

STARTING AND RUNNING YOUR LIBRARY

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This session will give an overview of basic issues about starting and running a library, including policy statements, organization, budget, staffing, collection development, and preparing for automation.

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2. A library vs. a room full of books.
3. Six general issues to consider
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 - c. Staffing requirements and job descriptions
 - d. Budget
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Sherry Wasserman

This session will give an overview of basic issues about starting and running a library, including policy statements, organization, budget, staffing, collection development, and preparing for automation.

This Freshman Seminar is designed for people who are either new to librarianship or are volunteers who suddenly find themselves in charge of a Jewish library but have little or no experience in organizing and running any kind of a library. We are going to discuss basic issues that relate to starting and running a library and my rule of thumb will be that you know practically nothing about doing this, but please remember that it is not just you who need direction and help, but also the powers that be that you have to deal with when you get back home. I hope when you leave this seminar, you will feel that you know something about how to proceed so you can be the one with the ability to guide your institutions towards achieving the goal of having a real functional library.

WHAT MAKES A LIBRARY?

Let's start with the most basic issue of all and ask the question what is a library? The dictionary has the main definition a library is "a place in which literary, musical, artistic, or reference materials (as books, manuscripts, recordings or films) are kept for use but not for sale". But this is not a satisfactory definition because it could be a description of just a room full of books and not what we normally think of as a library. So we need to look further for a secondary or sub-definition and indeed there is one - "a library is an institution for the custody or administration of such a collection". So what are the defining features that separate a "library institution" from a "room full of books"? Please look at the hand out entitled "A Library vs. A Room Full of Books" which shows how these two entities differ. Let's look at their different characteristics.

A Library vs. A Room Full of Books

Check the box in each row that applies to your institution. The left column includes characteristics of a library. The right column includes characteristics of a room with reading and viewing materials. Which column best describes your institution? Which column do you want your institution to fit into?

LIBRARY	ROOM WITH READING MATERIALS
<input type="checkbox"/> Has established policies and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Is very informal; functions casually and “off the cuff”
<input type="checkbox"/> Managed by a professional librarian, at least part-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Staffed by volunteers and aides; no management is evident
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials are acquired in an orderly and rational manner and further the library’s mission and goals	<input type="checkbox"/> The collections consists mainly of gifts; acquired randomly with no particular purpose or over-arching scheme
<input type="checkbox"/> A professionally recognized classification system is consistently applied to all materials and materials are organized to facilitate bibliographic access and retrieval	<input type="checkbox"/> Little or no classification and cataloging; a simple organizational scheme such as alphabetization is used
<input type="checkbox"/> Has a system for circulating materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials are circulated on the “honor system”
<input type="checkbox"/> Has an annual budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Depends on gifts or small, occasional institutional subsidies
<input type="checkbox"/> Has a dedicated space	<input type="checkbox"/> Library operations may be interrupted or curtailed when space is needed for other purposes

It is perfectly fine if your institution falls in the category of “Room Full of Books.” You just have to recognize that that’s what you are. You might decide that a “Room Full of Books,” or a “Reading Room” or “Reading Center,” is what is right for your institution. However if your institution wants a truly functioning library, you have to meet the requirements listed in the “Library” column.

As you get started, no matter whether you are establishing a library or a space with a collection of reading materials in it, you must first consider the following 6 general issues. Answering the questions posed by these general issues in writing will generate structure and order to your new library and provide a mechanism to help deal with governing boards and patrons who may not understand the reasons for the policies and rules you set up. They will keep your library on the right track.

1) **What is the purpose of your endeavor? Who will it serve? Why is it being established?**

From these questions a **Mission Statement** can be created. You need to have a mission statement to define what your library is going to be. As you begin to answer these questions, you will find that they tend to overlap each other. But by answering them you can put together a broad general expression of the goals and objectives that your library is going set out to accomplish. And keep in mind that these are goals and not all of them will be realized at the beginning. Every library will have a unique mission statement that reflects its own unique situation. There are no right-or-wrong answers, but you have to decide on your purpose and scope and you have to have it written down as a firm policy. This written mission statement will provide guidelines for all the rest of the decisions you need to make to organize your library. Everything else you do must fall inside the parameters of the mission statement.

