



# The OPLIN CIRCUIT

News for Ohio Public Library Staff & Management

## OPLIN vs. Spam: It's War!

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### No More Dons?

We're saddened to report that Don Yarman is leaving OPLIN to become the new Assistant Director of the Delaware County District Library.

Don started with OPLIN in 2001 as a consultant on the MORE project, and became a permanent staff member in 2002. He's been at the forefront of many (if not all) of the improvements made to database access in recent years.

Also, Don served as Interim Director for the better part of a year after Carol Roddy's departure and before Stephen Hedges' hiring.

So is OPLIN now truly without a Don to its name? Not so fast... Vince Riley (OPLIN Support Center Technician) has a secret - his actual first name is Donald.

As anyone who owns an e-mail account can tell you, the spam just keeps on getting worse.

In recent months, researchers, IT managers, and security vendors have all confirmed that the amount of spam is increasing dramatically worldwide, with some estimating that it now accounts for almost 90% of all e-mail traffic.

Experts note that there's usually a spike in spam levels around the holidays every year, but 2006 has seen an unprecedented rise.

### The Enemy

Why the huge increase? Mostly because the spammers have successfully kept one step ahead of filtering technologies, but also because the well of unsuspecting recipients has yet to run dry - apparently, spam works.

Spammers are also using new technologies to disperse their wares, such as botnets, which relay messages via the broadband-connected PCs of people who are completely unaware that their computer is spawning spam.

Spammers have also found new ways to get around spam filters. One way is through image spam - messages that contain words embedded in an image file so it can evade spam filters, which aren't able to recognize text within an image. A lot of image spam messages are part of "pump and dump" schemes, which start when a spammer purchases a penny stock, promotes it through e-mail, and then tries to sell it for a profit.

As an example of how difficult it is to stay ahead of the spammers, when image spam began appearing earlier in the year, security vendors quickly developed products that

created a "fingerprint" of an image spam message, in order to filter any identical incoming messages. Spammers just as quickly responded by randomizing their messages, so that each message was slightly different from preceding ones, and therefore unable to be fingerprinted.

### OPLIN Joins the Fight

OPLIN is doing its best to stem the tide by installing and improving filtering capabilities at the OPLIN mail server.

OPLIN Support Center personnel recently upgraded OPLIN's SpamAssassin filtering engine to version 3.1.3, and are in the process of "training" the built-in Bayesian spam filter. In addition, OPLIN continues to write new custom rulesets that help ward off more spam, while allowing legitimate library-related messages through.

Currently, SpamAssassin is catching approximately 60% of the spam messages that hit the OPLIN mail server, and that number should go up as it gets better at recognizing spam.

### What Should You Do?

The only way any OPLIN e-mail user can take advantage of the SpamAssassin filtering engine is to manually set up filters in your local e-mail program. Instructions for setting up spam filters for OPLIN webMail and for several popular e-mail clients can be found at [www.oplin.org/spam](http://www.oplin.org/spam).

Also, if you notice that any legitimate messages are being mislabeled as spam, please forward them to the OPLIN Support Center at [support@oplin.org](mailto:support@oplin.org).



# Get With the New Strategic Plan, Man

As the needs of Ohio's public libraries change, OPLIN wants to be flexible enough to change as well.

With that in mind, the OPLIN Board of Trustees recently approved updates to *OPLIN's Mission, Goals, Objectives, and Activities*, which will function as the organization's strategic plan through June 30, 2007, and be reviewed annually beyond that. The document can be read in its entirety on the OPLIN website at [www.oplin.org/oplin/policies/missionGoals.xhtml](http://www.oplin.org/oplin/policies/missionGoals.xhtml).

There are three primary goals outlined in the latest document:

1. Connect Ohio public libraries to the Internet
2. Provide selected electronic information
3. Assist public libraries with the implementation of World Wide Web technologies

The first two goals aren't new - OPLIN has been connecting libraries and providing electronic databases since its early days. However, with an ever-increasing range of circuit options (not to mention the ever-increasing demands for bandwidth), OPLIN will be using a new method to determine the amount of Internet bandwidth provided to each library.

