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Doc Aquis-Librarian's Online Warehouse

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Doc Aquis

Librarian's Online Warehouse <http://www.libsonline.com>

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Ever wonder where to find die cutting equipment for libraries? What about library-related greeting cards? **The Librarian's Online Warehouse** is a Web site which can point you in the direction of such hard-to-find items, as well as list vendors for more mundane products such as books and periodicals.

Earlier this year, **Apollo Marketing Innovations** was formed by Californians **Jeff Davinni** and **Kirk Dulaney** to provide an easy-to-use Internet based online directory and buyers' guide for libraries called **The Librarian's Online Warehouse**. The site gathers together over 1,000 companies which offer services to libraries, with choices for product categories, company index, chat room, contest registration, ad rates, and publications. I contacted **Jeff Davinni**, who answered my questions about his business.

Product Categories and Companies

Product Categories are arranged hierarchically. Each category displays appropriate vendors, including a large number of small specialty companies that you might not encounter otherwise. Not all the categories have vendors listed, but Davinni expects the site to eventually include "hundreds of companies" in each category. The Company Index lists product categories for each company as well as addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and hyperlinks when available. When I asked Davinni which types of vendors were more likely to advertise, he said, "It does seem that some of the companies with more advanced technical divisions are more favorable to marketing on the Internet. Remember, the Internet is a new medium and a lot of people are still waiting to test the waters. That's another reason our listing prices are so reasonable..."

Contest Registration and Chat Room

On the Contest Registration page, you'll find an opportunity for librarians to get free stuff like the custom signage package being given away this month. But if you register, your name will go into a file of monthly leads to given to advertisers. While the Chat Room is not very active at present, Davinni says that he'd like to have the chat room "grow into an arena where industry experts and professionals can arrange important sessions/presentations to be heard worldwide."

Online Subscription Service

The Publications page is billed as an online subscription service, but only a fraction of the titles display hyperlinks. **ATG** appears, but without a hyperlink. Davinni plans to encourage more editors to participate and feels that "in time as our site becomes more and more popular, more publications will participate." When a hyperlink accompanies a listing, a message displays to "Click here for online subscription." The subscription request is emailed directly to the publication office, where it will be processed. **The Librarian's Online Warehouse** is not involved in billing or fulfillment.

Advertising

According to the Company and Advertising Information page,

vendors are promised "thousands of prospective buyers," monthly leads, and displays for "incredibly low rates." According to Davinni, vendors also receive statistical reports which list the number of hits to the site and to each category as well as the number of times visitors click on the vendor hyperlink.

How it All Started

How did the company begin? **Jeff Davinni** and **Kirk Dulaney** met while working for a library automation company, **Information Transform, Inc.** (producer of MITINET/MARC software). Davinni said, "I began as a sales representative and was promoted to Director of Marketing and Sales. While handling the marketing functions, one of our sales representatives, Kirk Dulaney, and I began to see a need for an easy to use Internet-based online directory and buyers' guide. We began asking clients and prospects about their opinions of any Internet directory that catered to their industry. We received only positive feedback and thus decided to create a company to fill this need.

"In the beginning of 1997 **The Librarian's Online Warehouse** was developed under our company **AMI** (Apollo Marketing Innovations). I am still employed as an acting marketing consultant with Information Transform, Inc. along with my responsibilities with **AMI** and **The Librarian's Online Warehouse**." **AMI** and **The Librarian's Online Warehouse** are not affiliated with Information Transform, Inc.

The Future

Davinni's long-term goals include an expanded chat room and the ability to purchase products directly through the site. In the near future he plans a new products section and hot links section as well as a list of all trade shows and associations.

When I first visited the Warehouse, I wasn't sure how the site would meet my needs. It didn't seem like a resource I would use to locate vendors for library books and periodicals because its offerings in those areas were not as complete as those on **AcqWeb**. The Chat Room showed signs of being a dud, and I generally steer clear of contests. I was really intrigued with the Publication page offering online subscriptions, but the small number of offerings limited its usefulness.

But that's now. **The Librarian's Online Warehouse** is bursting with potential as a purchasing resource. The site's real strength comes with the comprehensive scope of its offerings, which include more than traditional acquisitions-related goods and services. This came home to me when I discovered a small vendor who provided a service I needed but didn't know existed. With increased listings, more hyperlinks, and online purchasing, the Warehouse could be the librarian's best friend.