2) **What will it consist of in terms of the depth and breadth of the collection and the types of materials it will have in it?** Its contents need to serve its Mission. From this question a

Collection Development Policy can be created. A collection development policy should cover every aspect of how you will build and maintain your collection. Acquisitions is how you build the collection and the acquisitions section of a Collection Development Policy defines what materials will be collected, for whom the material be will collected, and the scope of the collection. It should also include procedures for accepting and rejecting gifts. Just because someone donates a book to the library doesn’t mean you have to add it to the library collection. Even if it’s free! If you wouldn’t go out and purchase the item for the library because it doesn’t meet your collection development goals, then it doesn’t matter if someone is willing to give it to the library for free. If it is not furthering your library’s mission then you don’t need it. But you have to have a policy that spells out your criteria to allow you to gracefully decline. The second section of the collection development policy relates to maintaining your collection. Remember you are always going to want to add new materials, but available shelf space is finite. At some

point you are going to want to weed the collection of old, outdated, unused, or damaged items or other materials that no longer are needed. You need a written policy in place that allows you to withdraw, de-select, and dispose of materials that are no longer needed, even if they were gifts or donations.

- 3) **Who will manage the library and provide services?** From this will come **staffing requirements** and **job descriptions**. Every person employed in your institution, no matter how small, has a job description—the secretary who answers the phones has a job description, the Rabbi has a job description, the principal has a job description, and the maintenance person has a job description. The librarian needs a job description too! Traditionally in libraries there are 3 kinds of staff positions: professional (librarian, clerical and support. The librarian is responsible for budgeting and managing the library and usually handles reference work, collection development, classification, and programming. The clerks handle circulation, fines, overdues, and book processing and provide clerical help to the librarian. The support staff re-shelved the books and kept things neat. If you are a one man show and are expected to do it all think about utilizing volunteers to do some of the clerical and support tasks, then put managing and training volunteers into the librarian job description. None of us have enough hours in the day, whether we are working full-time or part-time, to accomplish what is needed, therefore you need to have a job description so that you are not wasting your time on things that somebody else in your institution is better able or suited to do.

- 4) **What annual budget will be needed for start-up costs and on-going expenditures, including acquisitions and staff salaries?** An annual budget needs to factor in a book/ materials budget, salaries, supplies, and other fixed recurring expenses such as automation support if you are automated, mailing and paper costs, and programming costs. And then there are start up costs like furniture, automation, or other capital expenses. You cannot have a functioning library that exists solely on donations. Even if the majority of your funding is coming from donations you have to know that every year you can count on a minimum amount of funding from the institution.

- 5) **What will be circulated (loaned), to whom, for how long?** From these questions a **Circulation Policy** can be created. A circulation policy specifies the eligible borrowers for each different type of material, the loan period, ability and frequency of renewal, borrowing limitations (how will you limit the borrowing of holiday books in the weeks immediately prior to

the holiday?), timing and frequency of overdue notices, fine schedules, and rules for payments for lost materials.

- 6) **What will be the library's operational procedures: what hours will it be open, how will it be staffed in terms of professional and clerical responsibilities, how will its materials be organized?** This is the catch all question that gets down to the nitty-gritty issues of day to day practice in the library, and it leads to many more specific questions about library availability, cataloging, classification, reference assistance, behind the scenes activities and use of volunteers. And it leads me to an additional 10 essential questions that need to be answered. Answering them will help to answer the questions just discussed.

10 Essential Questions

1. Who are the primary users? Who are the other (secondary) users?

For example, students, faculty/teachers, parents, senior citizens, the general public, members of the Jewish community, rabbis, cantors, and staff. You need to decide who your users are. If you are in school maybe your users are only going to be the students, the parents, the rabbis, and the staff of your school. Who are the most important people that you are designing and developing your library for? For example, in a synagogue library you might decide that the primary users of your library are your congregants, the rabbis, and the synagogue staff. In the process your library may also be able to serve the general public and other members of the community, but these are your secondary users, not your primary users.

2. What types of materials will be available?

For example, fiction books, non-fiction books, children's books, reference material, audio-books, music cassettes and CDs, videos, websites, periodicals, databases, puzzles, games, toys, posters, maps, computer software, etc. Also, what languages will your material be in? Will you have only English language materials, or will your collection also include material in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, or other languages? Will all types of material be circulating? For instance, will you allow patrons to checkout computer software, puzzles, and games? There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, however, it is important that your institution decides what types of materials will be purchased and acquired.

