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Doc Aquis-Brodart's TIPS

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DOC AQUIS

Brodart's TIPS

Column Editors: **Elsie Pritchard** (Morehead State U.) and **Winn Theirl** (U. of Kentucky Medical Center)

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With this issue of *Against the Grain*, **Barbara Hale** and **Mary McLaren** pass along the Doc Aquis column to **Elsie Pritchard** of Morehead State University and **Winn Theirl** of the University of Kentucky Medical Center libraries. Our thanks to **Elsie** and **Winn** for agreeing to take over the column for the coming year in order to allow **Barb** and **Mary** to devote more time to some major projects in 1997, including the move to their new library building! And special thanks go to **Barb** and **Mary** for their creation and long association and hard work on Doc Aquis! — **KS**

Hello Readers! Let us introduce ourselves .. Perhaps you've already noticed that there are a couple of new names under the Column Editors heading in Doc Aquis. **Barb Hale** and **Mary McLaren**, previous column editors, have taken a temporary leave from the column for the year in order to work on some major projects, including the move to a new library building! Filling in during 1997 will be **Elsie Pritchard** of Morehead State University and **Winn Theirl** of the University of Kentucky Medical Center Library. We're excited about the year ahead and look forward to reporting to you the news and developments relating to acquisitions and document delivery. Now that you've met us, read on for our first report!

Brodart's TIPS

by **Elsie Pritchard**
(Assistant Director for Technical
Services, and Automation,
Morehead State University)

Product Description

In 1996, Brodart began beta testing an academic version of TIPS (Title Information Preview Service), a product which allows libraries to receive selection lists with fulltext reviews and bibliographic information, custom profiled to each library's needs. TIPS was originally marketed to public libraries starting in 1993, and it now has over 100 public and school

library subscribers and eight academic beta test sites. TIPS permits profiling by such criteria as reviewing, journal, publisher, series, author, subject, and media. Libraries have the option of receiving fulltext reviews from *Choice*, *Kirkus*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *School Library Journal*. Libraries can also choose to receive citations only for titles which were reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review*. For titles which are not reviewed, Brodart can provide bibliographic citations from its own file.

With TIPS, libraries can eliminate duplicates from one list to the next, and they can choose to see titles only after the titles have been reviewed a certain number of times. Libraries can also request pre-publication notification. Brodart offers a "selection window" which will give a title a certain length of time in which to accumulate reviews, before it appears on TIPS.

Lists come on paper or in electronic format (MARC or ASCII). Libraries using Brodart's **PC Rose** software for electronic ordering can choose to receive TIPS in PC Rose format. TIPS can be viewed or downloaded from Brodart's bulletin board, or libraries can receive the list on disk. Frequency can be weekly, bimonthly, monthly, or quarterly. The cost for TIPS varies with the options chosen. Libraries must pay a basic charge for each profile, and the cost increases if fulltext review journals are included. The basic charge varies by library size and type. A new profile must be set up for each list.

Library Experiences with TIPS

by **Elsie Pritchard**
(Assistant Director for Technical
Services, and Automation,
Morehead State University)

Brodart provided me with the names of some academic users of TIPS, and I contacted three librarians who generously shared their individual experiences. I talked to **Bob Johnston**, Acting Director of **Pennsylvania College of Technology** in Williamsport, a technical college offering both associate and baccalaureate de-

grees. Penn College Library has 66,800 volumes and a professional staff of five librarians. Penn College has been using TIPS on a trial basis for several months, initially because of the *Choice* reviews (which they have been receiving on cards for some time), as well as the reviews from other journals. The ability to set up special subject and age level profiles was also appealing to them. Johnston said they opted to receive reviews from *Choice*, *Library Journal*, and *Booklist*, and also bibliographic citations for unreviewed titles. After experimenting with the MARC and ASCII formats, they decided to receive TIPS in paper only. The library's online system, **SIRSI**, did not readily accept TIPS records, although Mr. Johnston does feel that the records could be loaded if more time could be devoted to working out problems. He also tried to use TIPS from a file on his workstation, but he found it too massive.

Librarians at Penn College receive the reviews divided into five broad subject areas based on LC classification number,

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one for each librarian involved in selecting. When the library is ready to order, the Acquisitions Department sometimes uses PC Rose software to check Brodart's database for title availability, although they are not using PC Rose for ordering. Mr. Johnston says that because they consider TIPS mainly as a replacement for *Choice*, they are retaining their subscription to the *Choice* cards during the evaluation period. While TIPS is more inclusive, it is also more expensive. They will continue to evaluate TIPS for several more months.

Another academic library using TIPS is The Cardinal Carter Library at **King's College** in London, Ontario. King's College, with 1,800 undergraduate students and 60 faculty, offers courses in the arts and social sciences and is affiliated with the University of Western Ontario. The Library has about 120,000 volumes. I communicated with **Dr. John S. Clouston**, Chief Librarian, who explained that "part of the purpose in trying out the TIPS programme has been to even out faculty selection, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and encourage greater participation by the three professional librarians in the selection process." The Library has been using TIPS since October 1996, initially as a beta test site. Dr. Clouston said that they were interested in TIPS because it offers several services — reviews, announcements, and ordering — by a single vendor.

