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## Biz of Acq

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# Biz of Acq

## Center for Electronic Text in the Law

Column Editor: **Jack G. Montgomery** (Technical Services and Collection Management Librarian, Law Library, U. of Missouri- Columbia) <MONTGOMERY@law.missouri.edu>



*Column editor's note: Often it seems that innovations present themselves to our profession in a finalized state. This month's offering hopefully will offer a look at a project still growing though already functional. Our author is a former colleague who has seen the role of acquisitions expand in the face of new technology and has risen to meet the challenge. Cynthia Aninao is currently Acquisitions Librarian at the University of Cincinnati College of Law Library. Previous to Cincinnati, her employment included Assistant Librarian at the Cincinnati Law Library and Librarian for the law firm of Dinsmore & Shohl. She received her MSLS from the University of Kentucky. Ms. Aninao is active in the Acquisitions Committee of AALL Technical Services SIS and is currently moderator for LAWACQ, a discussion list for law acquisitions librarians. — JM*

### CETL at the University of Cincinnati Law Library: The Birth of the Electronic Library

by **Cynthia Aninao**

(Acquisitions Librarian, U. of Cincinnati, College of Law Library)

The **Center for Electronic Text in the Law** (CETL) is located at the University of Cincinnati College of Law Library. Founded in 1993 by Law Library Director **Taylor Fitchett**, its current mission is threefold: 1) production of fulltext databases that will facilitate legal research; 2) research in the management of electronic legal text; 3) instruction for the College of Law community in electronic text management tools.

The reasons for starting CETL are outlined on CETL's homepage on the World Wide Web — <<http://www.law.uc.edu/CENTER/>>. "The past decade has witnessed the movement toward increased access to computerized legal materials. Instantaneous delivery of information from libraries around the world is becoming an expectation of the legal researcher. Only recently have libraries had the technological capability to convert hardcopy collections into electronic format. Broad-ranging issues that arise from the application of this technology, including copyright, database structure, technological standardization, and the capture and preservation of electronic information for future generations require the establishment of such a center."

After three years, CETL has become an integral part of the UC Law Library. Although CETL is definitely an entrepreneurial venture and is utilizing cutting edge technology, it has many similarities to the "traditional" library. The long-held mission of the library has been "to acquire, organize, and make retrievable information." Beginning with mission statements and collection development policies, libraries have selected and acquired information, cataloged it, processed and labeled it, preserved it, helped patrons find it, and circulated it.

CETL currently has three databases or areas of "collection development": human rights, corporate law, and supporting faculty research areas and student needs. **DIANA** is the database of human rights literature which is named after the late **Diana Vincent-Daviss**, former Director of the Law Library at Yale Law School and a noted human rights bibliographer. The Corporate Law database contains securities acts, forms, regulations, and rules to assist lawyers in the practice of corporate and securities law. CETL also

supports the law school in making available law school exams for the law students. Other faculty research areas are also planned.

CETL also acquires information. The information is acquired in electronic form or converted from paper to electronic format by scanning and marking up the text for circulating on the Internet. Text is marked up in Standard Generalized Markup Language — SGML — an international standard (ISO 8879) which is a set of instructions for encoding the structure of a document. There are several versions of SGML. CETL uses the **Text-Encoding Initiative** (TEI) version, which was designed for scholarly documents in the social sciences and humanities.

Libraries have always managed budgets and dealt with highs and lows from their funding sources. CETL also receives a share of the Law Library's acquisitions budget. Initial start-up costs were funded by the **Ohio Board of Regents**, the **United States Institute of Peace**, the **National Center for Automated Information Retrieval**, the **Ford Foundation**, and **Electronic Book Technologies**.

The historical *raison d'être* of the library profession — cataloging — is also done at CETL by the Law Library staff. Each electronic document is preceded by a **TEI Header** which contains information about the text. The TEI header is analogous to the MARC record containing the bibliographic description. The TEI header is also called "metadata" — data about data. It includes author, title, place, publisher, file size, series, notes, language, and added entries.

Preservation of the electronic text is also a consideration at CETL. Early in the project, SGML was chosen as the markup standard over Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). Although HTML is widely used as a markup language for presentation of documents on the World Wide Web, it has limitations in searching and usefulness on other hardware and software platforms. Because SGML encodes the intrinsic structure and meaning of parts of a document, it allows transport of a document with minimal information loss to other hardware and software environments.

The staffing at CETL consists of a director, assistant director, scanner operator, text editors, and catalogers. The CETL Director is **Nick Finke**, a Harvard Law School graduate who practiced securities and corporate law at Jones, Day, Reaves and Pogue in Cleveland and also worked at **Lexis-Nexis**. Nick does much of the research in the management of electronic text, is the "brains" of the group, and also gives seminars and workshops. Assistant Director is **Greg MacGowan**, a graduate of the Syracuse University School of Information Studies (IST). Greg manages the daily technical operations of CETL and supervises the markup of electronic text. Scanner operator and cataloger is **Akram Sadeghi**, a former Head of Technical Services at Tehran University in Tehran, Iran. Akram is working on an MSLS at Indiana University College of Library and Information Science. Text editors are UC graduate students **Angeles Beristain-Flores**, **Tom Dinsmore**, **Nainsi Houston**, **Amy Scrivner**, and **Mark Tolley**. The text editors do the markup using TEI-conformant SGML.

In summary, CETL is a new kind of library. It is the beginning of a true electronic library. It is one of the many efforts which has been established to acquire, organize, and make retrievable electronic information to researchers around the world. For more information, visit CETL's homepage on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.law.uc.edu/CENTER/>> or email <CETL@law.uc.edu>