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Chaos-Scanning the Bar Code on Serials

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Chaos — Scanning the Bar Code on Serials
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At the November 19, 1999 meeting of Book And Serial Industry Communications (BASIC, a result of the merger of the Book and Serial Industry Systems Advisory Committees — BISAC and SISAC), a noted bar code film master manufacturer reported that a major serial publisher had questioned the utility of printing the SISAC Bar Code Symbol on their journals. In an attempt to document the need for that bar code, I sent a message out on Serialist on November 21, asking those scanning the bar code to say so. The following is a summary of the responses.

Librarians told us that the following American ILS systems CAN scan the SISAC Bar Code Symbol: ExLibris; Horizon; Innopac; Innovative’s Millennium Serials; NOTIS; and SIRSI’s Stilas. We were told that the Pica system in Germany can do so. We hope that this prompts the other ILS vendors to provide this capability as well.

Elna L. Saxon, Head, Periodicals Services Department at University of Cincinnati Libraries said, “I recently found that in a sample of 925 periodicals, 32% had a SISAC bar code,” a fact we did not know before. Thanks, Elna.

Comments in support of the benefits of scanning include the following: “Not all titles have it, but we appreciate it when it’s there.” Nancy Cadmus, Serials Assistant, Grinnell College Library.

“I use them when they are available, it makes checking in a breeze. I wish more publishers would use them. If there is anything else that can be done to help influence publishersto use them, please let me know.” Deej Baker, Periodicals Coordinator, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

“We’d love to have this functionality, and are looking for it as we search for a new ILS. Please tell this publisher to keep those bar codes on there!” Kim Maxwell, Serials Acquisitions Librarian, MIT Libraries.

“At University of California, San Diego we are upgrading to a new system with the capability to scan SISAC codes. Wouldn’t it be tragic if we acquired a system with that capability just as it disappears?” Crystal Graham, Head, Digital Information & Serials Cataloging and Serials Librarian, University of California, San Diego.

“I asked the two women who check in all of our serials what they thought and they were aghast that it would be removed. They really like it and makes checking in so much easier.” Susan Mueller, Director of Technical Services, The University of Montana, Mansfield Library.

“It speeds up our processing and we really like using them. We wish more of our journal publications used SISAC codes!” Sharon Wiles-Young, Team Leader for Information Organization, Linderman Library, Lehigh University.

My thanks to all of those quoted above and the others whose support for the bar codes have resolved the question of their utility and convinced the journal publisher to keep them on their serials in the future!