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CRL Partnership Enters Third Stage

Longtime readers are well aware that for some years now *LLMC-Digital* has been in a partnership with the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). It seems that we just started this yesterday, but that "some years" has now stretched beyond four, and we are happy to announce that our two organizations have now signed a third partnership contract; this one to extend for three more years.

The principal benefit of the CRL/LLMC partnership is that many more libraries are now able to obtain access to the scholarly resources available on *LLMC-Digital*. Of course, given the nature of the two organizations, some CRL college and university libraries already had access courtesy of their home law school library's subscription. Some 93 CRL libraries were already being served in this way. However, the majority of CRL's library members, more than half, were not being served. The partnership therefore brought *LLMC-Digital* access to the patrons of 122 new institutional libraries. For their part, these new members constitute roughly one third of *LLMC-Digital*'s total library membership, and their annual dues provide a substantial boost to the resources supporting *LLMC*'s mission.

In addition to providing financial support to the joint program, the partnership with CRL provides *LLMC-Digital* with access to a broad range of additional materials for scanning. As a repository of shared print holdings for North American universities and colleges, CRL itself is naturally an exceptionally rich source of target materials. In addition, because of goodwill and contacts generated by the partnership, *LLMC-Digital* has obtained access to several important and unique subject collections. These connections are evidenced in several of the subject areas delineated in the third article below in this issue; particularly

with regard to the foreign and U.S. collections. As to the former, CRL has been especially useful in guiding *LLMC*'s scanning efforts toward, and helping to provide print copies of, legal materials from: Africa, Central and South America and Eastern Europe. With regard to domestic materials, the principal focus of the partnership over the last several years has been in scanning CRL's unusually complete collection of state legislative journals.

We are delighted to be entering this third stage of our productive partnership with CRL. We expect that, working together and targeting our joint print resources, we can continue to maximize the research potential of the law and governance-related materials made jointly available to our members.

Interim Report on OCLC Knowledge Base

A number of librarians, especially those on the technical side, have been asking what is going on with OCLC's launch of Knowledge Base, and how that new service will affect users of *LLMC-Digital*. The short answer for the moment is that we only know so much, since most of OCLC's operations are well beyond our control; and perhaps our ken. But the picture is getting clearer.

As background for those who have just joined this discussion, OCLC is abandoning its renowned WorldCat sets program in favor of a federated system dubbed Knowledge Base. The new system potentially incorporates significant enhancements for participating libraries. For example, in the past an institution could make a limited number of customized changes to the records purchased for a particular set, and some of these customizations required additional charges. In the new Knowledge Base World Order, it appears that the potential range of these customizations will be

substantially increased, and that they will be implemented at the discretion of the acquiring library without intervention by OCLC personnel. Furthermore, since the library will be essentially “self-profiling” set-by-set without employing OCLC staff time, none of these modifications will occasion costs above the base cost for acquiring the records.

In addition, the cost of the records themselves will be included in the base annual cataloging subscription paid to OCLC by its customers. This means that for those libraries the records will be “free.” In addition, assurances have been given that, at least for the near term, the dollar amount of OCLC cataloging subscriptions will not increase. As to non-subscribers to OCLC, although pricing schedules have not yet been disclosed, assurances have been given that the records will be available to all.

That’s the scheme. Now to the details. Transitioning to the new system has required that online publishers such as *LLMC-Digital*, have had to resubmit all of their catalog data in a format appropriate for incorporation into OCLC’s new program. At this point we can tell you that LLMC has apparently done everything that was required of it with regard to providing OCLC with all of our historic cataloging data in the format that they need. In addition, our cataloging gurus at Saint Louis University Law Library have been feverishly training on the complexities of the new processes via which our member institutions will be able to acquire MARC records for *LLMC-Digital* titles. Therefore, once OCLC’s Knowledge Base next release is ready to roll, which we have been told will be “soon,” *LLMC-Digital* is poised to participate.

One small wrinkle caused by the transition has been that our catalogers at Saint Louis have not been able to introduce newly scanned titles into the *LLMC-Digital* system since September. This is because the way that our system operates, nothing can go “live” until its MARC records have been introduced into OCLC. However, that problem will soon be history. We expect that this relatively minor inconvenience will be compensated for by a bonus of several months cataloging output in the near future; hopefully just in time to celebrate the New Year.

