

## In this Issue:

### The Virtual Library Takes off

## A PASCAL Christmas

For the state's public and private academic librarians, the 2004 Christmas left them smiling from ear to ear. It wasn't Santa Claus who left them bundles of treats, but the state's legislators. Nine months ago the General Assembly provided funding for South Carolina's academic virtual library. Over the holidays, PASCAL's membership consisting of 56 of the state's public and private academic libraries, used those funds to "break ground" on two major virtual library initiatives. Soon, not only will the state's over 150,000 college and university students be smiling, but the PASCAL initiative will have every citizen of South Carolina who uses any of these academic libraries smiling from ear to ear, too.

First, PASCAL signed an annual license with EBSCO, a **worldwide leader in the information access field**, for a collection of 12 databases to provide access to over 12,000 full-text titles in core academic disciplines, health sciences, and business. PASCAL's second initiative is "universal borrowing," powered by Innovative Interfaces' INN-Reach system. This system will make almost every book in every South Carolina academic library available to a student or faculty member in any one of the academic institutions in the state regardless of the size or location of their technical college, four year college, university or medical school. Books in this virtual collection of almost 13 million volumes will usually be available within 24 hours.

### Core Research Journals

EBSCO's *Academic Search Premier* is one of the world's most valuable and most abundant collections of active full-text peer-reviewed journals; and *Business Source Premier*, the definitive scholarly business database. Between them, the databases provide in depth full text resources in many academic and business disciplines. Previously, only four institutions in the state were able to make both of these tremendous resources available to their users. The EBSCO package also includes major nursing and allied health sciences (*CINAHL*), and language and literature (*MLA International Bibliography*) databases.

### Everyone Benefits

But this is only the beginning of the bounty. According to PASCAL's financial plan, additional packages of comparable impact are on tap for this spring and in subsequent fiscal years. Our vision is to make sure that students at South Carolina's public and independent colleges and universities will have the same information resources available to them as are at comparable institutions anywhere in the country. Moreover, any citizen of South Carolina who visits any of these libraries will also have access. In partnership with DISCUS, the State Library's virtual library program, we plan to make

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### PASCAL Highly Cost-Effective

more and more resources directly available to all citizens over time. Indeed, PASCAL was able to extend access to three health science and education databases to *all* citizens in their homes or businesses via DISCUS, and state employees will have access to the *entire* collection through the State Library. By funding PASCAL, state legislators have helped the state's academic libraries "avoid" millions of dollars if these databases had been purchased separately by all 56 institutions of higher learning. For a fraction of the cost, the state's academic libraries will enjoy \$2.7 million worth of new resources. Indeed, the EBSCO package multiplied the buying power of the state's academic libraries over five times!

### Expanding Collections

PASCAL's universal borrowing program will similarly reshape access to print resources. By this time next year, South Carolina students and faculty will be able to retrieve any of almost 13 million 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. 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. Funding for this initiative has also come via the state's wise legislators.

### Thank Your Legislators...

Since these programs involve ongoing commitments, funding must remain in place to keep this momentum going, but with so many benefiting from the largess, we think it's an easy decision. 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.

### Then Thank Them Again!

We owe a huge debt of thanks to South Carolina's forward thinking legislators. Without the General Assembly's approval, none of this would have been possible. Without its continued support, this gigantic step forward will be lost in one year. Christmas decorations have come and gone. Mistletoe no longer guards archways for the unwary. Even so, you may want to take the time to thank your legislator when you see him or her again. In fact, you may even want to give him or her a hug, the missing mistletoe notwithstanding.

### Stay Tuned!

PASCAL and South Carolina's virtual academic library are changing rapidly. To keep up-to-date with these programs, our digital collections initiative, and other activities, please check our website often: <http://pascal.tcl.sc.edu/>