

**REPORT OF THE
COMMISSION STUDYING A STATE
LIBRARY NETWORKING SYSTEM
TO
THE GOVERNOR
AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Delegate Robert B. Ball, Sr. - Chairman
Senator Adelard L. Brault - Vice-Chairman
Mr. Dean Burgess
Dr. Vinod Chachra
Delegate V. Thomas Forehand, Jr.
Miss Ricky S. Johnson
Delegate Mary Marshall
Senator William F. Parkerson, Jr.
Delegate Lacey E. Putney
Mrs. Virginius R. Shackelford, Jr.



STAFF

Virginia Division of Legislative Services

**Report of the
Commission Studying a State
Library Networking System
To
The Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia
January, 1983**

To: Honorable Charles S. Robb, Governor of Virginia
and
The General Assembly of Virginia

INTRODUCTION

The study of the feasibility and desirability of a State library networking system was created by House Joint Resolution No. 239 enacted by the 1981 Session of the Virginia General Assembly and extended by House Joint Resolution No. 1 of the 1982 Session of the Virginia General Assembly.

House Joint Resolution No. 239 reads as follows:

WHEREAS, there are twenty-one regional libraries in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, a strong and viable cooperative library system is an asset and enhances the education and cultural advancement of the citizens; and

WHEREAS, the orderly growth of a cooperative library system should be planned so that it can operate at maximum efficiency and economy and achieve desired benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That there is hereby created the Commission on a State Library Networking System. The Commission shall consist of four members of the House of Delegates and two citizens appointed by the Speaker and two members of the Senate and two citizens to be appointed by the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee. Two of the members appointed from the House of Delegates shall be members of the House Appropriations Committee and one of the members appointed from the Senate shall be a member of the Senate Finance Committee.

The Commission is requested to study the feasibility and desirability of a State library networking system. The study should include, but not be limited to, the techniques of establishing a Statewide networking system which would act as an interlibrary loan center for all collections in the network district; maintain and distribute an up-to-date union catalog of books, materials, and periodical holdings in the network district; promote staff and cooperative buying systems as desired by the members; keep membership records and collect and disburse any charges related to membership in the network district; develop a delivery system for interlibrary loans; provide centralized acquisitions and processing if desired by the membership; develop a plan for reimbursement for materials interlibrary loaned if that is desired by the network district membership; and develop a plan for cross-district cooperation. The Commission is further requested to study any other matter that would affect and enhance the State library system.

Pursuant to this directive, the following individuals were appointed to serve on the Commission. The Speaker appointed the following House members: Delegate Robert B. Ball, Sr., Delegate V. Thomas Forehand, Jr., Delegate Mary A. Marshall, and Delegate Lacey E. Putney. The following Senators were appointed by the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee; Senator Adelard L. Brault and Senator William F. Parkerson, Jr. The following citizen members were also appointed to the Commission: Mr. Dean Burgess of Portsmouth, Dr. Vinod Chachra of Blacksburg, Miss Ricky S. Johnson of Staunton, and Mrs. Virginius R. Shackelford, Jr. of Orange.

The Commission unanimously selected Delegate Robert B. Ball, Sr. as Chairman and Senator Adelard L. Brault as Vice-Chairman.

The Library Networking Commission has been studying networking for two years and has held numerous meetings as well as four public hearings to thoroughly explore all the issues and

alternatives. This report contains the Commission's findings and recommendations as well as the proposed legislation which will be submitted to the 1983 Session of the Virginia General Assembly.

The Commission wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all the individuals and librarians who assisted the Commission during its study and deliberations.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Networking is defined as the linking of a number of libraries so that library resources may be shared among the various libraries which are linked. The term linking is not precisely defined because there are many levels of linking, some very simple and some relatively sophisticated, however, a number of Virginia libraries use a computer network to link libraries and their records together while using the efficiency of the computer to more economically and efficiently handle exchanges of information and library resources among each other. Networking allows library patrons in Virginia to search the entire network of libraries in Virginia to determine the resources available to them to meet their particular need.

The Commission wishes to emphasize that networking also involves very substantial benefits to libraries, especially in terms of reducing their operating costs. Testimony to the Commission indicated that most libraries spend only 20% of their budgets on periodicals and books while the remainder is used for overhead, salaries and other expenses. Clearly, libraries need to spend a greater proportion of their budgets on obtaining and updating their resource materials. Networking would save libraries funds by allowing them to not duplicate the resources of other libraries since library users could easily ascertain if that material is available from a library within the nearby area. In addition, when libraries and their catalog records are linked by computer, significant economies arise because of the substantial savings in labor costs involved in not updating card catalogs and searching through card catalogs for information which can be obtained more economically and more efficiently by using the stored data in the computer. Finally, additional savings will result when the computer information is used for collection control functions such as notifying a user when a book is overdue, etc.

