

Annual Report of the VTLS User's Group, 2005

On December 4, 2004 the executive committee met in Boston, Mass. at the Mary Baker Eddy Library to plan 2005's annual meeting and to consider other matters. Debra Denault, from the VTLS staff, phoned in to discuss—at some length and very informatively—the enhancement process for Virtua. Carl Grant, VTLS president and COO, provided an update on the company, discussed upcoming Virtua releases, spoke about several new products (Aquabrowser, VIEWS, and VITAL), and reported on expanding the client base in North America.

Bob Grattan, the user's group's webmaster, from the University of Mary Washington, announced his upcoming retirement at the meeting. Joanne Noel, from the library of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, agreed to assume his webmaster's duties. We also said good-bye to Eddie Paul, from the Jewish Public Library, Montreal, who rotated off the executive committee after many years of superlative service, and Susan Klein, from Mary Baker Eddy, who regretfully resigned her position. Tragically, Pat Anderson, from the Newport News, Va. public library passed away shortly after we met.

On February 21, 2005, user's group chair Kerstin Dahl and vice chair Richard McKinstry met with Debra Denault at VTLS headquarters in Blacksburg, Va. to further discuss the Virtua enhancement process. Debra focused on user's group contributions, product development at VTLS, assigning points to enhancement requests, and VTLS's intended Virtua release schedule. Carl Grant joined in for a time.

The user's group annual meeting was held at OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.) headquarters in Dublin, Ohio, April 20-22, 2005; about 40 people attended from as far away as Australia, Switzerland, and Sweden, and as close as Upper Arlington and Cincinnati, Ohio. Robert L. "Jay" Jordan, president and CEO of OCLC, was our keynote speaker. In addition to our usual programming, attendees were treated to a tour of OCLC's facilities. The user's group and VTLS sponsored a dinner for everyone at La Scala Italian Bistro, not too far from OCLC and our meeting hotel. Many thanks to Kate Porter, from the Upper Arlington Public Library, for handling local arrangements.

After the meeting Richard McKinstry, from the library at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, assumed the chair's position of the executive committee and Kate Porter became vice chair. We welcomed new members: Marilyn Guy, Vaughan, Canada Public Libraries; Francie Mrkich, New York University; Jon Ritterbush, University of Tennessee—Chattanooga; and Jacqueline van Dyk, Vancouver, Canada Community College. In addition, Catherine Brown, from the University of the Sunshine Coast Library, Queensland, Australia joined the executive committee as the representative of Australia's user's group. Kerstin Dahl, from Lund University, Sweden, agreed to lead the Virtua enhancement process for the user's group.

Members of the European user's group gathered late in August 2005 in Krakow, Poland at the library of Jagiellonian University for their nineteenth annual meeting. Over 100 people attended; Kate Porter represented the executive committee. Staff of VTLS led training seminars, Prof. Krzysztof Zamorski, a member of the history department at the university, provided keynote remarks via his talk, "A Few Notes from an End User," and breakout sessions focused on Virtua's subsystems. There were four show and tell sessions from VTLS clients: Ewa Bakowska, Jagiellonian University, spoke about the online version of the university's old catalog; Erin Raynor, Oxford University Libraries, on "Alliance and Autonomy: The Federated Environment of Oxford University Libraries;" Kathryn Hughes, National Library of Wales, on the all Wales web portal; and Martin Katuscak, Slovak National Library, on "Slovak Library and Memoria Slovaca."

Next year's meeting of the European user's group will be held in the Slovak Republic at Comenius University, Bratislava.

The executive committee met in Ottawa, Ontario early in December 2005 in part to organize our annual meeting for 2006, which will be held at The University of Tennessee—Chattanooga, May 3-5. Executive committee member Jon Ritterbush will serve as local arrangements coordinator. As this is being written, much of the agenda and meeting activities are still being planned. Marshall Breeding, Director for Innovative Technologies and Research at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn. (<http://staffweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/breeding/>), has agreed to be our keynote speaker.

During 2005, the website of the VTLS User's Group was redesigned by Joanne Noel; its new URL is <http://www.vtlsug.org>. Joanne is continuing to add information from our previous site and has added more, including profiles of member institutions. We dropped the name Vital Links, the title of the user's group's former printed newsletter, from the site.

2005 was a productive year for the VTLS User's Group. With great anticipation, we look forward to working together as a group and with VTLS in 2006 and the years to come.

E. Richard McKinstry
Chair
VTLS User's Group

Andrew W. Mellon Senior Librarian
Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum