Purdue University
Purdue e-Pubs

Charleston Library Conference

Where's Professor Watt's Request? Streamlining to a Paperless Acquisitions Workflow

Rita M. Cauce
Florida International University, caucer@fiu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/charleston
An indexed, print copy of the Proceedings is also available for purchase at: http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston.
You may also be interested in the new series, Charleston Insights in Library, Archival, and Information Sciences. Find out more at: http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston-insights-library-archival-and-information-sciences.

Rita M. Cauce, "Where's Professor Watt's Request? Streamlining to a Paperless Acquisitions Workflow" (2011). *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference.*
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284314944

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Where's Professor Watt's Request?
Streamlining to a Paperless Acquisitions Workflow

Rita M. Cauce, Head, Resource Development Department, Florida International University, Miami, Florida

Abstract:
Having trouble finding an inquiring faculty's request because it is not in your ILS? This is no longer an issue at Florida International University (FIU) Libraries since we created *OLAS* (**O**nline **L**ibrary **A**cquisitions **S**ystem), an electronic system to gather, organize, and store incoming new material requests. The implementation of *OLAS* was a big step towards paperless acquisitions. This session will show the previous paper intensive acquisitions workflow, and the new streamlined electronic workflow. It will demonstrate the advantages of having acquisitions processes trackable at all times online, instead of buried in a paper file. In creating *OLAS*, my goal was to streamline acquisitions procedures by creating a central database for incoming new material requests. This database could be searched and organized to simplify ordering and to find the status of any request at any time in the acquisitions process. Our ILS tracks our orders once they are placed, but it was important for us to be able to track the pre-order steps, as not every request is automatically purchased. It was also very important for us to keep a record of the requests that were not ordered due to duplication or other reasons. This new system has greatly improved efficiency and accountability. I'm very pleased to be a participant in Charleston's first year of Pecha Kucha-like Shot Gun Sessions. This practical, concise presentation format is a great way to present this acquisitions management system we created at FIU.

Background

Before we developed our electronic system, faculty submitted their library material requests by various and diverse print means, from vendor catalogs with highlights and markings, to vendor supplied print slips. We had an online order form on the library web site which generated an email to the Acquisitions unit, but this too was converted to print in order to make the necessary annotations, documenting the different reviews and procedures of the order process. For example, staff would jot notes on this hard copy with information such as available vendors and prices, the budget fund code to be used, whether we already owned the title, etc. This paper request could pass through various desks during the process, including Cataloging, which would create the bibliographic record in the ILS, jot down the ILS number, and return it to Acquisitions to create the order record. Subsequently this document would be filed in a variety of paper files. If a faculty called to ask about his/her request, and that request had not made it to the ILS, we would have a very difficult time putting our hands on that paper request since it could be at a variety of different work stations, or paper files, along the acquisitions process. This system was very cumbersome and unaccountable.

Needs and Goals

Thus arose our need for an electronic system to store and track all incoming faculty requests. It would be a one-stop point where the status of these could easily and quickly be found by any staff.

The goal was to have all requests be submitted through our online order form and have this information be stored in a database for electronic tracking. We also wanted to take advantage of this electronic information to create provisional bibliographic records without having to rekey the order form information.

I met with our Systems Department and explained how I imagined this system to work:

Once the online order form was submitted, an electronic record would be created in a database including all the information submitted by the faculty member. Each record would include a bibliographic section, a requester information section, and an Acquisitions section. The database would document every request from the moment it was submitted. Acquisitions would be able to track the ordering process on that electronic record as had been done on the paper requests.

Copyright of this contribution remains in the name of the author(s).
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284314944

With the help of the Library Systems and Cataloging departments, our new system was created. After some brainstorming, the Acquisitions staff came up with the name for this new database: *OLAS: **O**nline **L**ibrary **A**cquisitions **S**ystem*. *OLAS* also means "waves" in Spanish so the acronym was a friendly and easy one to remember.

New Electronic Workflow

Now all faculty requests are submitted electronically through the *OLAS* online request form. All the information submitted on the form automatically populates the *OLAS* database, creating a specific record for each request (*Fig 1*) on submission. This record is system date stamped and given the status of "Requested". We identified specific sequential statuses we wanted to use in *OLAS* reflecting our workflow: *Requested*; *Catalog Searched*; *Record Creation*; *On Order*; *Received (Fig 2)*. Every day the Acquisitions staff do a search for "Requested" records, add necessary notes, and change the status of these records as they move along the process. These statuses are chosen from a drop-down menu within the individual records and are automatically date and time stamped. Staff will also edit the title when necessary as this information will be used to create a provisional bibliographic record in the ILS.

