

NEWS

For Immediate Release

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PASCAL Launches South Carolina's Virtual Academic Library

Columbia, SC — PASCAL (Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries), a consortium of over 50 South Carolina academic libraries, has “broken ground” on the South Carolina Virtual Academic Library. In December, Joe Boykin, chair of PASCAL’s board of directors and dean of libraries at Clemson University, announced two major program initiatives that will reshape the way South Carolina’s students, faculty, and researchers acquire information. First, PASCAL signed an annual license for a collection of 12 EBSCO databases that extend access to over 12,000 full-text titles in core academic disciplines, health sciences, and business. PASCAL’s second initiative, “universal borrowing,” powered by Innovative Interfaces’ INN-Reach solution, will create a virtual collection of over 12 million volumes that will make almost every book in every academic library in South Carolina available to a student or faculty member in any one of the academic libraries in the state, usually within 24 hours, regardless of the size or location of their technical college, four year college, university, or medical school. The programs are being funded through \$2 million in lottery funds provided by the South Carolina General Assembly.

Cost Effective

Through its statewide license agreement with EBSCO, PASCAL was able to multiply the buying power of each dollar spent on the databases over five times, thus reducing by over \$2 million the amount that would have been spent if each individual institution had acquired these resources independently. “The cumulative power of this ‘cost avoidance’ is phenomenal,” noted Rick Moul, PASCAL’s executive director. “Over ten years, a similar academic consortium in Virginia has recorded approximately \$125 million! With a sustained program, we could achieve similar results for South Carolina.” An additional benefit of the program is the fact that cash-strapped PASCAL libraries will be able to use the funds currently spent on small subsets of the EBSCO package to acquire other vital resources.

“Knowledge in electronic form is increasingly expensive, and South Carolina’s academic libraries struggle to provide the resources that support quality higher education, a skilled workforce, business growth, and lifelong learning,” observed David Cohen, dean of libraries at the College of Charleston. “This represents a tremendous development for the over 150,000 students in the state.”

Expanding Collection Sizes

“By this time next year,” says Mark Herring, dean of libraries at Winthrop University, “South Carolina students and faculty will be able to retrieve any of millions of volumes from any academic library in the state by making a simple Web request. Books will arrive at the user's home library within two days or less.” Rick Moul, PASCAL's executive director notes that virtual collection lending in other states generally costs two-thirds less than traditional interlibrary loans and is more heavily used. This has been proven by the experience of similar INN-Reach systems like California's LINK+ and OhioLINK, and a recent Association of Research Libraries study that placed Innovative Interfaces' solution in the top tier of speed and cost effectiveness (Mary Jackson, 2004).

Access to knowledge, through databases, electronic and print versions of journals and books, has become a fundamental component of higher education. Many states have realized it is also valuable fuel for the economic development engine that education and research support. With the PASCAL initiatives South Carolina is entering the game in a major way.

Information on each program is provided in the accompanying press releases.

About PASCAL

In 2001, South Carolina academic libraries formed PASCAL -- Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (pascal.tcl.sc.edu) -- to address information-access problems. Today, PASCAL is a consortium of well over 50 public and private academic libraries dedicated to improving information resources, access and services at each member institution's library. PASCAL programs include electronic resource licensing, universal borrowing among its members; statewide access to historical, cultural and educational resources through collaboration and digitization; and professional development of its member librarians. These projects have been characterized as the South Carolina Academic Virtual Library.

An important dimension of PASCAL's program is its cooperation with state government agencies. The SC Commission on Higher Education, the SC State Library, the Budget and Control Board's Division of the State CIO, and the Department of Archives and History are all partners with the member libraries. For example, PASCAL's programs will include the SC State Library, thus making member resources available to South Carolina government employees. Another important partner is South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities (SCICU), which promotes the cause of independent higher education in South Carolina.

More information on PASCAL may be found at <http://pascal.tcl.sc.edu/>. More information on PASCAL's partners and service providers may be found at <http://pascal.tcl.sc.edu/members/members.html>

About EBSCO

EBSCO is a worldwide leader in providing information access and management solutions through print and electronic journal subscription services, research database development and production, online access to more than 150 databases and thousands of e-journals, a full-featured OpenURL link resolver, and e-commerce book

procurement. EBSCO has been serving the library and business communities for more than 60 years. Additional information on EBSCO Industries is available from www.ebscoind.com.

About Innovative Interfaces

With over 25 years of partnership with the library community, Innovative Interfaces (www.iii.com) is the leader in providing Web-powered, Java™-based integrated library management systems. Its flagship product offering, Millennium, is installed in thousands of libraries in 42 countries around the world. The company is headquartered in Emeryville, California, with offices in Australia, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Korea, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

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