLMC's main corporate web site: www.llmc.com. Pertinent articles are found at: Issues # 1, pp. 1–2; #2, pp. 3–4, & #5, p.3. Those in need of additional information should contact Jerry Dupont at llmcdigital@aol.com.

4.) Statistics party line. Use statistics are available for each subscribing institution. The how and why are covered in the *LLMC-Digital Newsletter*, Issue #3, pp. 2–3; #4, pp. 1–2; & #5, p.1

5.) As it happens, \$352,000 is, nominally, roughly what LLMC spent during the fiche era to buy its basic complement of microfiche production equipment: five cameras, one film processor, two fiche-duplication machines, and related peripherals. We say “nominally” because the equipment money was spent mostly in the 1970s and early 1980s. In terms of today's dollar (using the CJR Inflation Calculator and picking 1980 as loosely the median year of purchase), we actually spent something in the range of \$675,000 on microfiche equipment. So prices have fallen in the sense that we are getting a lot more productivity for our money today. However, the main difference between the two experiences is that, during our fiche era, we bought our equipment laboriously, on credit, and penny-by-penny over a decade. This time around, with your support, we are going to be at full productivity, and debt free, almost from the beginning.

6.) These machines are dubbed “step-and-repeat” because, like their film-camera counterparts, they are designed to handle bound books. The book sits under a glass plate, which presses it down against two platforms on springs, one for each side of the book. The springs adjust for differences in size between the two sides of the book as the pages are turned. The operator lifts the glass, turns a page, puts the glass back down, and then films/scans two pages at once. That step completed, the operator repeats the cycle. Hence the name.

7.) Each piece of equipment we buy is measured against its competitors, domestic and foreign. Price is less a factor than is ability to do the job we require. Unfortunately, the field of library-quality-data-capture, both for film and digital, has been all but abandoned by U.S. manufacturers. The remaining equipment manufacturers in these fields are centered mainly in Germany and, to a lesser extent, in France.

8.) When we first moved toward offering an on-line digital alternative, our initial expectation was that fiche sales would plummet. That hasn't

happened. For whatever reason, measured by number of physical fiche sold, fiche sales continue at a rate equaling all but our best three fiche-era years. No doubt, this is at least partially a result of our offering a 66% discount on fiche to *LLMC-Digital* subscribers. Wherever the demand is coming from, we still must meet it. Hence the need to consider new equipment. The good side of this equation is that, even at the much lower yield with the 66% discount fiche, current sales still provide a modest cash flow of about \$180K per year. So they cover their costs, will pay for a new duplicator if needed, and generate cash for our other missions.

9.) We're not picking on anybody; just starting at the head of the alphabet. Any other state's reports would do to illustrate the point.

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