GALILEO
A Vision for One Statewide Library

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Abstract

In August, 1994, the new Chancellor of the University System of Georgia asked his advisory staff to brainstorm in response to the question, "If you had $20 million, how would you spend it?" As a result of that question and an already established PeachNet, the telecommunications network for education in Georgia, GALILEO was officially launched at University System of Georgia institutions on September 21, 1995.

This presentation focuses on

• History of GALILEO
• Services to be rendered
• Necessary and desirable databases
• University System server sites
• Hardware and software selection
• Help Desk Activities

In a two-year period, GALILEO services have expanded beyond the initial 34 University System libraries to include technical schools, K-12 schools, two consortia of private colleges, and public libraries. Staffing has increased four fold.
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Profile

The state of Georgia comprises seven million people, is eleventh in size of the fifty states, and is geographically the largest state east of the Mississippi. The University System of Georgia is made up of 34 institutions: four research universities, two regional universities, thirteen four-year institutions, and fifteen two-year institutions. The institutions generate a total of 170,000 FTE (full time enrollment) and have a head count of 210,000. The chief officer of the University System is Chancellor Stephen R. Portch.

Origins/History of GALILEO

GALILEO was born of necessity melding with ideas, ideas melding opportunities, and opportunities melding with resources. Of course, the bulwark of functioning in a bureaucracy is the much maligned committee, which is where, long before anyone knew it, GALILEO got its start.

The Regents Academic Committee on Libraries (RACL) of the University System of Georgia (USG) was organized in 1968. RACL gave University System librarians an opportunity to meet regularly to discuss their concerns, possible common problems, and library management. Over time, computer technology became a part of library management, and with growth and new, expensive technology, costs escalated.

In an effort to manage costs and the burgeoning application of technology in libraries, the state EDP (electronic data processing) committee, which oversees all state computing procurements, recognized that a coordinated effort would be necessary in the selection of efficient and cost effective library automation systems. As a result, an advisory committee on information technology (IT) was formed in 1989 through the incentive of Dr. J. B. Mathews, then Vice Chancellor of Information Technology (VCIT).

The purpose of the advisory committee was to provide coordination, information, and support to USG libraries in information management and in automation. A core group of System librarians, along with a liaison from what is now the Office of Information and Instructional Technology (OIIT), began meeting on a regular basis in an effort to provide leadership for USG libraries. In keeping with the mandate of the EDP committee, the IT advisory committee made recommendations on the desired functions of an automation system and then selected a limited number of systems that could be adopted. The oversight of the IT advisory committee eventually expanded to address other library needs, such as lack of bibliographic records in computer format; resource sharing—especially electronic databases; and cost efficient automation of smaller libraries.
In August, 1994, the new Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, Dr. Stephen R. Portch, asked his advisory staff, including the liaison from the VCIT, to brainstorm in response to the question, “If you had $20 million, how would you spend it?” When the suggestion that $6 million be allocated to develop system-wide library services in the state of Georgia—shared databases, universal borrowing, unlimited access—realization of the expensive, logistically complicated idea seemed beyond expectation, much less reality. Everyone involved with developing the innovative project was excited, but cautious: library needs often go unmet because of scarce public dollars.

By the time the opportunity came to write a proposal for one statewide library in 1994, however, the committee had been compiling and incubating ideas that were able to be funneled into the focused effort that became GALILEO. The groundwork to write the proposal and the electronic infrastructure to allow ready implementation of the proposal of resource sharing already existed: PeachNet, Georgia's telecommunications network for education. These developments converged with Governor Miller's dedicating state lottery money to education. (The Georgia lottery was implemented in the 1994-95 Legislative Session; all proceeds are earmarked for education.) GALILEO certainly was an educational advantage and became the beneficiary of lottery funds. Best of all, GALILEO would serve the entire population of Georgia, not only those formally enrolled in educational institutions.

