

**Fiscal Year 1998
Annual Report of the
Federal Library and Information Center Committee**

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Highlights of the Year

During Fiscal Year 1998, the Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC), in the words of its new mission statement, worked "to foster excellence in federal library and information services through interagency cooperation and to provide guidance and direction for FEDLINK." The FLICC Executive Board and the general membership developed this new formal mission statement and adopted it early in the year. FLICC's annual information policy forum expanded on some of the key features of this mission by exploring how the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) affects federal libraries and how federal librarians should approach applying its principles. FLICC also held its annual information technology update, this year focusing on equipping federal librarians with the tools and expertise to create end-user training programs in their libraries and information centers.

FLICC formed two new working groups, the Awards Working Group and the Ad Hoc LC Bicentennial Working Group, and reconstituted the Preservation and Binding Working Group. Other FLICC working groups developed a Web-based, real-time information assessment of federal library information technology; created new educational initiatives in the areas of metadata, law classification and cataloging, and distance learning; issued surveys to members on fees and analyzed their responses; compiled knowledge, skills, and abilities statements for federal librarians, created three new government-wide awards, planned federal library participation in the LC Bicentennial, and continued to expand access to resources through the FLICC Web site.

In addition to supporting the membership projects, FLICC staff made substantial improvements to the FEDLINK program, improved members' use of OCLC, concluded their 18-month consultative management pilot, prepared for a replacement for the FEDLINK financial system, laid the groundwork for and began testing of a comprehensive multimedia distance learning initiative, and executed a return from offsite offices back to the LC Capitol Hill complex. Staff also sponsored 36 seminars and workshops for 1399 participants and conducted 103 OCLC, Internet, and related classes for 753 students.

FLICC's cooperative network, FEDLINK, continued to enhance its fiscal operations while providing its members with \$53.2 million in transfer pay services and \$64.8 million in direct pay services, saving federal agencies millions of dollars in cost avoidance and millions more in vendor discounts.

FLICC managers worked to improve project planning, implementation, and staff participation through effective use of Facilitative Leadership (FL) techniques developed in the Library's training program.

FLICC Quarterly Membership Meetings

The first FLICC Quarterly Membership meeting featured a visit to the "American Treasures of the Library of Congress" exhibition. Following the tour, Dorothy Fisher Weed (Department of Labor) introduced members to her department's treasures and rare books collections and Doria Grimes (NOAA) highlighted her agency's special collections.

The second FLICC Quarterly Membership meeting was host to two guest speakers, John Cole, Jr., (Center for the Book) and Gil Baldwin (GPO). Cole addressed LC's Bicentennial planning that led to the formation of a FLICC Ad Hoc Working Group on the LC Bicentennial. Baldwin updated members on the *NCLIS Assessment of Electronic Government Information Products*.

The third FLICC Quarterly Membership meeting focused on federal library policy issues, including a legislative update from Glenn McLaughlin (LC-CRS), followed by a presentation from Richard Kellet (GSA) on privacy, FOIA, and electronic FOIA.

The fourth quarterly FLICC Quarterly Membership meeting featured General Counsel Elizabeth Pugh (LC) who outlined a variety of common legal issues for federal libraries.

A fifth FLICC Quarterly Membership meeting, held in late September 1998, reviewed the status of government information distribution policy including a report from Fran Buckley (GPO) and Mary Alice Baish (AALL) on proposed revisions to U.S.C. Title 44 and an update by Robert Willard (NCLIS) on his commission's survey of selected electronic documents.

FLICC Working Groups

FLICC Ad Hoc Bicentennial LC Working Group

In honor of the Library's upcoming Bicentennial celebration, a FLICC working group formed to develop programs for the entire federal library community that will provide benefits beyond the bicentennial year. By participating in LC's bicentennial activities, federal libraries and information centers will increase recognition of their programs and link federal libraries to LC under the larger campaign to publicize the "Nation's Collections." The working group has proposed a variety of activities, including developing a tool kit complete with a press release, a calendar of events, a poster, bookmarks, and other promotional materials libraries and information centers can adapt for local use. The working group also hopes to sponsor a digitization competition among federal libraries and information centers to identify federal historical holdings or other collections that could be added to the Library's digital collection.

