

Computerized Library Increases Efficiency, Saves Time, Money

The NPS Pacific Northwest Regional Office has established a Regional Library System using computer technology to provide comprehensive information services to its staff and 17 field areas in the region. Using the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), the Regional Library can order and catalog all publications for itself and park library collections in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Located in the Westin Building in downtown Seattle, the library will contain the main catalog of all the parks in the region. Park employees no longer need worry about the technical aspects of collection management; they can provide catalog information for a new publication to the Regional Librarian. In most cases a set of catalog cards can be in the return mail.

In addition to a centralized catalog, staff members will be able to borrow from the 2,400 other libraries on the OCLC System, which includes some of the largest natural and cultural resource collections in the country, such as the Department of the Interior Library, other NPS libraries, Alaska Resources Library, Department of Agriculture Library, etc. The OCLC system uses a specially designed Beehive terminal with a dedicated line to the central computer located in Columbus, Ohio.

Computer reference services are an integral part of Regional Library services. The four services currently available are Lockheed Corp., DIALOG; System Development Corp., ORBIT; the Department of Energy, RECON systems; and Bibliographic Retrieval Service (BRS). Each of these systems provides access to approximately 200 databases on different subjects. By searching these databases, the Regional Librarian can produce a bibliography of recent publications or articles on almost any subject.

Managers, scientists, and researchers often conduct surveys of the available literature before they begin a project to avoid duplicating work already accomplished by others, and to study the most recent developments and trends before making decisions. Cost savings realized by using these systems are dramatic . . . on the order of 10 times less expensive than a manual search. These database systems are reached by dial-in through standard telecommunications utilities, such as TELENET, TYMSHARE, and UNINET, using any standard dumb terminal. The PNR Library uses the Hewlett-Packard 2645A terminal for this purpose.

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