



Press Release

For immediate release
15th February 2006

NEW GENERATION OF UNITYWEB FOR STATE OF THE ART RESOURCE SHARING AND ILL

15 February 2006 - The Combined Region's resource sharing and interlibrary loan service, UnityWeb, has entrusted the next phase of its development to OCLC PICA, incorporating Fretwell-Downing Informatics (FDI). FDI was acquired by OCLC PICA in 2005.

The new generation of UnityWeb brings the separate union catalogues of The Combined Regions and LinkUK into one service. The new Unity service will be hosted and managed by OCLC PICA and FDI, world-leaders in resource sharing.

Rob Froud, county librarian, Somerset, and chair of The Combined Regions, says, "Working in partnership with OCLC PICA to take the Unity service forward offers exciting possibilities for resource sharing and inter-lending in the UK public library sector. It provides us with a unique opportunity to join-up previously distinct union catalogues into a single national resource. Combine this with improved functionality and service and we believe that we have a winning formula."

The new UnityWeb service will now offer a range of new functionality including Z39.50 compliance, real-time status of availability of books and access to 5 million bibliographic records on LinkUK. Libraries can also take advantage of the full interlibrary loans messaging option. This peer-to-peer and global system offers complete searching and request management in one single interface. The new service can also be integrated with local systems using standard protocols.

CBS from OCLC PICA is the replacement software for the Unity union catalogue. It can load a minimum of 10,000 records per hour with full duplicate detection and can export at 80 records per second. It supports Unicode and input/editing of all non-roman scripts, and has excellent support for duplicate record detection and resolution.

"We are delighted that the first success of the new venture between OCLC PICA and FDI happens to be one in FDI's home market," adds Rein van Charldorp, managing director of OCLC PICA. "Winning this tender shows what can be achieved if two strong partners work together. We can offer a unique solution by combining our expertise and product offerings."

Robin Murray, managing director of FDI, adds, "We can offer a hybrid approach offering both physical union catalogues and stand alone library catalogues through one interface, combine this with ISO ILL for request management – and this offers libraries the next generation in resource sharing solutions."

FDI and OCLC PICA solutions have already demonstrated their reliability and stability working separately, and together. The new generation of the new Unity service consists of systems that already work together successfully and are estimated to be in use in some 20,000 libraries around the world.

A new website has been launched to support the new service, and is available at www.thecombineregions.com or contact tcr@fdisolutions.com for more information.

A nationwide roadshow of events will run between 13 March and 7 April. Dates will be announced w/c 20th February and will be posted to www.thecombineregions.com.