FLICC Awards Working Group

To honor the many innovative ways federal libraries, librarians, and library technicians are fulfilling the information demands of government, business, research, scholarly communities, and the American public, the Awards Working Group formed in Fiscal Year 1998 to inaugurate a series of national awards for federal librarianship.

The three awards are

Federal Library/Information Center of the Year -- to commend a library or information center's outstanding, innovative, and sustained achievements during Fiscal Year 1998 in fulfilling its organization's mission, fostering innovation in its services, and meeting the needs of its users;

Federal Librarian of the Year -- to honor professional achievements during fiscal year 1998 in the advancement of library and information sciences, the promotion and development of services in support of the agency's mission, and demonstrated professionalism as described in the Special Library Association's *Competencies for Special Librarians in the 21st Century*, and

Federal Library Technician of the Year -- to recognize the achievements of a federal library technician during fiscal year 1998 for service excellence in support of the library or information center's mission, exceptional technical competency, and flexibility in adapting work methods and dealing with change.

The award winners will receive a certificate and a plaque honoring their contributions to the field of federal library and information service which will be presented at the annual FLICC Forum on Federal Information Policies in March 1999.

FLICC Budget and Finance Working Group

The FLICC Budget and Finance Working Group began meeting in January to develop the Fiscal Year 1999 FEDLINK budget and fee structure. The group also initiated and completed a survey of the full membership on changing the fee structure. The final budget approved for 1999 reduced fees for transfer pay customers to 7.75 percent on accounts up to \$300,000 and 7.00 percent on amounts more than \$300,000. Direct pay fees remained at Fiscal Year 1998 levels.

Working group members first presented the budget proposal to FEDLINK and FLICC memberships and then mailed the proposal to all FEDLINK and FLICC members. The FLICC voting members unanimously supported the Fiscal Year 1999 budget proposal.

FLICC Education Working Group

During Fiscal Year 1998, the FLICC Education Working Group developed or supported 36 programs in the areas of technology development, copyright issues, technician training, cataloging and classification, and end-user training, and continued the FLICC Orientation to National Libraries and Information Centers tour program.

In November 1997, the working group sponsored "End-User Training and Support: A Role for Librarians" with speakers including: Carol Tenopir, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; John Auditore, National Institutes of Health; Jim Bradley, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command; Janie Butler, Lexis-Nexis; Cathy Kellum, Southeastern Libraries Network, Anne Caputo, Knight Ridder Information Services, Melissa Becher, American University; and Cheryl Hunter, DTIC. Seventy-five federal librarians joined together at this program to discuss practical techniques for being effective instructional librarians.

During the winter months FLICC continued its commitment to continuing education initiatives for librarians and library technicians education by hosting satellite downlinks to two popular teleconference series, "Soaring to... Excellence" and "Dancing with... Change," both sponsored by the College of DuPage.

Following the success of the 1997 program, the working group held the second annual "Federal Library Technicians Institute" in August 1998. This week-long institute continued to focus on educating library technicians. Federal and academic librarians joined FLICC professionals to discuss various areas of librarianship, including acquisitions, cataloging, reference, and automation.

The newest institute, "Law Classification and Cataloging for Federal Librarians" held in late August, provided a structured presentation for cataloging and reference librarians. Participants reviewed standards, bibliographic description, LC classifications, subject headings, and legal serials.

FLICC Information Technology Working Group

In Fiscal Year 1998, the Information Technology Working Group unveiled its new Web-based survey entitled "The FLICC Information Technology Assessment for Federal Libraries and Information Centers." This assessment will help federal librarians examine how information technology is being used in their organization and glean information about other libraries' equipment and programs. The results of this informative questionnaire are accessible through the FLICC/FEDLINK Web site and allow federal librarians to assess the level of automation in their libraries by comparing their agency's use of technology with other agencies' library profiles.