3. What space is available? Is the space sufficient to house the desired materials? What are the space requirements?

The size of your space is going to affect your decisions on what types of users you are going to serve and what types of materials you will collect. On the flip side, the types of users you would like to serve and the types of materials you would like to collect will affect the amount of space needed. Also, is the library a dedicated space or will library operations be interrupted or curtailed when space is needed for other purposes? While we all have to deal with sharing our space, will the space sharing interrupt library use? You may encourage groups within your institution to hold meetings or classes in the library to expose and introduce people to the library, but you have to have control over the space so that the library does not have to stop being a library when someone else wants to utilize it.

4. What materials and services are available from either local public libraries, synagogue libraries, day school, or community libraries? What materials and services do not need to be duplicated by your institution?

For example, if the public library has copies of popular “main-stream” titles, then you might not need to purchase them for your library. If a patron requests it you can refer them to the local public library. Another example is back-issues of periodicals. Almost all of the periodicals that we collect in our libraries are available (and easily accessible) on microfilm at public and/or academic institutions, so you may not need to waste storage or shelf space maintaining back-issues. Or, for instance, the congregation down the street received a large donation to purchase Jewish audio books. Assuming you have a reciprocal relation with them, you may not need to collect Jewish audio books because you can refer your patrons to another local congregation. You have to make decisions about your collection development based on what is available in your community and based on the needs of your users. Don’t forget the power of reciprocity and Inter-Library Loan to expand your service to your patrons. It is essential to know what other libraries are collecting both in the Jewish community and in your community at large. We can’t be everything to everyone!

5. How will materials be acquired?

If purchased new, what is the annual budget? Who sets up accounts with library jobbers, online booksellers or local bookstores? Who will select the materials? Is the Rabbi selecting the books for the library or is the librarian? What criteria should be used to select materials? Where do you find reviews of new Jewish titles? You want access to the AJL Newsletter reviews, and AJL’s New Jewish Values Finder website. Who will order, label, process, and catalog the materials acquired? Who gets to recommend books to be purchased? If somebody recommends a book does the library have to purchase

it? If materials are acquired by donations, who will decide what to keep and what to discard? What will be done to dispose of unwanted materials? A donor agreement is recommended so that all donors understand that donated material becomes the sole property of the library and that the library can decide to de-select, withdraw, or remove it from the collection at any time.

6. How will the collection of materials be organized so that people can find what they are looking for on the shelf?

Is your library organized to provide good browsing? Are similar items, either in content or format, shelved close together so a patron can walk to a section and just look at the shelf to find what he wants? How is it classified? Will you use one of the Judaic classification systems like Weine or Elazar or will the material be organized in some other way?

7. How will materials be checked in and out?

Will there be an automated circulation system? If the library is not automated there needs to be a procedure for circulation like sign out cards. How will missing titles be identified and located? Will you charge fines for overdue items? How will you charge for lost items? Will there be a separate system for when the library is open but un-staffed?

8. How will borrowers find out if you own the materials they want?

What kind of access will there be to your collection? Will there be an automated catalog? Will there be adequate signage, a card catalog, a book Catalog, a map of the library? Who (or what) will be there to help borrowers find the materials they want?

9. When will the library be open? When will the library be staffed? Who will train the

volunteers? Will the library be open the same hours as your school or synagogue? Will it be open to your patrons all the time that you are there working or will there be times when you are the only one around? What percentage of open time will it be un-staffed? Is there money to pay staff to be in the library all the time it is open for use or will you use volunteers? Are there security issues for materials and staff that need to be considered in relation to the hours you are open.

10. Who will be responsible for ordering equipment and supplies, including those needed on an on-going basis? Who is in charge of requesting or ordering needed supplies such as staples, paper clips, pens, pencils, paper, etc.? These tasks are usually done by clerical staff. Will there be clerical library staff to do it or will it be the librarian's responsibility?

