

AGENDA ITEM: Telecommunications Infrastructure - Z39.50

GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATES:

In 1998 CLSA funds were allocated by the California Library Services Board (predecessor to the Library of California Board) for \$7,500 grants to public libraries to acquire Z39.50 server software for their library automation systems. Using Z39.50, remote users could search a library's online catalog via the Internet.

As part of its implementation efforts the Library of California Board (LCB) assumed responsibility for making future Z39.50 server software grants and expanded the program to include all types of libraries meeting certain eligibility and technical requirements.

In addition to the Z39.50 server grants, the LCB also uses California Library Services Act (CLSA) funds to subsidize the ongoing cost of Z39.50 access to public library catalogs (\$500 per year), and to subsidize the ongoing cost of Z39.50 Gateway Client systems that are managed by CLSA Cooperative Library Systems (\$5,000 per year).

The purpose of funding the development of Z39.50 connectivity is to establish the infrastructure necessary to create a virtual statewide database representing the holdings of California libraries. Such a database is an important component of a cluster of access services envisioned in the Library of California Act.

CURRENT STATUS: A strong focus of the Library of California is the development and support of a telecommunications network to enable all libraries to share their resources with each other. Z39.50 is a protocol that allows for the searching of one or more library online catalogs over the Internet, regardless of the proprietary software and hardware on each local computer system. The Board's decision to continue and expand the Z39.50 server software support and server access programs is facilitating the development of a network of virtual library catalogs for access by California library users. It is critical that this network be developed and maintained to establish a statewide database that reflects the most current holdings of California's libraries and to support sharing of resources for all Californians.

At its February 1999 meeting the Board directed its Chief Executive Officer to implement a Z39.50 server software reimbursement program for libraries who meet the eligibility requirements for participation in the Library of California

and technical requirements that promote open access to library catalogs via Z39.50. Forty-six grants have been awarded in cycles one and two representing multitype libraries throughout the state. These libraries represent more than 4,700,000 in population served and make available more than 8,323,000 volumes.

Cycle 3 Grant Applications

The current application and grant award materials have been made consistent with current Board guidelines for the awards, and have improved the application process. With the revisions incorporated in the application materials staff expect a high success rate for approval and successful implementation. The revised grant packets were released the week of January 13, 2000. The announcement has been mailed to a broad list and was posted to multiple electronic mail lists used by all types of libraries throughout California, and is available on the Library of California web site. Four new applications are currently in process and are pending approval.

InfoPeople and the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) offered a workshop *on Nuts and Bolts of Z39.50* in San Francisco in February. Staff attended this workshop and informed the attendees of the availability of Z39.50 server software grants. InfoPeople is offering another workshop, *The Z39.50 Information Retrieval Protocol: A Basic Introduction* (Exhibit A) in May that staff will attend and again provide information on Z39.50 server software grants. Personal contact with workshop attendees has assisted staff in understanding the needs of libraries in making Z39.50 operational and provides another opportunity to answer questions and assist libraries in the application procedure.

Relevant Committee: Support Services
Staff Liaison: Ira Bray