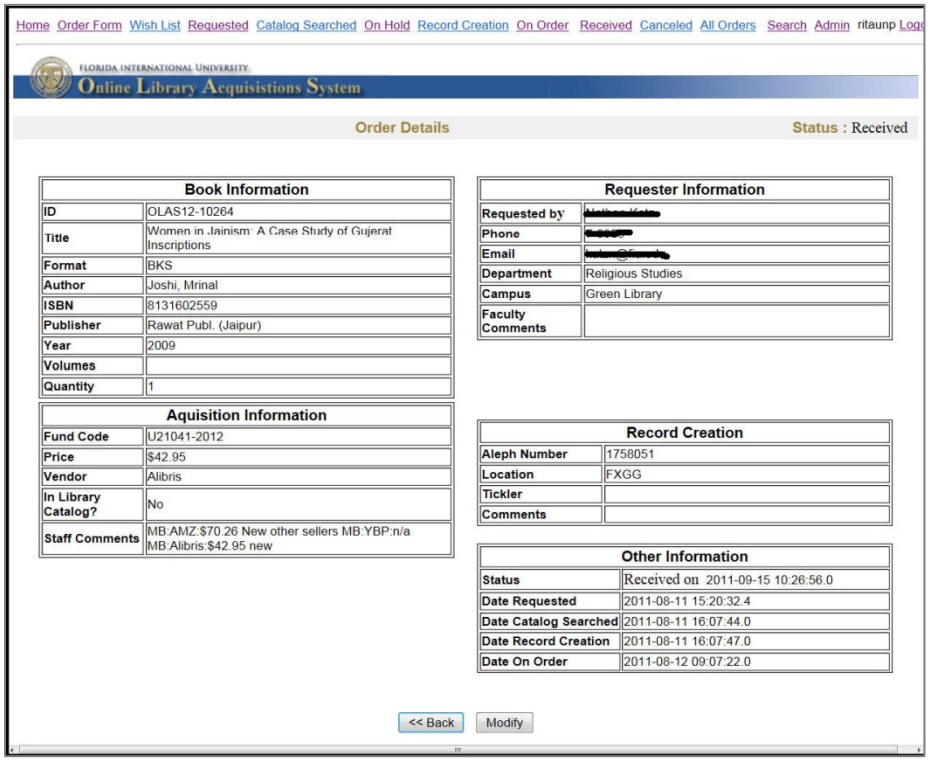


Figure 1: *OLAS* electronic record

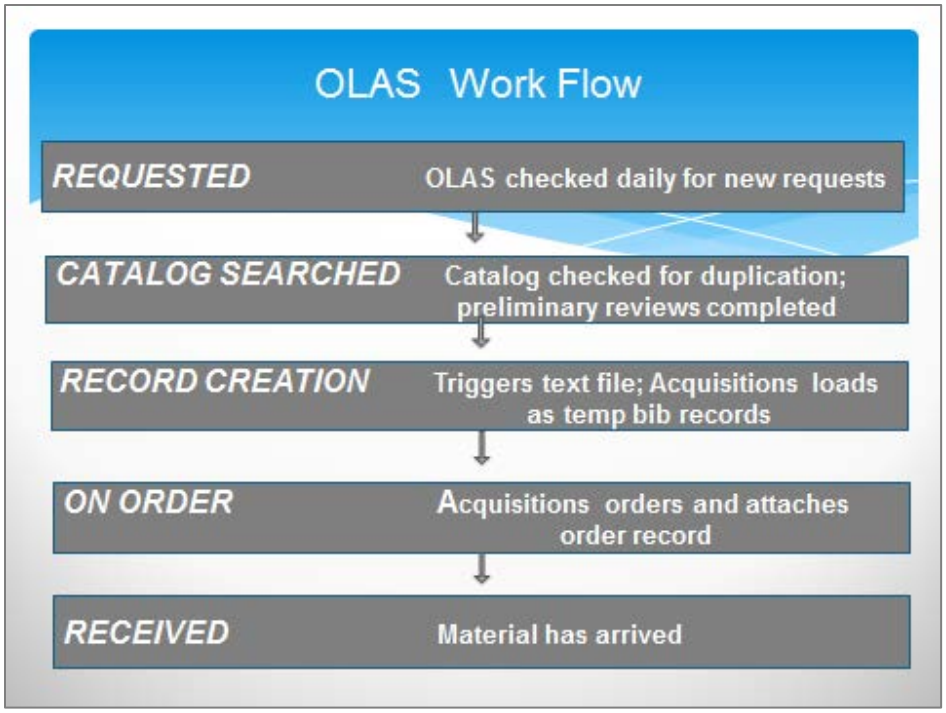


Figure 2: *OLAS* workflow statuses

When an item is ready to be ordered, the "Record Creation" status is selected. At the end of the day, a script automatically runs which takes the bibliographic information from all records with the "Record Creation" status and produces a delimited text file. The next morning