

VALE Steering Committee

Minutes of the January 28, 1999 Meeting

Present: Anne Ciliberti, John Cohn, Judy Cohn, Marianne Gaunt, Joan Getaz, Arthur Hafner, Judith Hunt, Paul Rigby, Richard Sweeney. Guest: Dave Hoover

1. Dave Hoover reported on his work in the development of the SiteSearch interface for the locally loaded databases. He has successfully implemented many, but not all, of the recommendations of the Interface Subcommittee. A particular problem will be the customization of an email button which may have to be programmed by a consultant. Dave noted that to date he has received only ABI/Inform and Periodical Abstracts backfiles. The other tapes are expected in early February and early March. Some of the data was unreadable and needs to be replaced.
2. Following Dave's report, a discussion occurred about VALE plans for moving to remote access databases. Several members of the Committee expressed the view that VALE should begin as soon as possible to migrate from the burden of interface design and local load issues to providing remote access to host sites. The difficulty of providing search functionality and state-of-the-art interface options on our own was noted. Although most of the group concurred that some remote access is something VALE should be working toward in the future, others expressed concern that it is often more expensive, that it leaves interface and design issues in the hands of vendors and that we may lose the "VALE" connection. After a lengthy discussion, the group agreed that for many practical reasons we should continue the VALE core suite of databases as local loads through FY 00.
3. Marianne Gaunt proposed that the first release of the "new VALE" interface which will be used with the local loads go through a series of tests prior to full release. We need to have loaded both the backfiles and at least one update file successfully. After several viewpoints were expressed, it was agreed that the Training/Help Desk and Interface groups will have access to a test database prior to the release and that documentation will be prepared prior to the official rollout.
4. The group also agreed on a process for on-going feedback regarding the database releases. Feedback from users and librarians will be funneled to a User Feedback Listserv and the Training/Help Desk Listserv. The Interface Committee will review these inputs and make recommendations to Dave Hoover as which should be implemented and their relative priority. Dave will then communicate the results of his efforts back to the Training/Help Desk Committee which will keep members updated with announcements.
5. Anne Ciliberti agreed to compile and distribute a list of all VALE listservs and to promote enrollment in the public list maintained at Rider.
6. Arthur Hafner suggested that the group begin to consider key strategic issues for VALE and the group agreed that further planning beyond the current database problems was needed. Marianne will put out a message on the Council listserv asking for member views on where VALE should be going and for input on what is important/valuable/unique to members that

should be addressed by VALE. In other words, what beyond providing database access should VALE be doing or exploring? The following ideas were expressed by members of the Committee:

1. Provide 24 hour remote librarian assistance.
 2. Collaborate on the development of interactive training modules for database use
 3. Identify and investigate providing SiteSearch access to unique NJ databases and websites important for New Jersey residents.
 4. Develop a central proxy server to facilitate remote access to VALE resources for all libraries.
7. With regard to VALE usage statistics, Dave has begun to compile some preliminary data which he will share with the Assessment Committee.
8. Marianne noted that there have been two meetings with the Regional Library Cooperative directors and the State Library to investigate the feasibility and interest in looking into some statewide database licenses. The group will be meeting with vendors at ALA and again on February 8.
9. Several trial demos to various possible databases have been set up and Anne will forward this information to the Steering Committee.
10. Marianne will be meeting soon with the Rutgers' Government Relations staff to discuss strategies for legislative funding. John Gaboury, Anne Ciliberti and Marianne will also be meeting with Nick Yovnello on this issue in mid-February. Nick is president of the state college faculty union and a librarian at Rowan University.
11. Dave Hoover will provide instructions for using guest passwords.
12. Anne Ciliberti distributed a report on the VALE finances which indicated that many institutions have not yet requested workstation reimbursement, although most have paid their database and server invoices.
13. Anne also reported that she had received an inquiry about joining VALE from the Philadelphia College of Bible. The group asked Anne to do some more research on their presence in New Jersey.
14. In preparing next year's VALE cost estimates, it was suggested that the FTE data be updated to 1998.
15. The group agreed to meet again on February 18, tentatively in the morning. Marianne will confirm the time and date via the listserv.

Minutes prepared by [Anne Ciliberti](#)