What Is This Thing Called INSPIRE?

by

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By the time you read this issue of *Indiana Libraries*, Indiana will have taken another stride into the information age. On January 15th 1998, Inspire: Indiana Libraries On-Line, expanded the universe of information to include on-line periodical databases that will be accessible to all citizens of Indiana, from libraries, schools, businesses, and homes, regardless of age, background, or interests. All that will be required is a computer with access to the Internet.

Just exactly what is Inspire? Broadly speaking, it is the information or content counterpart of the technology grants that have supplied us with all those computers and Internet connections we have been installing in our libraries in Indiana over the past few years. Specifically, it is a collection of on-line databases accessible over the Internet, that contains citations and full-text information, primarily from periodicals. And finally, it is the opportunity for all citizens of Indiana to have access to on-line information literally at their fingertips.

A little background, please....

In 1996 Millard Johnson of the Indiana Cooperative Library Service Authority (INCOLSA) arranged for a presentation of a project called GALILEO (Georgia Library Learning Online) at a meeting of the Cooperative. GALILEO provides access to on-line periodical databases to students across the state of Georgia. Johnson saw possibilities for a similar project in Indiana. He called together an ad hoc committee of librarians and technical staff that was representative of many types of libraries and many segments of Indiana's population. This group of people became the Inspire Steering Committee which today guides the direction of the Inspire project.

The Steering Committee formed two subcommittees: the Database Selection Working Group and the Technical Specifications Working Group.

Both subcommittees were made up of people representing the same interest groups as those of the Steering Committee.

The charge of the Database Selection Working Group was to consider issues pertaining to the content of Inspire. What types of databases were to be available through Inspire? What priorities should be considered in selecting these databases? How and where should Inspire be available? Guidelines were prepared and brought to the Inspire Steering Committee for consideration.

At the same time the Technical Specifications Working Group considered the requirements to provide state-wide access to the databases that would eventually be available through Inspire. Issues included consideration of one gateway vs. mirrored sites, software and hardware, how users would be authenticated as being citizens of Indiana, to name just a few. Other similar projects were contacted to obtain information, and software demonstrations were set up at INCOLSA.

The Steering Committee received and reviewed the reports of the working groups. It wrote a mission statement for the Inspire project, established priorities, and discussed funding and governance. One member of the Steering Committee and two members of the Technical Working Group assisted Millard Johnson in interviewing candidates for a prospective project manager. They hired Justin Lowe for this position.

Potential database vendors were identified and passwords for their databases were distributed to everyone working on Inspire. Members of the above-mentioned three groups spent hours on the Internet, visiting database test sites and evaluating the ease of use and quality of content. After a lengthy review process, four vendors were selected to make presentations at INCOLSA to the committee and working group members who had volunteered to serve as the evaluation team. A list of questions was prepared to be asked of the vendors at the demonstrations. These questions were selected to address concerns of different types of libraries and different ages of library users.

After the demonstrations, the evaluation team met to discuss the four vendors. Taking into consideration the criteria that had been established earlier by the three committees, the funds available, and the results of the demonstrations, EBSCO was selected to provide the databases for Inspire.

Not all of the Inspire action took place in meeting rooms, however. Early in the process, the Steering Committee sought funding from the Indiana General Assembly. With the help of the Indiana Library Federation and the Indiana State Library, Inspire received state funds in the amount $1 million a year for the purchase of databases for two years. The State Library also provided half a million dollars in LSCA funds for hardware, software, and personnel costs for the first year of the project.

The INCOLSA staff and the Steering Committee members took the Inspire concept to librarians across the state during district meetings in the fall of 1997. The project was also presented to state legislators at the Indiana Library Federation's Legislative Day meeting. Representatives from the Governor's office and from Access Indiana (information network) expressed interest in the progress and content of the project as well as some of the issues surrounding it.

Finally, about a year and a half after the GALILEO demonstration, Inspire is a reality, thanks to the cooperative efforts of many people and organizations who saw the potential in the project, and who believed that access to information is a vital advantage for the citizens of Indiana. "Virtual libraries have been around for a long time, but they're usually only accessible to staff, faculty, students, or any other group that has directly come up with funding," says Project Manager Lowe. "Nowhere else on the Internet is there a virtual library offering free state-wide access to the kind of high quality information contained in Inspire. And what about value for money? Inspire has a tiny budget compared to other [projects]."