Acquisitions picks up this file, processes it through the program *MarcEdit*, and then *Gen Load*, our ILS record loader, creating the provisional bibliographic records in our ILS. Figure 3 shows an *OLAS* generated provisional record. This load process takes maximum 15 minutes.

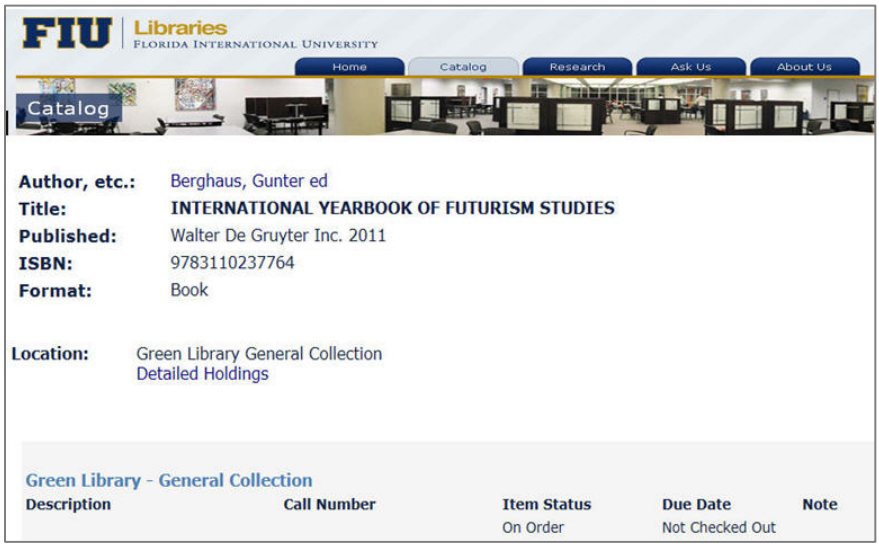
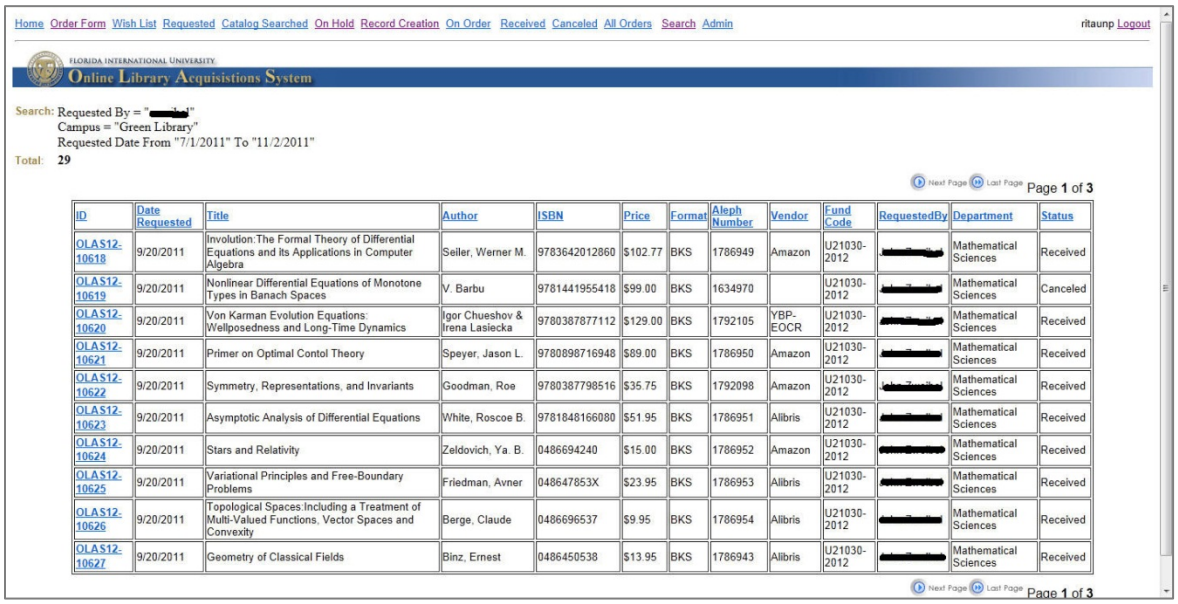


Figure 3: *OLAS* generated provisional record in the catalog.