I am sure that with little trouble you can find many more questions to ask and answer. But these 16 that I have talked about will certainly get you started and on the way to a real library and away from a “collection of books”. For a while you may find your institution to be part library and part collection of books. But to get all the way there, if there is institutional support for a functioning library, the following additional issues need to be addressed:

- **Develop a job description for a salaried, professional (MLS) librarian, at least part-time.**
- **Gain approval for a yearly library budget from institutional operating funds.**
- **Institute a dedicated space for the library.**

Tips for Starting a New Library

For those of you who are starting from scratch, who may be involved in building a library or remodeling a space to become a library here are some additional hints to help in the process.

1. **Form a library committee** consisting of institutional decision-makers, volunteers, and residents. Meaningful planning requires the participation of stakeholders; plans should be made by consensus to ensure support. You can't make these decisions by yourself. You need input from the library supporters and the library patrons to answer all of these questions and address all of these issues. Involve them in the creation of your mission statement.
2. **Get professional advice.** Utilize an architect who is knowledgeable about libraries or professional library planner about space planning. (However many electrical outlets you think you need, double it). Contact sales representatives from library furnishing and equipment vendors will estimate shelving and seating needs and show you what is available.
3. **Determine a preliminary budget;** when starting from scratch remember that there are two parts to the budget creation process. One is budgeting for the building or remodeling project itself which includes the costs architectural or consultant fees, the building itself, the cost of the furniture, shelving, computers and automation system etc. The other is budgeting for the ongoing operation of the new facility. This operating budget should include staffing, annual automation costs, allocations for supplies (stamps, pockets, cards, labels, office supplies, etc.), subscriptions, professional dues, photocopying and mailing costs, programs, professional development (local and national conferences and workshops), new materials and ongoing supplies. Keep in mind, in 2005, the average price of an adult hardcover book was \$25 for fiction, \$41 for non-fiction, and \$74 for reference titles. Adult paperbacks average \$15 for

fiction and \$28 for non-fiction. Hardcover children's books average \$21 - \$19 for picture books, \$17 for fiction, and \$25 for non-fiction; children's paperbacks average \$9. By now these numbers have probably gone up and even with an "educational discount" the costs are high.

4. Become a member of the Association of Jewish Libraries and get involved with your local chapter, if available. Yearly AJL dues for at least one staff member should be written into the budget and covered by the institution. Request that your institution play for all or part of your expenses to attend AJL Conventions each year or every-other year. Also, request institutional funds to allow you to take advantage of professional development opportunities in the general library field like State library association workshops and conference. Insist that these expenses be written into your contract or into the library budget so that you do not have to ask for the funding every year. Your institution needs to understand that professional development will enable you to be a better, more educated, knowledgeable, and professional librarian and this will insure a higher quality of library services. Visit the AJL website at www.jewishlibraries.org for membership information, a list of AJL publications, the AJL Bibliography Bank, Chapter contact information, how to join the HaSafran listserv, and more!

5. Download the AJL Accreditation applications from the website. Make Accreditation a goal for your library.

LIBRARIES AND AUTOMATION

You may have noticed that as I discussed these organizational questions, the issue of automation keeps popping up I believe that all libraries should be looking towards automating their facilities. So I want to discuss automation in the library in more detail.

WHY AUTOMATE THE LIBRARY?

The answer is simple. This is the direction that libraries are moving in as a discipline, a group. In reality it has really already happened. The card catalog is out and the computer catalog is in. Older generations may complain and bemoan the end of the card catalog, but the younger ones will take to an electronic catalog like a duck takes to water. More and more reference databases, Jewish encyclopedias, and even the Talmud are now available online. Everything under the sun is available through a WEB search and our patrons want to access this information, including your library's catalog, over the Internet. Like it or not this is the digital information age and that means that, unless libraries want to be

left behind, library automation is here to stay. This means providing an automated catalog, automated circulation and access to the Internet.

WHY AUTOMATE THE CATALOG?