The work continues. The Inspire project is now affiliated with the Indiana State Library. Rules of governance, continued funding, and project evaluation are just three of the on-going issues that now face the Inspire Steering Committee.

How Do I Use Inspire?

(Caveat: At the time I am writing this, the Inspire databases are available for use for the first time. While the Inspire project manager and the INCOLSA staff have performed miracles, and EBSCO has been very cooperative, many of the details for access have yet to be worked out. The information below will be general and certainly subject to change. Detailed information will be forthcoming to residents of Indiana in the near future.)

The two most frequently asked questions about Inspire are: How does a resident of Indiana get access to Inspire? What databases and information are on Inspire?

Inspire is now available through its own Web page at INCOLSA's Web site. The address is: www.inspire-indiana.net. To use Inspire, go to this Web page and select the option for access to Inspire databases. This Web page also includes answers to FAQs (frequently asked questions) as well as other information of interest to Inspire users.

Inspire is designed to be accessible through the Internet through a personal computer. At this time the Inspire server at INCOLSA has been instructed to recognize the domain names of other Indiana servers. This includes domain names for commercial Internet providers as well as those for libraries and schools. This arrangement will permit broad access to Inspire for a large number of Indiana residents while other access issues are addressed. (The term "resident" also includes any college or university student studying in Indiana. The student could be using Inspire from a terminal in a library or a personal computer in a residence hall room.)

If you do not access the Internet through your own server or an Internet provider that is recognized by the INCOLSA server, there will be other types of authentication that you will eventually use to access Inspire. More information about authentication will be forthcoming as details are worked out.

The EBSCO databases that are available through Inspire are designed to cover four broad categories of users: academic, high school, middle school, elementary school, and general. The database titles are:

> Academic Search FullTEXT Elite
> *(includes peer-reviewed material)*
> Business Source Elite
> Health Source Plus
> Newspaper Source
> ERIC
> Comprehensive MEDLINE
> MasterFILE FullTEXT 1500
> Collier's Encyclopedia
> Funk & Wagnall's New Encyclopedia
> Encyclopedia of Animals
> Primary Search

MAS FullTEXT Premier

Middle Search Plus

For complete lists of the periodicals included in each of the databases, visit the Inspire web page at: www.inspire-indiana.net.

All of the databases are available to any user at any site. However, databases may be selected and tailored for a specific site. More information about tailoring databases will be made available in the future.

The Inspire Web page features two methods of searching the databases: EBSCO's interface, and an interface designed by the INCOLSA staff using SiteSearch software. The SiteSearch interface provides the ability to standardize searching when using different databases with different search techniques. Both interfaces on the Inspire Web page allow simple keyword searches as well as advanced searching.

The databases themselves contain citations to articles and as well as many full-text articles. Graphics are also included in full-text articles when graphics appear in the original article. If you are using a Web browser and you find a citation or an article you want, you can print it using the print function of your Web browser. Also, you may save it to your hard drive or a disk, again using your Web browser's functions. Or you may e-mail the citation or article, either to yourself or to a colleague, a student or a teacher.

What is the Future of Inspire?

The EBSCO databases will be available for two years, that is, the period for which Inspire is currently funded. Access during the first year of the project is free to all eligible users. An evaluation process will be designed to monitor performance of the system and the databases, and to guide future database selection. The Inspire Steering Committee will continue to build bridges with the people and organizations that will assure that funding is available for the project in the future. Inspire could also be the start of an on-line library for Indiana, as other types of information resources are considered and evaluated for inclusion in Inspire in the future.

Inspire will succeed to the extent that the people of Indiana use Inspire to find the information they need to conduct their daily lives, educate their children, and make themselves competitive business people. A vital part of the Inspire project now rests on the shoulders of all librarians in the state. That vital function is to promote Inspire to every citizen of Indiana and to

help every citizen take that step into the information age along with us.

Detailed information about Inspire can be viewed at: www.inspire-indiana.net.

For additional information about the project, contact:

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> INCOLSA
> 6202 Morenci Trail
> Indianapolis, Indiana 46268-2536
> (317) 298-6570
> jlowe@incolsa.palni.edu

Inspire Mission Statement

Mission Statement:

To provide the residents of Indiana with equitable access to electronic information resources that enhance the quality of their everyday lives, the depth of their educational experience and the economic prosperity of their communities.

