

Statement to the Florida Joint Library Committee

Background:

Thanks for inviting me here, I am honored to be asked to speak. The Orange County Library System (OCLS) is a vibrant, innovative, and growing library system that serves an urban community of 1,078,755 residents in the Orlando area of Central Florida. A staff of 263 full-time and 155 part-time employees works to provide excellent customer service for OCLS patrons. Approximately 132 adult volunteers provided 7,200 hours of support last fiscal year in our Friends of the Library Bookstore, our Children's Library, Club Central, our teen area at the Main Library, and our branch facilities. Over 90 teen volunteers logged an additional 5,000 hours in 2008 at our Main Library and branches.

OCLS has 15 service outlets, including a central library (the Orlando Public Library), 14 branch locations strategically placed around 1,000 square miles of Orange County. Our virtual branch, Materials Access to Your Library (MAYL), circulates more than 70,000 volumes per month, making its circulation equal to and in many cases more than that of a branch location.

Orange County is one of the largest library systems in the state. We have a long history of innovation and service. Our numbers are very strong: We racked up 25% in circulation this year. Door count is up 10% this year. Web visits are up 64% this year. (Aug 08 to August 09) Class attendance is up 36% even though the number of classes held did not increase. PC sessions are up 10%. Customer transactions (circ in and out) are up 15%.

For the fiscal year 2008-2009, the Orange County Library System operated on a budget of \$41.5 million. Just over 53% of the budget—

over \$22 million—goes toward salaries and benefits. OCLS budgets over \$10 million for operating expenses, including \$500,000 for hardware and software supplies, repair, and maintenance. The library uses \$300,000 of the nearly \$2 million capital outlay funds for the purchase of hardware and software. According to the 2008 Florida Library Directory with Statistics, OCLS with \$34.35 in local income per capita, ranks fourth of seven large library systems that serve a population greater than 750,000.

Decreasing revenues due to Proposition 1 and lower property values are major challenges. Large increases in usage are welcome but a challenge to handle with diminished revenues. We are looking at a 10% decrease in October and a 5.5% next year.

Orange County and OCLS are also facing the challenges of an increasingly diverse community. African-American, Hispanic, and Asian populations now represent a larger percentage of the total population in Orange County than they do at the state level. According to 2006 U.S. Census data, 20% of the county population is African-American, 24.3% is Hispanic, and 4.3% is Asian. According to the Florida Department of Education, 47% of black and 20% of Hispanic students are not promoted to first grade.

Cushing School in Massachusetts is all digital and sold all old books.

1. What is working well: The electronic databases that we receive from the Florida Electronic Library are working well for us. They are worth over \$256,000 to us. We get good usage out of them. In the past year, we have had 88,878 searches done on the databases available to us through FEL. (See chart)
2. What is needed that is not currently available: Databases that deal with legal, personal investments and finances, like Lexis-Nexis,

Morningstar and Value Line would be helpful for us and other libraries in the state. We could also use Geolocating service that has IP address recognition. If we knew where a web request from a customer was coming from, it would make it easier to authenticate our customers. The new Career Transitions database that helps users search for jobs, develop résumés, formulate broadcast letters, and target particular industries and job classifications would help a lot when so many of our residents are out of work and actively looking for employment.

3. If concepts in the proviso were implemented, what would be the impact:

A. Establish a Union Catalog for all libraries in the state, including K-12) A union catalog is not really what is needed. It is providing a solution from the past to solve today and tomorrow's problems. This is similar to an old tool, akin to a rotary phone in the digital age. We are not borrowing from school libraries. Most schools have raided their media specialists and put them in the classroom or laid them off. Our ILL use is down 89%. A union catalog (and the ILL process associated with it) is harkening back to the 1980's, not looking forward to the digital challenges ahead of us. We need to look to the next generation of users and to try and meet their expectations. Kids and young people are digitally oriented and we should be as well. We need to be paying attention to Google Books. Many books will be available via Google Books that are currently out of print but available for a fee. What sense does it make to ILL a few copies around the state when for a statewide license, all libraries (and their customers) could have access to it digitally. Young people (our future voters), expect to get things digitally. Let's not give them it in an old package (ILL). Dan Brown example: 180 copies for 460 holds on his new book.

B. Establishing a process for Sunlink (K-12), the Florida Center for Library Automation, the College Center Library Automation and the Florida Electronic Library to jointly negotiate statewide licensing of electronic resources. This is being done. Negotiating for more databases and a greater variety would be good. One of our employees worked with a development team for one of the vendors to develop **Career Transitions**. This would be a great resource to have statewide, since it helps people discover new jobs and new fields, build their resumes, target their skills to certain sectors, market their strengths and helps them interview successfully. This is one I would like to have for OCLS.

C. Consolidating automated online library services and systems throughout the state. If using state funds okay. If we are using local dollars, please don't tell us how to use our local dollars, unless you are going to leverage them with dollars of your own. We have been very aggressive and creative in fundraising and raising local funds (aside from ad valorem taxes) and would not want to compromise that. And don't hold us back from innovating in order to go at a pace for some of the slowest libraries in the state. The vendors are charging by FTE's for the academics and charging us by population served. One to many not one on one. We buy MSFT for Windows per p.c., not by population. Yet it is all the same folks that make up the population of Florida, just sliced & diced in different ways to get their revenue. Purchasing a database once by the State makes infinitely more sense for the taxpayers, who are our users.

D. Establishing an approach and process for establishing a statewide contract with a cataloging facility. We pay approximately on average \$.87 per record for cataloging. So anything less than that would be a good thing for us.