Electronic catalogs make searching your catalog more effective and efficient. They are able to search every word in your catalog record. That is because of the wonderful thing called keyword searching. With an electronic catalog it is no longer imperative that you know the “correct subject heading”. For example, take books about Jewish holidays. The correct subject heading is “Fasts and Feasts, Judaism”. If you looked up “Jewish holidays” in the old card catalog, you only found books that happen to have a title starting with those words. But, with an electronic catalog, if the words “Jewish holidays” are found anywhere in the record, even in the sub-title or buried in a contents note it will come up in your search. And the creation of an electronic catalog has become very easy. An automated catalog will provide, with a minimum of staff training and expertise, a very professional catalog. Online catalogs are all over the WEB and you can search them and print out, copy, or import the catalog records that are out there. You don’t even have to pay for these records as you once did. With automation you no longer have to purchase catalog card sets, type or file and un-file cards. Creating and maintaining a card catalog require a lot of staff time and expertise and sources for purchasing catalog card sets are disappearing. With an automated catalog, you import the catalog record once and it is all done. And one final advantage, putting your electronic catalog online provides access to it from your patron’s home, thus expanding the potential usage of your library.

WHY AUTOMATE CIRCULATION?

Library circulation includes everything that relates to the movement of materials between the library and its patrons. It includes checking out of materials, renewal, returns, overdues, lost and missing items etc. Automation makes circulating your materials and keeping track of them much more efficient. An automated circulation system keeps track of who has what, calculates fines, produces overdue notices and bills as well as keeps circulation statistics. It really streamlines these activities. But an automated circulation system can only work after the patron data has been entered. Entering a large number of patrons manually can be time consuming. But if you are working in a synagogue or school library there is a good chance that a patron database already exists that can be imported directly into your automation system.

PREPARING TO AUTOMATE

Let's talk a little about how to approach thinking about automating your library and selecting an automation system. First of all, automation takes time and effort; it will not be accomplished in a day. After the system is chosen and purchased, you still have to input the data into it before it can be used. Build time considerations into your planning. As you begin to think about automating your library always remember this important fact: there is no perfect automation system out there, and there never will be. When you chose a system there will always be something about it you wish was different, or that you feel is lacking. Begin your automation planning by considering these four issues.

1. **Know your short and long terms goals before you go shopping.** Ask and answer two questions. First, what do you need and want the system to do now, right away, today? Second, what do you ultimately want to be able to do with this system? For example, are you thinking of just automating the catalog now, or do you want to automate the circulation function too? If just the catalog now, do you think you will want to automate circulation in the future? How does the Internet fit in to your goals?

2. **Have a clear idea about how much money you can afford to spend.** Finances will determine which of the many automation systems out there you can even consider. But always keep in mind the possibility of long term cost savings that might result by purchasing up front to accommodate long term goals. Should you be looking for an integrated system that comes in one package, or a modular one that allows you to purchase cataloging and circulation separately? What is more cost effective in the long run?

3. **Think about hardware as well as software.** Do you own any computers now? How old are they? Will they be suitable to run a library automation system? Do you need a dedicated staff computer? How many access points do you need for your patrons to search the catalog? If more than one, you need more computer workstations and you need to purchase a system that offers multi-user capabilities all of which may add to your initial costs.

4. **Internet access.** How will your institution provide Internet access for your patrons? Should your system provide you with internet access or do you have another way to provide it for your staff and patrons? Do you want your catalog to be WEB-based and on the WEB?

5. **What Automations standards should the automation system you choose comply with to be acceptable?** The library community, along with the technology community, has set up standards and rules to govern library automation. These standards are instituted by NISO, The National Information Standards Organization, which deals with all aspects of information technology and regulates, among other things the electronic transmission of information. There are three electronic standards that impact on library automation that you need to be aware of.

1. **MARC CATALOGING:** MARC means MACHine Readable Cataloging. This standard regulates exactly how the library catalog records are created. Your system must use correct MARC cataloging.
2. **Z39.50 Protocol:** this standard governs the actual transmission of library catalog information over the Internet. To fully utilize the Internet, your system must be Z39.50 compliant.
3. **UNICODE:** This standard governs the display of language characters, called glyphs, to enable the electronic display and exchange of non-western languages that do not use our alphabet, or are pictographic. If Hebrew capabilities are important to your library, UNICODE will make it possible.

Yes, you can create an electronic catalog using ordinary database software like Microsoft Access, but it is NOT recommended because the catalog you create does not conform to the cataloging standards which are used and accepted internationally. It will not integrate itself with other automated catalogs, provide keyword searching, or coordinate with a patron database to track circulation. It is a lot of work, and if you do it, someday when you want to participate in these other areas of library automation, you will have to start over.

Once you have dealt with those questions, then, when you start looking at actual systems, be sure and consider these issues.

