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Minnesota State University, Mankato. Library Services

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Library Resources

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ONLINE MIGRATION: WebPALS to MnPALS

Although preparations for the migration from WebPALS to MnPALS have been underway for many months, the public will begin noticing the effects in December. At that point, the current catalog will be “frozen” while transfer and review of records takes place. In January a new online catalog system will be available for Library users.

MSU will be among the second group of “PALS libraries” to make the change to the new system. Winona State University, Gustavus Adolphus College, and others will make the switch at the same time. St. Cloud State University, the College of St. Benedict, and St. John’s University were in the group that migrated earlier this fall. Eventually most libraries that were part of “PALS” will make the transition to the new system. Libraries of the University of Minnesota campuses, which underwent system migration last year, will also be part of the statewide library system, which has been mandated and funded by the state legislature.

MnPALS refers to the online catalog system that will replace the one we currently use. Many features will be similar to WebPALS, but there are new features that enhance searching. Other terms associated with the new system are Aleph, which is the name of the software that supports the system, and Ex Libris, the company that developed the Aleph software.

We hope that the following questions and answers will help explain how services may change during the next few months. We will also send electronic announcements through the campus system and provide updates with a link from our home page at www.lib.mnsu.edu

Will I be able to search for Library materials during the time the catalog is “frozen”?

Yes, you will continue to have access to the WebPALS system to view records of library materials, but the catalog will no longer reflect day-to-day circulation. *You will need to go to the shelves to find out if the book, video, or other item you need is here.*

If you check the status of your user record during December or early January, borrow and return transactions which occur after the catalog is frozen will not be noted. During this time you will not be able to use the online system to renew materials or place holds, although renewals will still be possible at the library. Users may find that circulation check-outs are a little slower than usual because of the need for more manual involvement at the check-out desk. You will need to pay attention to due dates because the system will not produce notices.

Will I still be able to order materials through interlibrary loan?

Yes, you may still order materials, but the process may take longer than usual until summer. During migration, staff need to review data and clean up records while training on the new system.

During spring semester, there will be significant changes in how we interact with other libraries. Because some Minnesota libraries will remain on WebPALS as others switch, we will not be able to communicate with those libraries as quickly as we can now. We do not anticipate problems with filling requests, but the process will be somewhat slower. Requests can be made by using the online forms at the Library website.

What happened to the new materials my department requested this fall? When will we be able to suggest new books and videos to order?

As you know, order deadlines were set earlier than usual this fall. Because we want to reduce potential complications of ordering in one system and paying bills in another, we processed the fall order requests that arrived by that deadline but have stopped entering additional orders. Once the materials arrive, they will not reach the shelves as quickly as usual because new records can't be entered during the "freeze." However, you may continue to send order suggestions to the librarian who works with your department for collection development. Once the acquisitions part of the system is running in spring, we will enter new items as quickly as possible. Please indicate anything you need for summer session 2004 so that we can get the material purchased and catalogued in time.

How will I book videos and equipment?

Contact the ERC staff as you have in the past. Booking will be handled differently behind the scenes, but you shouldn't notice a difference.

What shall I do about reserve materials?

Books placed on reserve for use during fall semester will continue to be available for check-out from the Circulation desk, and items which have been available via electronic reserve will be available through "E-Reserves." Instructors may place items on reserve for spring semester. Be aware that reserve processing may be somewhat slower than other semesters because of the need for more manual involvement during this transition period.

How will my students and I learn the system?

To request a class session, use the form from the Library home page or contact Jim Kapoun, Instruction Coordinator, at 2251 or jim.kapoun@mnsu.edu. When the system is up and running, we will schedule a number of open sessions to introduce MnPALS to users. To get some idea of how MnPALS will work, you might visit the web pages for St. John's University Library

<www.csbsju.edu/library> or St. Cloud State Library <<http://lrts.stcloudstate.edu>>

Will other online resources stay the same?

This change will not affect our access to online databases. You can continue to search as you do now from the Library, your office, or home. Serials List will still work to let you know what periodicals we have in paper and electronic formats.

MUSIC LIBRARY AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER WILL CLOSE FOR REMODELING

The online catalog won't be the only aspect of Library services to have a new look next semester. The **Educational Resource Center** will be closed from December 12 to January 12. Carpeting will be installed and children's books, videos, audiobooks, K-12 textbooks and software, and educational toys and puppets collections will be reconfigured.

Any materials you wish to use during the interim period must be checked out before December 12. The last day to check out equipment is December 10. If you have any questions, contact Barb Bergman, ERC coordinator at 5945 or barbara.bergman@mnsu.edu.

The **Music Library** also will be closed December 2 to January 12. Carpeting and new shelving will be installed, and study space will be rearranged. The Music Library collections will be placed in secure storage during construction.

From December 2 through January 12 please return music library materials to the main library or use one of the library book drops near the main library entrances. If there are specific items you will need from the collection during this time, please contact Lynne Weber (5272) or Deb Meissner (5064) to make arrangements for extended loans.