With *OLAS* we have been able to improve our communication with faculty through system emails. The requester receives an automatic email confirmation as soon as they submit the online request form. They also receive an *OLAS* generated email when their request is canceled. Most of these cancellations are because we already own the title, in which case we include the call number for the item in the email.

OLAS has also added great searching and reporting capabilities. In one quick step we can search, sort, and create acquisition reports. The *OLAS* search screen offers searching on almost every field in the record, allowing for general or very detailed reports. For example a search could be done for all requests by an academic department. On the other hand, more specific searches for specific professors, within specific time periods, can also be done. In Figure 4 we see the results for a one professor's request between July 2011 and November 2011. The added export to Excel functionality in OLAS allows for these reports to be sent out as necessary.



Home Order Form Wish List Requested Catalog Searched On Hold Record Creation On Order Received Canceled All Orders Search Admin ritaunp Logout

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Online Library Acquisistions System

Search: Requested By = "[redacted]"
Campus = "Green Library"
Requested Date From "7/1/2011" To "11/2/2011"
Total: 29

Next Page Last Page Page 1 of 3

ID	Date Requested	Title	Author	ISBN	Price	Format	Aleph Number	Vendor	Fund Code	RequestedBy	Department	Status
OLAS12-10618	9/20/2011	Involution:The Formal Theory of Differential Equations and Its Applications in Computer Algebra	Seiler, Werner M.	9783642012860	$102.77	BKS	1786949	Amazon	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10619	9/20/2011	Nonlinear Differential Equations of Monotone Types in Banach Spaces	V. Barbu	9781441955418	$99.00	BKS	1634970		U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Canceled
OLAS12-10620	9/20/2011	Von Karman Evolution Equations: Wellposedness and Long-Time Dynamics	Igor Chueshov & Irena Lasiecka	9780387877112	$129.00	BKS	1792105	YBP-EOCR	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10621	9/20/2011	Primer on Optimal Contol Theory	Speyer, Jason L.	9780898716948	$89.00	BKS	1786950	Amazon	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10622	9/20/2011	Symmetry, Representations, and Invariants	Goodman, Roe	9780387798516	$35.75	BKS	1792098	Amazon	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10623	9/20/2011	Asymptotic Analysis of Differential Equations	White, Roscoe B.	9781848166080	$51.95	BKS	1786951	Alibris	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10624	9/20/2011	Stars and Relativity	Zeldovich, Ya. B.	0486694240	$15.00	BKS	1786952	Amazon	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10625	9/20/2011	Variational Principles and Free-Boundary Problems	Friedman, Avner	048647853X	$23.95	BKS	1786953	Alibris	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10626	9/20/2011	Topological Spaces:Including a Treatment of Multi-Valued Functions, Vector Spaces and Convexity	Berge, Claude	0486696537	$9.95	BKS	1786954	Alibris	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received
OLAS12-10627	9/20/2011	Geometry of Classical Fields	Binz, Ernest	0486450538	$13.95	BKS	1786943	Alibris	U21030-2012	[redacted]	Mathematical Sciences	Received

Next Page Last Page Page 1 of 3

Figure 4: OLAS search results for a specific professor's requests between July 2011 and Nov. 2011.

Conclusion

All of our faculty requests are now quickly accessible, whether they have been ordered or not. Accountability has been greatly improved and the ordering process is much more efficient. We have gained excellent searching and reporting capabilities with the extensive *OLAS* searching and reporting functionalities. In an easy step we can search, sort, and create customized acquisitions reports. We have also improved our communication with faculty through email notifications. This year we hope to add another *OLAS* generated email feature, notifying the faculty when their order has arrived. Overall the system has been successful in achieving our goals. The ideal situation would be for our ILS to include all the *OLAS* functions, but for now this is the next best scenario. Now if Prof. Watt calls asking about his requests, we know we will be able to quickly answer his questions.