Instead of simply providing a single T1 line to every library, OPLIN will be using a formula outlined in Objective 1.2. It's important to note that no libraries will see a reduction in circuit capacity, but we will be taking steps to increase the circuit size to a few libraries in the near future.

Goal 3 is the most notable newcomer. Some of the objectives and activities listed are already underway (e.g., *The OPLIN 4cast*). Other things, like web hosting for libraries, will take some time to develop, and we'll let everyone know when we're ready.

This document is scheduled to be reviewed every year, so that it can remain flexible. In fact, it's due for review at the end of June, probably before we'll have a chance to implement all of its ideas.

We discuss the changes, and the ongoing evolution of OPLIN, in December's *OPLIN 4cast Podcast #11*, which you can listen to at [www.oplin.org/4cast](http://www.oplin.org/4cast).

## This, That & the Other

### E-Mail Accounts

The OPLIN Support Center recently began sending a report to every public library director listing all active OPLIN e-mail accounts assigned to their library. OPLIN will send these reports out every other month.

### After-hours Support

The OPLIN Support Center is open from 8-8 Monday through Thursday, and 8-5 on Fridays. If your library is having connectivity issues on the weekend or overnight, you will be directed to the Network Operations Center (OIT). The on-call engineers can't answer day-to-day questions about e-mail and other OPLIN services, but they can help your library get its OPLIN-managed circuit back up and running.

If a SOMACS circuit that your library pays for goes down, you can call AT&T (INOC) at the following number: 1-800-252-6499. Again, only call that number if your library pays for the circuit.

All other questions and issues can be sent to [support@oplin.org](mailto:support@oplin.org) and we will respond first thing on the next work day.

### Searching Every Library

Visitors to the Find a Library section of the OPLIN website now have the option to quickly search every Ohio public library website from a single search box. OPLIN

used Google Co-op ([www.google.com/coop](http://www.google.com/coop)) to create this customized search engine.

### OPLIN Mobile

A growing number of people are accessing the Internet via mobile device. Now, anyone who uses a mobile device to visit the OPLIN website will be automatically redirected to OPLIN Mobile ([www.oplin.org/mobile](http://www.oplin.org/mobile)), an extremely trimmed-down version of our website where users can find an Ohio library or search our Discover Ohio link directory.

### Filtering Assistance Grants Approved

For the second consecutive year, the Ohio legislature added \$100,000 to the OPLIN budget in order to support filtering in local public libraries, and the OPLIN Board recently gave approval to fund the second round of Internet filtering grants.

In the first year, OPLIN received 33 applications from libraries, and the number rose to 43 this year - some for new filters, some for upgrades to existing filters, and some for renewals on the annual cost of an already-installed filter.

The intent of the legislature is that at least half of this money must be spent on filters, so public libraries requesting new workstations, hardware purchases, and staff costs that are not explicitly filter-related are things OPLIN could not pay for.