Like Penn College, King's College is receiving reviews in paper format only. Dr. Clouston said that they haven't evaluated the MARC and ASCII formats, because the paper meets their needs very well. The paper list is routed to three librarians who mark their choices and send the list to Acquisitions for a holdings check. Orders are faxed to Brodart's office in Brantford, Ontario. Dr. Clouston originally hoped to order TIPS titles electronically from Brodart, but the library's system, **Dynix Horizon**, doesn't yet interface with Brodart. When King's College first started using TIPS, they chose to receive reviews and citations from *American Libraries*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Choice*, and *New York Times Book Review*. They immediately saw that this list was too much to handle, and they now receive only *Choice* and *New York Times*. They also set up a subject profile to tailor the list to their curriculum. The list is received twice a month.

Dr. Clouston noted that the TIPS subject thesaurus is currently more suitable for public and school libraries, but that Brodart is in the process of revising it for academic libraries. He also sees a need for Brodart to increase the number of systems

with which they interface for electronic ordering. King's College is pleased with TIPS and plans to continue using it.

Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, Illinois) is another TIPS beta test site. Northern Illinois is a large public university with an enrollment of 22,000. **Tom Peters**, Associate Director for Collections and Technical Services, says that "one way to think about the future of TIPS is that it could do for book reviews what approval plans did for book selection. The subject categories are not nearly as fine-grained as the categories for our **BNAM** book approval plan. We receive fulltext reviews from *Choice*, *LJ*, and *PW*. We also get review citations from the *NY Times Book Review*. We chose to have the reviews rough — sorted by LC class, so the four sources of reviews are all mixed together." Northern Illinois receives TIPS on floppy disks in the ASCII version twice a month. I asked Mr. Peters what particular needs TIPS meets for his library. He responded that "it's probably too soon to tell. I suspect that many of the books reviewed in these four reviewing sources probably already find their way into our collection, primarily through the approval plan. TIPS may serve as a safety net to ensure that we don't miss anything pertinent that is reviewed in any of the four [reviewing journals]. It may also serve well as a way to improve our collecting in the area of creative literature."

Mr. Peters describes the TIPS work flow as follows: "When I receive the diskette, I forward it to one of the systems people. He marks it up a little, then puts it up on our internal Web site. (I guess the hip word for this is 'intranet'). The subject specialist librarians then use their Web browser (Netscape) to access the site and scan and read the reviews. Because we have only two shipments (one month) of reviews up there now, it is too soon to tell how TIPS will fit into the selection work flow. TIPS may help the selectors to learn more about the books they already know about (and perhaps already have selected)."

According to Tom Peters, the ASCII version is hard on the eyes, and Brodart needs to improve the format so that libraries don't have to spend so much time cleaning it up. He also feels that "TIPS could become very useful for medium and large academic libraries if the number of review journals expanded to include more scholarly stuff. At this point, TIPS seems to be geared more toward public and school libraries." Northern Illinois hasn't yet decided if they will continue with TIPS after the end of their beta test agreement.

Morehead State University's Camden-Carroll Library (Morehead, Kentucky) has examined TIPS on a trial basis. Morehead State University, in northeastern Kentucky, is a regional public univer-

sity with 8,600 students. The Library has 377,000 volumes and 16 professional staff members. We first decided to try TIPS when we heard that it offered an opportunity to receive *Choice* reviews in an electronic format. Our Library has subscribed to *Choice* cards for decades, but the routing process takes so long that some things are well out of print by the time we try to order. So when we heard that we could get *Choice* electronically through TIPS, we envisioned a speedy distribution of subject-specific reviews to those involved in the selection process. Brodart sent us a small sample of *Choice* in ASCII format on disk, limited to just a few subjects in the area of science. I asked Brodart if they could break it into a separate file for each subject, but I was told that would require us to set up (and pay for) a new profile for each file. It took me several hours to clean up the file and break it into several narrower subject groupings. Incidentally, the subject headings used by Brodart are not those traditionally used by *Choice*, but some that are original to Brodart. As others have noted, the categories seem more appropriate for public and school libraries.

Until I worked with the sample, I had not realized how large the files would be. My original plan had been to email the subject lists to librarians and faculty, but I decided that faculty in particular would not like to receive such lengthy email messages, since some don't read their mail very regularly and are in perpetual hot water over taking up too much space on the campus computer. The sample lists from the sciences which I sent to several librarians were not nearly as large as literature or history lists would be, but most agreed that they would prefer cards over email, even for the shorter lists. The only person who liked the emailed list happened to get a list with just four reviews. We discussed the possibility of not routing the reviews and making them available centrally, but we did not think that would work well with our selection process. We are not using TIPS at the present time, although we haven't ruled it out for the future. I believe that it is a service with much potential, and Brodart seems interested in working with academic libraries to make it more attractive. If you are interested in giving Brodart some input, I suggest that you call.