Finally, LLMC assumes that once OCLC’s Knowledge Base system is launched there are bound to be a number of questions common to our member libraries that will require more in depth explanations. At that point we will devote a good portion of a future newsletter to helping everybody navigate the transition successfully so that, hopefully, we can all extract maximum local benefit from the enhanced program.

A Snapshot of Our Growing Collections

Subscribers often ask us to provide a general idea of the

types of materials offered by LLMC. This is something where we cannot always provide exact answers. For one thing, the collections are always growing. At any given moment in time the figures will be changed. Also, because we are working closely with several of our subscribing libraries as they seek to downsize their print collections, to some extent the relative composition of our various collections at given points in time is influenced by the flow of materials from our donor libraries.

However, we do have our priorities and a fairly well thought out general plan. So it turns out that over the longer term our intentions have been fairly accurately reflected in the relative sizes of the main and smaller collections that comprise *LLMC-Digital*. Recently the size of our total online collection passed 85,000 volumes in over 51-million images.¹ That’s a big enough critical mass to justify taking a look at where we are and where we appear to be heading. In the table below are presented gross title and percentage figures for all of our bigger collections.

| Categories | Titles | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|
| U.S. Federal | 684 | 8.1% |
| U.S. States | 1,380 | 16.9% |
| Canada | 455 | 5.0% |
| U.K.+Dependencies | 397 | 4.1% |
| Ang.-Am. Cases, etc. | 101 | 1.0% |
| Ang.-Am. Treatises | 828 | 9.8% |
| Other Foreign Law Titles | 3,186 | 39.2% |
| Interna. & Compar. Law | 187 | 1.9% |
| Blackstone Collection | 174 | 1.3% |
| Br. Empire Studies | 315 | 3.3% |
| Military Law | 390 | 4.1% |
| Native American | 424 | 4.2% |
| Misc. emerging cols. ² | 274 | 3.0% |

¹ These two figures have relevance to what used to be a fraught issue back in the microform days, and may still be pertinent in the online era. In the past many hours of committee time were expended in trying to come up with reliable “volume equivalency” figure for microfiche, microform and other non-traditional media. Eventually the base standard adopted by the AALL and the ABA was that an average law book was computed at 600 pages per volume. Looking at the composition of LLMC’s current online corpus, one can see that it is made up of a wide range of types of materials; treatises, court reports, session laws, agency reports, etc., etc. Using numbers this big should come up with fairly reliable averages. Doing the math tells us that for this large sampling there are 604.5 pages per volume. That’s astoundingly close to AALL’s earlier estimate.

² These infant collections are: Ancient Legal Systems (6 titles), Canon Law (76), Comparative Law (67), Legal Bibliography (25), Legal Philosophy (43), Pacific Studies (19), & Roman Law

(18).

Not surprisingly, the table illustrates that a major percentage of the *LLMC-Digital* titles, 25%, fall into the category of U.S. federal and state primary legal materials. Also unsurprisingly, another 9.1% of the titles are accounted for by mainly primary materials from the two foreign countries whose legal output is most commonly represented in American law libraries; Canada and the U.K.. Add to that the 10.8% of titles classed as “Anglo-American,” most of which come from the three named jurisdictions, and one comes up with a total of roughly 36% of our title coverage being devoted to those materials most likely to be held by the great majority of our subscribing libraries. Therefore, in the space-recovery-potential department, one of our principal missions, we seem to be making a real impact.

One other category that is particularly large, at least on a title-percentage basis, is “Other Foreign Titles.” This includes all national materials other than those from the U.S., Canada and the U.K. This figure is undoubtedly somewhat skewed by the fact that the majority of the titles in this category have fewer volumes than the general run of titles from the U.S., Canada and the U.K. So that figure probably overstates its case.³ Nevertheless, it does demonstrate another beneficial aspect of *LLMC-Digital* relative to the majority of its subscribing libraries. Most of the latter do not typically have rich holdings of foreign law. So the *LLMC-Digital* program results in a sharing of the wealth. By means of digital we are now bringing to the whole law library community a treasure trove of legal materials that heretofore were only held by the best-endowed institutions.