The title, A Vision for One Statewide Library, crystallized through conference calls and e-mail among various staff. After a flurry of activity, the Chancellor, who was excited by the prospect of providing vastly improved and superior library access and services to USG students, faculty, and staff, received the completed proposal requesting $6 million dollars in his office as stipulated. Because access to PeachNet was integral to the success of this project, the Chancellor saw the need to include a PeachNet upgrade in the statewide library proposal; the funding request climbed to $10 million.

The Chancellor and his staff presented A Vision for One Statewide Library to the Georgia legislative committees prior to the Georgia General Assembly session which convened in January, 1995. Governor Zell Miller and the General Assembly supported and approved the proposal in late February, 1995.

GALILEO was officially launched at University System of Georgia institutions on September 21, 1995. System institution librarians of Georgia eagerly set up workstations and printers purchased expressly for GALILEO, and paper records were converted to electronic format. As with many significant developments, a convergence of ideas, need, and opportunity created GALILEO. Collaboration was key.

**Original GALILEO Components and Budget**

Six main components were necessary to launch GALILEO: 1) expand PeachNet; 2) provide for
electronic full-text of core journals, state documents, census data, and research journals; 3) expand interlibrary loan activities; 4) convert card catalogs to computer format; 5) automate remaining USG libraries; and 6) provide state-of-the-art workstations to all USG libraries.

Beginning in October 1994, when the Governor first incorporated A Vision for One Statewide Library into the FY 96 budget request, the OIIT advisory committee began serious planning for vendor selection: databases, hardware, and software. System librarians begin to lobby legislators. In November 1994, the committee began vendor interviews; in December 1994, University of Georgia (UGA) programming staff began working on the project; and in February 1995, vendors were selected—UMI for full-text core databases and OCLC FirstSearch. Hiring of GALILEO full-time staff began in June 1995.

In order to implement the GALILEO project, several immediate connectivity matters had to be accomplished. PeachNet, the already in-place, effective educational network in Georgia, had to be expanded to handle the new network traffic, and line speeds at USG institutions needed to be upgraded. Additionally, the two GALILEO server sites, the University of Georgia and Georgia State University, required additional bandwidth to support the anticipated network load.

After connectivity issues were addressed, software selection commenced. The GALILEO implementation committee selected OCLC SiteSearch (WebZ) software as the GALILEO search tool. OCLC was the first vendor to offer a Z39.50 compliant web server; the web server seemed to provide much flexibility in offering the desired searching capabilities. Additionally, the web client was becoming prevalent as a user tool in the Internet environment and, for the general user (library patron), required minimal end-user training. The GALILEO reference committee led the effort in designing GALILEO search screens while project programmers, a group from the UGA library and GALILEO staff, began customizing OCLC SiteSearch menus. The databases from UMI—including full-text, digitized state documents, and research journal indexes would be locally loaded, and the FirstSearch databases would be accessed remotely through an OCLC gateway until GALILEO screens could be finalized.

A USG committee devoted much thought and planning to selecting additional databases, the most productive, comprehensive databases for the dollar investment. In addition to UMI (all files plus full text), OCLC FirstSearch, and Current Contents, the selection committee recommended Encyclopedia Britannica and Cambridge Scientific Abstracts.

Since vendor pricing was more favorable than originally anticipated, the GALILEO budget was stretched to include a set of databases published by Gale Research and Academic Press, thus bringing the cadre of GALILEO resources to over 120 databases for academic libraries.

To expedite interlibrary loan, high speed fax machines were placed in all System libraries, and a courier service contract was let for moving materials not available electronically among System institutions—a crucial element in creating a statewide library.

A major undertaking was to automate the remaining seven University System libraries that had not
been automated. A primary task in the automation component was to ensure that all paper records of the to-be-automated libraries were converted to computer format. Additionally, records from the already automated libraries were on tap for conversion, thus enhancing even those automated libraries not having all records in computer format. The universal conversion of all paper records would allow the existing Georgia Union Catalog to be expanded.

