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Library Profile

Tufts University

by **Bonnie Postlethwaite** (Director of Library Systems)

Column Editor: **Barbara Dean** (Fairfax County Public Library)

In 1986, the four separately administered libraries at Tufts University joined together to automate library functions and to create a single online catalog. The libraries selected the **Data Research (DRA)** system which they continue to use today. DRA is used for acquisitions, serials control, cataloging and authority control, circulation and reserves, and online catalog. In addition to these functions, the libraries also use **Open Dranet** for access to the **IAC Expanded Academic Index** and the **UMI Newspaper Abstracts**.

The four libraries at Tufts are located on three campuses. The Arts and Sciences Library, which has a main facility and four branch libraries, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Ginn Library are located on the Medford campus. The Health Sciences Library is in Boston and the Veterinary Medicine Library is in central Massachusetts. Each of the libraries has its own technical services operation including acquisitions and serials. In order to coordinate joint policy and common issues, a committee structure was established in the automation process.

DRA Acquisitions and Serials

DRA released significant upgrades to the Acquisitions and Serials modules during the summer of 1993. With these upgrades, the serials acquisitions function was cleanly separated from the serials control function and incorporated into the acquisitions functions. Links between the modules enable the use of supplier and payment information to be used for serials claiming. Within the Acquisitions module the type of order now determines how the order will be handled. A serials type allows for renewals which roll-over the current year's prices for the automatic generation of a PO for the next year. The PO can then be used to automatically create the next year's invoice records without re-keying all of the invoice information. The price can be adjusted if new prices come in for the next

year. At present there is no program to electronically import invoice information from a serials supplier into acquisitions records in the DRA system.

With the new version in 1993, the **Arts & Sciences Library** and the **Ginn Library** started using the DRA serials module for the first time. Their conversion to DRA was a manual process as DRA did not have a loader program for **Faxon SC-10** data. The **Health Sciences Library** had been using the old version since 1986 and the **Vet Library** had been using it for about a year. However, the new version had a much improved record structure which meant that these libraries had significant record clean-up to face. All of the libraries spent the Fall of 1993 converting serials control records. Consequently work with the serials acquisitions was not possible until serials control became totally operational. During Spring 1994, the Arts & Sciences Library began creating POs for their 1994 serials orders in order to roll-over this information to create the records for 1995. The other libraries have not yet begun to use the Acquisitions module for serials.

The DRA Acquisitions system can also handle standing orders. By using the Standing Order acquisition type on a record, the system uses the initial record as the order record which acts like an open-ended purchase order. You may then attach orders to this master order record. The attached orders can be entered as simple volumes for annuals or a separate bibliographic record can be inserted into the record for monographic series. Online lists of the standing orders can then be displayed and the acquisitions staff can determine how much has been spent on that order. The Arts & Sciences Library has worked extensively with this new standing order function in order to replace a Lotus file that was previously used to maintain standing order information. With the new Acquisitions module, all acquisitions activity is now in one database and Report Writer can be used to generate fund reports regardless of type of material. To a lesser extent the Ginn and Health Sciences li-

braries have used the standing order feature.

Selection and Ordering

The DRA Acquisitions module has a selection function that none of the Tufts libraries have opted to use. The selection function enables a selector to create records for items they are considering for purchase. Individual items or groups of items can be automatically rolled over to a purchase order with a simple command. The selection function requires the creation of bibliographic records which cannot be masked for display in the online catalog. Since there is no indication in the online catalog as to why this record is present, the acquisitions staff at the libraries have generally felt concern about confusing the public.

The libraries generally do not duplicate library materials except when needed for course reserves or reference. The shared catalog expedites the identification of pre-existing orders or materials already owned by one of the libraries. Staff search the Tufts catalog first. If the item is found, they decide whether or not to proceed with the order. If the item is not found, they then switch databases with a single command to search the **DRA LC MARC** file which is part of the **Open Dranet** service to which Tufts subscribes. Using the NetCat function, the record is then imported into the Tufts database using a 'copy' command. The title can then be added to a purchase order. Over 80% of the items searched by Tufts staff are found in the LCMARC file. If the item is not found in the DRA LCMARC database, the staff then search the OCLC database and using the import function at paired OCLC/DRA terminals the record is quickly added to the

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Tufts database. A few records are not found anywhere. The acquisitions staff then create skeletal bibliographic records for the purpose of ordering. The record is enhanced by cataloging once the item is received.