To assist federal librarians in the development of metadata, descriptive data used to classify and manage electronic resources, the working group sponsored "The 1998 FLICC Information Technology Update: Metadata 101: Beyond Traditional Cataloging." This program led to the spring follow-up institute, "Metadata 201: OCLC Institute's Knowledge Access Management for Federal Librarians," where attendees spent five days applying the latest standards and guidelines in cataloging government publications on the Web.

The working group continued its series of Internet-focused brown bag sessions in Fiscal Year 1998 with two sessions on web creation software and pricing issues between Internet and commercial databases. They also focused on ways to update federal librarians on maintenance contracts for integrated library systems and on how FEDLINK might play a role in facilitating the consortial purchasing of electronic products among federal agencies.

FLICC Nominating Working Group

The FLICC Nominating Working Group oversaw the 1998 election process for FLICC Rotating Members and the FEDLINK Advisory Council. Librarians representing 15 federal agencies agreed to place their names in nomination for these positions.

FLICC Personnel Working Group

The Personnel Working Group continued its efforts in developing sample Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) statements to help hiring officials specify appropriate quality

ranking factors for vacancy announcements for federal librarian positions. They intend these KSAs be used as a guide and are not associated with specific grade levels nor are they intended to be used for classifying 1410 positions. During Fiscal Year 1998, the working group formalized KSAs for public services and systems librarians and posted them on the FLICC Web site.

FLICC Preservation and Binding Working Group

The Preservation and Binding Working Group reorganized and reformed in Fiscal Year 1998, naming a new chair late in the year. The goals of the revitalized working group are to identify preservation priorities for federal libraries and information centers, discover alternative sources of funding to support these preservation efforts, and to develop and disseminate preservation information and resources in an electronic format through the FLICC Web site.

FLICC Publications and Education Office

Publications: In Fiscal Year 1998, FLICC supported an ambitious publications schedule with the departure of one permanent writer/editor in May 1998 and the arrival of another in July 1998. During Fiscal Year 1998, FLICC produced 11 issues of *FEDLINK Technical Notes*: October 1997 (12 pages); November 1997 (16 pages); December 1997 (12 pages); January 1998 (12 pages); February 1998 (12 pages); March 1998 (12 pages); April 1998 (12 pages); May 1998 (12 pages); June 1998 (12 pages); July 1998 (12 pages); and August/September 1998 (12 pages); and four issues of the *FLICC Quarterly Newsletter*: Fall 1997 (8 pages); Winter 1998 (8 pages); Spring 1998 (12 pages); and Summer 1998 (12 pages). FLICC also published a 36-page summary of the 1997 FLICC Forum, "Clear Signals? Telecommunications, Convergence, and the Quality of Information," which was selected for public sale by the Government Printing Office. FLICC published expanded and enhanced materials to support the FEDLINK program including the 72-page Fiscal Year 1999 *FEDLINK Registration Booklet*; a 225-page complete revision of the looseleaf *FEDLINK Member Handbook*, with an index and tabs; two versions of the *FLICC/FEDLINK Education Catalog*, which was incorporated in the LCIU catalog and mailed to FEDLINK members; 5 FEDLINK Information Alerts; and a FLICC Awards brochure. FLICC also produced the minutes of the four Fiscal Year 1998 FLICC Quarterly Meetings and bimonthly FEB meetings and all FLICC Education Program promotional and support materials including the FLICC Forum announcement, Forum attendee and speaker badges, press advisories, speeches and speaker remarks, and Forum collateral materials. In addition, FLICC produced 30 FLICC Meeting Announcements to promote FLICC Education Programs, FEDLINK membership, vendor, and OCLC users' meetings, and three education institutes, along with badges, programs, certificates of completion, and other supporting materials.