The Governor, Zell Miller, and the Georgia State Legislature supported the concept of one statewide library by appropriating lottery and state funds to develop the project. The original budget of $10 million FY 95 and FY 96 monies was allocated accordingly:

- Expand PeachNet $4M
- Workstations/Printers $1M
- Server Hardware—2 sites $700K
- Server Software $130K
- Staff—4 FTE $130K
- Expedite Interlibrary Loan $600K
- Complete Retrocon $1.5M
- Automate Remaining Libraries $400K
- Database Licenses $1.5M
Expansion to Other Libraries

With the recognized success and convenience of GALILEO and because of an earlier pilot NSF grant that connected designated regional public libraries to PeachNet, numerous other educationally related entities in Georgia were investigating securing PeachNet connections and/or access to GALILEO. The first to come into the GALILEO fold in early 1996 was the University Center in Georgia, a consortium of public and private academic libraries in the Atlanta area—12 of which are private academic institutions. The endeavor was funded by a three-year grant from the Woodruff Foundation. Shortly thereafter, with funding announced for FY 97, the state’s 32 technical institutes and the fifty-seven regional public library systems and the public library headquarters were earmarked for inclusion in GALILEO. Implementation of technical institutes and public libraries evolved over a nine month period. Additionally in 1996, a group of private academic libraries formed an association expressly to join GALILEO’s consortia of libraries.

As a result of the 1997 legislative session, funding was made available for libraries in the remaining 101 counties and the 180 public school districts to have access to PeachNet and GALILEO. The implementation would be spread over an eighteen month period. In the Georgia school districts, the 1,818 schools were to be provided with dial access to GALILEO.

With the advent of almost all of Georgia’s educational entities gaining access to GALILEO, the decision was made that a universal core of GALILEO databases should be made available to all Georgians. Librarians from each GALILEO consortium recognized, that regardless of their individual institutional missions and student requirements, the overall goal of a statewide library would dictate which databases must be available for constituencies. Thus, the core set of databases for all Georgians was established:

- UMI—all files plus full text
- EBSCO Masterfile with full text
- Colliers Encyclopedia
- OCLC First Search
- ERIC
- Georgia State Documents
- United States and Georgia Census Data
- Public databases provided by Georgia Net

Additional databases used by academic libraries include Current Contents, Britannica Online, GALE, Academic Press, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, Chadwyck-Healey Literary Files, Dialog®/CARL (50 full text newspapers), and the Oxford English Dictionary.

Usage

Usage statistics are tracked on-line. Reports may be generated by users. (See
http://www.galileo2.peachnet.edu/stats.html.

Usage statistics keep climbing. Since the inception of GALILEO—September 1995—until November 11, 1997, there have been 6,336,748 keyword searches and 2,861,735 full-text searches. During the week of October 21, usage tracking indicates 410 simultaneous users. It is anticipated that by winter quarter 1998, GALILEO will reach the 500 simultaneous users mark.

**Governance**

A steering committee, composed of 19 individuals representing all types of GALILEO libraries, is the body that sets GALILEO policy. (See http://www.peachnet.edu/galileo/governance.html) Various subcommittees—Reference, Assessment, Interlibrary Loan, and Collection Development, to name a few—make recommendations to the steering committee. A GALILEO coordinator oversees business operations, including budget management and contract negotiations, and is responsible for GALILEO help desk services.

**Conclusion**

GALILEO is quickly fulfilling its mission to become One Statewide Library. In fact, GALILEO is fulfilling the mission of becoming an electronic library for all citizens. GALILEO is a powerful vision that has broad-based appeal and one that offers increasing economies of scale. GALILEO should be viewed as an added value rather than as a replacement for local library resources, the services provided viewed as additions not replacements for print resources.

Even though GALILEO resources are cheaper when purchased collectively, GALILEO should not be viewed as a cost cutting device. The true value of GALILEO is in the increased levels of services it provides. Nevertheless, there is the potential of future cost containment because when groups collaborate on a consortial basis, cost savings can be realized. GALILEO should be viewed as an extension of Georgia services that provide resources to new audiences and offer an increased level of convenience and critical service.