Once a bibliographic record has been created, the acquisitions staff can then create or add to a purchase order. Purchase orders in the DRA system can be used for single-item orders or for the ordering of multiple items. The system generates a purchase order number automatically once the library has told it at which number to begin. In order for the individual acquisitions units at Tufts to keep their records straight, using agreed upon prefix codes, the purchase orders all begin with the prefix assigned to that library. A similar arrangement has been used for fund numbers and supplier records. Staff can continue to add or change a purchase order until it has been 'placed'. Purchase orders can be printed or they can be sent electronically to specific suppliers using the BISAC standard. None of the Tufts libraries currently uses the electronic ordering feature.

Receiving, Payment, and Claiming

Since Summer 1993, DRA has enabled the receipt of items without invoices, the payment of invoices without received items, and partial receipts of multiple copies. This has greatly improved the acquisitions operations. As acquisitions staff process received items, they can easily search for items either with the purchase order number or by title. Items can be moved from multiple purchase orders to a single invoice or a whole purchase order can be automatically used to quickly create an invoice. The system allows for adjustment of prices and provides a 'test' function to make sure that the supplier's invoice total matches the online total. For large, multi-branch libraries with central acquisitions, there is a feature that allows for reassignment of the copies if a partial shipment is received. DRA has yet to address the problem of partial receipt of multi-volume orders which the Tufts libraries deal with frequently.

Once all of the items on an invoice have been checked in, the staff can then

test the online data for accuracy and 'pay' the invoice. By paying the invoice, it closes the record so that no further financial changes can occur thereby securing the records.

Acquisitions staff can set parameters by supplier or by order type as to what will be claimed and how often. Cancellation of an order can be set to automatically be initiated after a certain number of days. The acquisitions staff initiate the claim and cancellation notices. Cancellations that are supplier initiated can be identified as such and are removed from the production of notices. Cancellations automatically unencumber the funds.

Fund Accounting, Reports and End-of-Year Processing

The DRA acquisitions record contains three fields for funds in the event that an item is paid out of more than one account. Fund numbers should be constructed in such a way that any hierarchical information is codified for flexible fund reporting. With the exception of the Arts & Sciences Library, the fund accounts for each of the libraries is limited to donor funds or general funds and the acquisitions librarians are happy with a simple fund report for all of their funds. The Arts & Sciences Library has a more complex fund construct given the number of academic disciplines it serves and the number of fund accounts which can be used for any given subject area. The fund number for the Arts & Sciences Library is made up of a 6-digit account number followed by a 4-digit subcode as required by the University's Accounting Department. This subcode identifies items as being monographs, serials, electronic databases, or binding. The final element of the fund number is a 3-digit code for the subject. Using the DRA Report Writer, the Systems Department can write fund reports that select and sort records based on any or all of these elements. DRA provides a few standard fund reports and the Systems Office has written specialized reports for each of the libraries to assist in their budgetary and fund accounting activities. Reports can either be printed out to paper or they can be output to file and downloaded to a PC for manipulation. Unfortunately, the Arts & Sciences acquisitions reports are very large by the end of a year and are unmanageable on a PC. We continue

to examine ways of providing the data so that it can be of greatest use to the acquisitions staff and the selectors.

There are a number of online statistical reports and comparisons that the user can examine at any time. These online displays compare data over several years. Supplier records also provide statistical information on numbers of items ordered and fulfillment for that supplier.

At the end of the fiscal year, the encumbrances can be rolled over or canceled depending on the practice of the library. At Tufts, all of the libraries roll over their encumbrances. They also have the ability to roll over their funds or to start fresh with new funds. Again, at Tufts all the libraries roll over their funds with the same budgeted amounts since they retain the same fund numbers from year-to-year. If allocations to a fund are altered, you can go into the fund record to change the amount. In general, Tufts tends to retain online the acquisitions records for the current and the previous year, but removes the closed or canceled orders for anything older. This enables the running of the previous year funds reports but frees up space on the system.

Future Needs

After many years of working with an acquisitions system that really only handled monographic orders, the new DRA Acquisitions module is a refreshing and much needed change. The Tufts libraries are now handling all of their acquisitions processing in one system and that feeds directly to the public. Library users can see if an item is on order or recently received and place requests on the items. Separate PC databases and spreadsheets are a thing of the past making the information more accurate and more timely.

The Arts & Sciences Library will be experimenting with the tape loading of bibliographic records for approval plan titles in the near future. This, too, will greatly reduce the amount of time spent on the individual processing of approval plan materials.

We look forward to the day when **electronic data interchange (EDI)** will be possible with the DRA system to eliminate labor-intensive data entry. The ability to export electronic orders and claims and to import invoicing data and publisher replies is of great interest to us. ☛