1. Does the system meet established standards? Does it provide for MARC cataloging and the importation of records? Is it Z39.50 compliant? If Hebrew capabilities are important, is it UNICODE compliant.
2. Does the system provide for different levels of access to the data to protect your item catalog and your patron database? Your patrons should not be able to do anything with your catalog except search it. Only the librarian or other designated staff should be able to add, delete or make any other changes to the catalog. And you need to protect the privacy of the patron database.
3. Does this system provide ongoing technical support? How much does it cost each year? Does it have a good track record?
4. Does this system look towards the future? Does it provide software updates at no cost to correct problems and keep the system current? Does it provide for growth and expansion?
5. As things change in automation and in the library world, does it offer additional add-on products that can be used with the original software?
6. What systems are your colleagues using and how do they like them? This is a resource that is often ignored. Selecting the same system that is already used and liked by someone close by,

with whom you can consult, can be a great help as you go through the process and as you begin to learn to use the system you have purchased.

Whether or not you automate your library should be decided early on in the planning stages as you develop your Mission Statement and other policies. The process of automation is something that requires separate and careful planning. Hopefully these guidelines will help in this process.

IN CONCLUSION

Let me close this way. Starting and running a Judaic library is the same as starting and running any other library but has an additional element, you must accommodate special Jewish needs. To function, every library needs to be housed in a friendly, welcoming space. The materials it collects need to be sorted by subject to facilitate easy browsing and they need to be indexed so you can always find a specific item or subject area. To keep pace with the modern technological world, the library needs to automate. Special Judaic issues and needs are met by your mission statement, collection development policy and the classification system you choose.

I hope that this information will help you to organize your libraries. I will be happy to answer questions now or via email at stwasserman@sbcglobal.net. Thank you for your attention.

Portions of this session were adapted from *Starting a New Library: Issues and Questions to Help You Get Started*, developed by the Association of Jewish Libraries, Greater Cleveland Chapter.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

General Library Sites

American Library Association - <http://www.ala.org/>
Association of Jewish Libraries - <http://www.jewishlibraries.org>
Library of Congress - <http://www.loc.gov>
Library Spot: a connection to unlimited library information & resources -
<http://www.libraryspot.com/libshelf/>

Book Jobbers – Companies that act as middlemen and buy books and media from manufacturers and sell them to retailers and libraries at a discount. Discounts vary depending on publisher. Jobbers also can provide book processing including jacketing.

Baker & Taylor Inc. -- <http://www.btol.com/>
Follett Library Resources-- <http://www.flr.follett.com/>
Ingram Library Services -- <http://www.ingramlibrary.com/>

Online booksellers

Amazon - Provides a good discount and allows you to set up a corporate account for billing.
Provides access to used book dealers. - www.amazon.com
Barnes & Noble – www.barnesandnoble.com
Abebooks – network of used book dealers - <http://www.abebooks.com/>

Sources for reviews of Jewish materials

AJL New Jewish Values Finder – for children’s materials - <http://www.ajljewishvalues.org/>
My Jewish Books – new books adult and some children’s - <http://www.myjewishbooks.com/>
Nextbook – a gateway to Jewish literature, culture & ideas - <http://www.nextbook.org/>

Sources of Library **Supplies** - carry everything from general office and library specific supplies to library furniture, shelving etc. Call the 800 numbers and they will be happy to send out a catalog.

Brodart – www.shopbrodard.com 1-800-820-4377
Demco – www.demco.com 1-800-356-1200
Gaylord – www.gaylord.com 1-800-272-3412
Highsmith – www.highsmith.com 1-800-835-2329

A few library automation vendors (there are many others)

<http://www.cybertoolsforlibraries.com/> (Cyber Tools)
<http://www.exlibris-usa.com/aleph.htm> (Aleph)
<http://www.fsc.follett.com/> (Destiny)
<http://www.mlasolutions.com/> (Mandarin)
<http://www.resourcemate.com/> (Resource-Mate)
<http://www.sagebrushcorp.com/> Athena, Spectrum, InfoCentre
<http://www.softlinkamerica.com/go/gateway/gateway.exe?displayform=librarySelect®ion=na>
(Softlink-Alice)
<http://www.surpasssoftware.com/> (Surpass)