To provide this information through content-rich, full-text, commercially-available databases.

To ensure access to the databases for all residents of all ages, in all economic circumstances, in all walks of life, and in all regions of the state of Indiana through Internet-connected computers in homes, businesses, schools, and libraries.

To maximize the use of public funds through the cooperative purchase of these databases.

Governance and Operations of Inspire:

The Inspire Steering Committee is the governing body of the Inspire project and recommends policies and procedures to INCOLSA (Indiana Cooperative Library Service Authority). Representatives are appointed to the Steering Committee from:

1. AIME (Association of Indiana Media Educators)
2. Indiana Department of Education
3. Indiana Library Federation
4. INCOLSA
5. Indiana State Library

6. Indiana Public Library Association (one member from a large public library and one member from a medium-sized public library)
7. Indiana Library Federation Small Libraries Division
8. PALNI (Private Academic Library Network Indiana)
9. SULAN (State University Library Academic Network)

The Database Selection Working Group and the Technical Specifications Working Group report to the Steering Committee. Each Organization represented on the Steering Committee appoints the members to these two working groups.

Inspire is managed and operated by INCOLSA which is the agency designated for this purpose. The Indiana State Library and Historical Board allocates government funding to INCOLSA to carry out these functions.

Inspire Steering Committee

Name:	Organization:	Representing:
Charr Skirvin, Chair	Plainfield Public Library Plainfield, IN	Medium-sized public libraries
Ed Szynaka	Indianapolis-Marion Co. Public Library Indianapolis, IN	Large public libraries
Anne Mallett	Gary Public Schools Gary, IN	Association of Indiana Media Educators (AIME)
Jacie Morris	Indiana Department of Education Indianapolis, IN	Indiana Department of Education
Sally Otte	Indianapolis, IN	Indiana Library Federation
Ray Ewick	Indiana State Library Indianapolis, IN	Indiana State Library

Larry Frye	Lilly Library Wabash College Crawfordsville, IN	Private Academic Library Network Indiana (PALNI)
Pat Steele	Indiana University Libraries Bloomington, IN	State University Libraries Academic Network (SULAN)
Millard Johnson	INCOLSA Indianapolis, IN	ex officio

Inspire Database Selection Committee

Name:	Organization:	Representing:
David Lewis, Chair	IUPUI University Library Indianapolis, IN	Indiana Library Federation
Martha Roblee	Indiana State Library Indianapolis, IN	Indiana State Library
Nancy McGriff	South Central Schools LaPorte, IN	Association of Indiana Media Educators (AIME)
Jacie Morris	Indiana Department of Education Indianapolis, IN	Indiana Department of Education
Catherine Gibson	Indianapolis-Marion Co. Public Library Indianapolis, IN	Large public libraries
Debra Shaw	Plainfield Public Library Plainfield, IN	Medium-sized public libraries
Paul Schueler	Delphi Public Library Delphi, IN	Small public libraries

Tom Kirk	Lilly Library Earlham College Richmond, IN	Private Academic Library Network Indiana (PALNI)
Cheryl Kern- Simerenko	Purdue University Libraries West Lafayette, IN	State University Library Academic Network (SULAN)
Becki Whitaker	INCOLSA Indianapolis, IN	ex officio
Millard Johnson	INCOLSA Indianapolis, IN	ex officio

Inspire Technical Specifications Working Group

Name:	Organization:	Representing:
Ray Ewick, Chair	Indiana State Library Indianapolis, IN	Indiana State Library
Colleen Obergfell	Indianapolis-Marion Co. Public Library Indianapolis, IN	Large public libraries
Kathryn Holst	Huntington City-Township Public Library Huntington, IN	Small public libraries
Linda Hayward	Franklin Community Schools Franklin Central High School Franklin, IN	Association of Indiana Media Educators (AIME)
Mary Jo Erdberg	Indiana Department of Education Indianapolis, IN	Indiana Department of Education
Steve Schmidt	IUPUI University Library Indianapolis, IN	Indiana Library Federation

Lewis Miller   Butler University   Private Academic
       Irwin Library   Library Network
       Indianapolis, IN   Indiana (PALNI)

Brad Faust   Ball State University   State University Library
       Bracken Library   Academic Network
       Muncie, IN   (SULAN)

Millard Johnson   INCOLSA   ex officio
       Indianapolis, IN

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