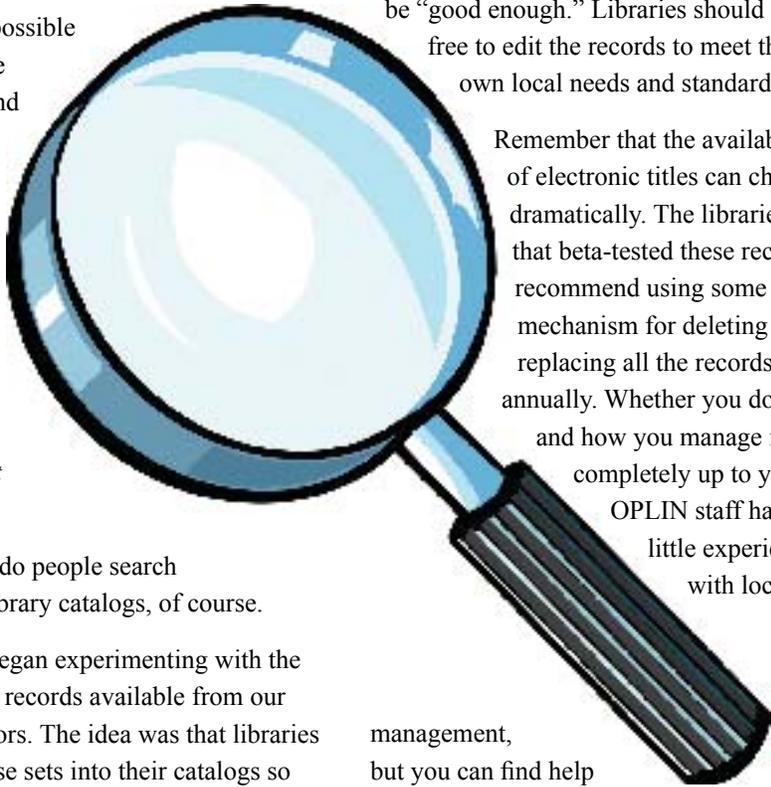
## On Your MARCs... Get Set... Go!

In the search logs for the OPLIN website, there's evidence that people often enter terms like "Consumer Reports" or "Cleveland Plain Dealer." Those searches don't give people what they're looking for... but they should. People search for titles, and we should find a way to connect them as quickly as possible to what they're looking for. And boy, do we have lots of titles: 145 of them in the *Oxford Reference* collection, and over 3,000 of them in *EBSCOhost MasterFILE*.

So where else do people search for titles? In library catalogs, of course.

This fall, we began experimenting with the sets of MARC records available from our database vendors. The idea was that libraries could load these sets into their catalogs so that when a patron searches for "Consumer Reports," she can click through to the resource on EBSCO. The link won't take her to a particular article, but to EBSCO's page about the magazine, where she can browse the content by date, or search within issues of *Consumer Reports*.

So far, we've created MARC record sets for *NewsBank*, *Oxford Reference Online*, and *EBSCOhost*. The EBSCO set is a combined file containing the journal titles in *Academic Search Premier*, *MasterFILE Premier*, and *Consumer Health Complete*; the other EBSCO products are either alternate interfaces to these journals (like *Student Resource Center*) or are largely made up of something other than full-text periodicals (like *NoveList*). You can find links to these record sets at [www.oplin.org/marcrecords](http://www.oplin.org/marcrecords).



### Some words of caution:

These records were provided by *NewsBank*, *Oxford Reference*, and EBSCO in batches; we have done minimal editing and have not rigorously verified the accuracy and quality of the records. Our goal was that they would be "good enough." Libraries should feel free to edit the records to meet their own local needs and standards.

Remember that the availability of electronic titles can change dramatically. The libraries that beta-tested these records recommend using some mechanism for deleting and replacing all the records annually. Whether you do this and how you manage it is completely up to you. The OPLIN staff has very little experience with local ILS

management, but you can find help from other Ohio libraries on *OPLINLIST* and *OPLINTECH*.

As more records become available, we will post links to those files at [www.oplin.org/marcrecords](http://www.oplin.org/marcrecords) and announce their availability on the OPLIN electronic discussion lists.

## E-Rate Workshops

- Jan. 4 Clark County Public Library
- Jan. 9 OHIONET
- Jan. 10 Southern State Community College
- Jan. 11 SEO Annex
- Jan. 12 Twinsburg Public Library
- Jan. 16 NORWELD
- Jan. 17 SERLS
- Jan. 18 North Canton Public Library

You can register online for these workshops at <http://winslo.state.oh.us/cregister>.

## Out & About on the Circuit

**OPLIN Board Meeting**  
February 7, 2007  
State Library of Ohio

**Code4lib Conference**  
February 28 - March 2  
Athens, Georgia

## Have You Checked Your Branch Modem?

For every T1 line that travels from a public library back to the OPLIN core, OPLIN requests a dial-up, diagnostic line so that engineers can troubleshoot any connectivity issues and update local routers as needed. Every main library with an OPLIN connection has a modem and diagnostic line in place already.