The Commission emphasizes that networking, although it is a relatively new concept and still in its formative stages, is developing in Virginia. In fact, it is developing very rapidly. Numerous libraries have already converted their old card catalogs to a standard machine readable format which contain their card catalog information on a computer record.

The Commission has found that in order to help develop networking and to be of the greatest use there needs to be established a governance for the general management and operation of this network. For example, one subject that would need to be addressed would be the minimum standard for cataloging card catalog information into the network. The Commission, after examining what types of structures could be established to deal with networking, recommends that the Virginia State Library Board be responsible for the general management and operation of the network system. The Commission believes this would be a logical extension of the role of the State Library Board. Libraries that wish to join the network would follow the cataloging standards and inter-library lending policies which the State Library Board would establish.

The Commission believes that the development of networking and the conversion of the present card catalogs into machine readable format will require additional funds for libraries but the Commission has noted that such expenditures will bring large economies in the future in terms of operating costs. The Commission has heard a great deal of testimony that changing from card catalogs to a machine readable computer format will be the only method of operation for the libraries of the future. In order to assist in the development of networking the General Assembly may appropriate funds to libraries through the State Library Board to assist in making the necessary conversion changes to join the library networking system. Of course, if localities wish to receive state funds to join the network, these libraries will be required to adopt certain standards for inter-library lending and the format of computer records. However, the Commission wishes to stress that library networking and the joining of the network will be on a voluntary basis.

Although the Virginia Library Networking Commission believes that the libraries and library services are a role for the local governments, the Commission notes that the Commonwealth has been providing a larger and larger percentage of operating funds and assistance to libraries over the past few bienniums. The Commission continues to believe that each locality should decide for itself

whether to join the network. However, the Commission believes that there should be some standards which must be met if a locality decides to join the network and receive the benefits of belonging to the network.

In order to retain as much local autonomy in networking as possible, while still adopting a certain minimum level for standards to join the network, the Commission recommends that a seven member State Networking Users Advisory Council be created to advise the State Library Board and the State Librarian in the development and the direction of networking and its policies, standards and requirements for use. The Users Council shall represent all classes of networking users in the state-wide community. The seven members shall be librarians and shall be appointed by the Governor for three year terms. The Users Council is charged with receiving the input of all network users and to present them to the State Library Board.

The State Networking Library Commission is recommending and will introduce the legislation contained in Appendix A which embodies the Commission's recommendations. The Commission has over the past two years, studied the recommendations and issues involved in networking and presents its unanimous recommendations to the 1983 Session of the General Assembly. The Commission wishes to note that it has received the complete support of the Virginia Library Association and numerous other library associations in the Commonwealth during the course of its study and especially in its final recommendations which are presented in Appendix A.

Respectfully submitted,

Delegate Robert B. Ball, Sr., Chairman

Senator Adelard L. Brault, Vice-Chairman

Mr. Dean Burgess

Dr. Vinod Chachra

Delegate V. Thomas Forehand, Jr.

Miss Ricky S. Johnson

Delegate Mary Marshall

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APPENDIX A

ARTICLE 5

NETWORKING

42.1-32.1 It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Commonwealth, as part of its provision for public education, to promote the cooperation and networking of all public, academic, special and school libraries throughout the Commonwealth.

42.1-33.2 In order to assist in the development of library cooperation and a library network, the Board shall grant from such appropriations as are made to it for this purpose, funds to assist libraries in preparing for networking and in supporting a library network. The Board shall seek the advice of the State Library Users Advisory Council, as defined in § 42.1-32.7, to guide in its allocation of such grants and in the establishment of standards and priorities for the network.

42.1-32.3 Libraries receiving such aid, as is provided by the Board for networking, shall be committed to the standards and priorities established by the Board for interlibrary lending policies between network members, to cooperation in establishing collection development policies and resource sharing for the greatest good of all library users, and to the provision of comprehensive and cost effective library services to the citizens of Virginia.

42.1-32.4 All computer programs and data bases created pursuant to programs supported by grants made for networking shall be the property of the Commonwealth and shall be made available to all libraries of the network equally.

42.1-32.5 The Board shall establish standards under which a library shall be eligible for grants for networking.

42.1-32.6 The Board may establish and operate or may contract for the establishment and operation of one or more automated communication centers and other networking services, based on a plan approved by the Board and Governor after consultation with the Users Council.

42.1-32.7 State Networking Users Advisory Council-There is hereby created a State Networking Users Advisory Council which shall be composed of seven members. The State Networking Users Advisory Council shall advise the State Librarian and the Board in the development and direction of the network and its policies, standards, funding levels and requirements for use, after receiving the input of other libraries. The Council shall be appointed in such a way as to represent all classes of networking users in the statewide library community. The members shall be librarians and shall be appointed by the Governor for three year terms. The Users Council shall meet no less than twice annually.