Good News from our Partner Google

Over the past year a number of librarians from subscribing institutions have relayed to us their discomfort with the fact that our most prominent for-profit partner, Google, had recently joined the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Google is working with us in a noble preservation effort to bring the print portion of the New York Records and Briefs online. ALEC is notorious for advocating a fair number of retrograde causes, most notably its energetic opposition to all efforts to combat global warming. How, our colleagues asked us, could LLMC, an organization devoted to preservation in the widest sense, partner with a company that is providing material support to one of the country’s leading anti-preservation organizations?

³ In time for presentation in a future issue we will massage the data a little more in depth and seek to come up with percentages of images attributable to each of the named collections. It’s quite doable, albeit tedious. But it’s probably worth doing because it would speak more directly to the space-recovery-potential

question.

Apparently that was a question which Google fairly quickly began to ask itself. For those who have not yet heard, we are pleased to pass on the news that on September 22nd Google formally withdrew from ALEC. Moreover, we are particularly delighted that the reason Google gave was specifically the stance that ALEC has taken on global warming. In the words of Google Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt while being interviewed on NPR’s Diane Rehm Show: “We funded [ALEC] as part of a political campaign for something unrelated [to climate change]. I think the consensus within the company was that that was some sort of mistake and so we’re trying to not do that in the future. The company has a very strong view that we should make decisions in politics based on facts -- what a shock! Everyone understands that climate change is occurring and the people who oppose it are really hurting our children and our grandchildren and making the world a much worse place. And so we should not be aligned with such people -- they’re just, they’re just literally lying.”

In summary, even though we were in no position to affect Google’s actions, we are greatly relieved that their values on this important issue square with ours. It is equally gratifying that the recent actions of other big tech companies echo Google’s. In August Microsoft also cut itself off from ALEC, stating that its stance on climate change and several other issues “directly conflicted with Microsoft’s values.” Even Facebook seems likely to sever ties soon. It recently issued this statement: “We reevaluate our memberships on an annual basis, and are in that process now. While we have tried to work within ALEC to bring that organization closer to our view on some key issues, it seems unlikely that we will make sufficient progress. So we are not likely to renew our membership in 2015.”

LLMC is, of course, only a minnow relative to these tech behemoths. Nevertheless, we are newly proud to part of such a cool industry.

Alert on the LLMC Blog

An operation like *LLMC-Digital* has the luxury of avoiding much of the rat race. We chug away at our chores, and you can go about your days and months in the assurance that we will be there when you need us. So the occasional newsletter pretty well fulfills most of our members “need to know.”

However, there are times when a more timely notice of an event or problem would be appropriate. We now have a mechanism in place to accomplish that. For example, recently users of Firefox began to have some issues printing from *LLMC-Digital*. It appears that the newest version of Firefox needs a plugin to accomplish what had been an imbedded function in previous versions. In a few weeks or

so the gurus at NBS, our technical partner, will probably solve that interface problem. In the interim, however, it was desirable to alert users both that there was a problem, and also to suggest a temporary workaround. This was done through a speedy notice on the blog that is now an added feature on the *LLMC-Digital* landing page.

Regular users should now be aware that the *LLMC-Digital* blog will be used for alerts such as that described for the Firefox problem. In addition, we will be using this feature to publicize interesting and useful bits of collection-related information that might not merit full articles in the regular newsletter. Reference librarians and others who feel the need to be a step ahead of their patrons might want to go a step further and grab the *LLMC-Digital* RSS feed to get our latest blogs, alerts, videos and more.

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What is LLMC Digital?

LLMC-Digital is a non-profit cooperative of libraries dedicated to the twin goals of, preserving legal titles and government documents, while making copies inexpensively and more effectively accessible through its enhanced on-line service LLMC-Digital. LLMC-Digital provides libraries with a reliable and budget-friendly source of digital replacement when their older, physically deteriorating books become too burdensome to store given diminished use and/or space recovery demands necessitate alternative solutions.

About Us

LLMC Digital was chartered in 1976 as a non-profit Hawaii corporation and is classed as a 501(c)(3) entity by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. It is independent and self-governing, with its affairs being managed by a Board of Directors and Advisory Council elected directly by the libraries it serves.