However, some library systems also have branch locations with a T1 line traveling to the OPLIN core. This is known as "Level A Service" (and is described at [www.oplin.org/page.php?Id=62-67-338-1281-967&msg=#levela](http://www.oplin.org/page.php?Id=62-67-338-1281-967&msg=#levela)). For these types of circuits, we request that libraries supply their own dial-up, diagnostic line.

Lately, the OPLIN Support Center has been checking the validity of these diagnostic lines and has noticed that some of the numbers are no longer working or are not on file. When circuits go down at these branches, repairs are slow and more costly, because an engineer has to be dispatched to the site.

If your library has branches with Type A Service, please label the diagnostic line jacks with the phone number, and send a list of all your current modem phone numbers to [support@oplin.org](mailto:support@oplin.org). This way, OPLIN will be able to fully support the routers and troubleshoot when your branch has questions or issues with its connectivity.



# OPLIN Database News

## AccessScience

AccessScience has added a new feature called *AccessScience Explorations*, which includes a podcast series called **AudioExplorations**. The first *Exploration* visits Pluto (or rather “minor planet 134340”) and the second one examines the bones of ancient human fossils.

For chemistry students, a new set of multiple-choice questions has been added to the *AccessScience Advanced Placement Study Guide*.

## American National Biography

*American National Biography* is expanded and further enhanced in regular quarterly updates. The October update added 27 new biographies, bringing the total number to more than 18,000.

*American National Biography* now contains entries that link to biographies in the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Articles in one provide links to their counterparts in the other, which can be useful if, for example, researchers want to know how Benjamin Franklin is portrayed in the context of British history. The ability to easily compare treatments of the subjects is a valuable research and teaching tool.

## Encyclopædia Britannica

*Encyclopædia Britannica* has made it easier for websites to link back to any of its articles, even the ones that normally require a subscription to access. Now, a link to any *Britannica* article from an external referrer (such as a blog or other outside website) will provide a complete, free sample of that particular article. The article is not truncated and it doesn't require a subscription to read.

This free sampling functionality will only work from links on a web server, so you won't be able to view the full text of the articles from your local environment. For more details, visit [www.britannica.com/webmaster](http://www.britannica.com/webmaster).

## NetWellness

Recent monthly features on *NetWellness* include You and Your Lungs; Secondhand Smoke: What it Means to You; and Tie One on For Safety Campaign.

Health Centers are sections of the *NetWellness* website that focus on specific health topics. New Health Centers are added continually, and recent additions include: Dental and Oral Health; Worksite Health; and African American Health.

## Literature On-Line

OPLIN's links to *Literature On-Line* and other OhioLINK-hosted databases no longer require users to stop at an intermediate screen in order to pick an individual collection before entering. Instead, users are now taken directly to a page where they can search all of the collections.

## Ohio Capitol Connection

*Ohio Capitol Connection* has unveiled a complete website redesign, which can be seen at [www.rotundacollection.com](http://www.rotundacollection.com). On December 1st, OPLIN redirected its links from the old site to this new one.

OPLIN's link to *Ohio Capitol Connection* is [www.oplin.org/occ](http://www.oplin.org/occ). This will give remote users access with their library cards. If your library has its own proxy service, you can use [rotundacollection.com](http://rotundacollection.com) as your destination link.

## Oxford Reference Online

In response to user requests, the **Quick Search** that appears on every *Oxford Reference Online* page now supports standard Boolean operators “and”, “or”, and “not”. For more information on using these Boolean operators, see the Help pages on Using the Search tools.

## Searchasaurus

EBSCO is working on a new *Searchasaurus* interface, with added options and improved functionality. They are interested in feedback before they release it live, and you can take a look at: <http://product-view.epnet.com/webauth/login.asp?user=demo&password=dem0&profile=sas>.

For comparison, you can access the current *Searchasaurus* product at [www.oplin.org/searchasaurus](http://www.oplin.org/searchasaurus).