FLICC and FEDLINK staff worked diligently throughout 1998 to continue to expand and update the FLICC/FEDLINK Web site. The site contains a variety of information resources, member information, links to vendors and other members, listings of membership and minutes of various FLICC governing bodies, access to account data online, event calendars, and an on-line registration system that is updated nightly. FLICC staff converted all publications, newsletters, announcements, alerts, member materials, and working group resources into HTML format, uploading current materials within days of their being printed. Through collaboration with the FEDLINK Network Operations staff, the FLICC Web site continues to expand and offer resources including OCLC Usage Analysis Reports, pricing data for the FEDLINK Books Procurement Program, and many new documents, including the Fiscal Year 1999 budget materials, training resources, and links to other members.

Education: In conjunction with the FLICC Education Working Group, FLICC offered a total of 36 seminars, workshops, and lunchtime discussions to 1399 members of the federal library and information center community. Multi-day institutes covered metadata, law classification, library technician training, HTML; one-day sessions offered hands-on and theoretical knowledge on end-user training, copyright issues on the Internet, and assessing information technology in federal libraries. The "FLICC Orientations to National Libraries and Information Centers Series," comprised of tours of other federal libraries and information centers continued in Fiscal Year 1998 with visits and presentations at the National Library of Medicine, the National Library of Education, the National Agricultural Library, the Government Printing Office, the National Archives and Records Administration (both in Washington, D.C. and in College Park, Maryland), the Defense Technical Information Center, and the National Technical Information Service. FLICC also was a host to the College of DuPage's "Dancing with Change" and "Soaring to Excellence," two multi-session satellite downlink programs on library science issues for librarians and library technicians.

FLICC also provided organizational, promotional, and logistical support for FEDLINK meetings and events including: the FEDLINK Fall and Spring Membership Meetings; two FEDLINK OCLC Users Group meetings; a series of three vendor presentations; and a program on "How to Use FEDLINK in Fiscal Year 1999" in August 1998.

FLICC continued to expand its multimedia distance learning initiative by updating its equipment and testing new approaches to integrating titles, text, and graphics into videotape presentations. Through its arrangement with the National Library of Education for interlibrary loans to federal libraries, FLICC continued to make these educational programs available for members throughout the country and around the world.

FEDLINK (Federal Library and Information Network)

In Fiscal Year 1998, FEDLINK gave federal agencies cost-effective access to an array of automated information retrieval services for online research, cataloging, and interlibrary loan (ILL). FEDLINK members also procured publications, technical processing services, serials, electronic journals, CD-ROMs, books, and document delivery via LC/FEDLINK contracts with major vendors.

The FEDLINK Advisory Council (FAC) met monthly during Fiscal Year 1998 except in November, June, and July. During the year, the FAC approved the Fiscal Year 1999 FEDLINK budget and the new FEDLINK mission statement: "To serve federal libraries and information centers as their purchasing, resource-sharing, and training consortium." Also in 1998, the FAC voted to have the vice chair of the FAC serve as the moderator for the FEDLIB listserv.

The Fall FEDLINK Membership meeting of October 14, 1997 featured Pat McNutt, the International Trade Center Bookstore Chair and Director of Sales for the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). She described the characteristics and purpose of the new International Trade Center Bookstore at the Ronald Reagan Building. Staff also unveiled the new FLICC/FEDLINK Web site and offered attendees a virtual tour of its resources.

The guest speaker at the FEDLINK Spring Membership Meeting of April 30, 1998 was Tom Sanville, Executive Director of OhioLINK, who addressed consortial purchasing in academia. The FLICC Budget and Finance Working Group Chair presented the Fiscal Year 1999 budget and FEDLINK staff outlined consortial purchasing initiatives. The meeting concluded with a formal discussion of customer service efforts and strategies.

FEDLINK Network Operations -- OCLC Network Activity

During Fiscal Year 1998 FEDLINK sponsored a spring and fall OCLC Users Group Meeting. These meetings reflected the thrust of OCLC support activities for the year and highlighted upcoming telecommunications changes as federal libraries and information centers migrate from OCLC's proprietary method and older standards to TCP/IP-based technology via the Internet, dial-up connections, and dedicated lines. Staff reported that OCLC continues to base its software enhancements on Windows-based operating systems and that its proposed prices reflected modest increases, with decreases for those libraries contributing significant amounts of cataloging.

While working with member libraries and information centers to decrease telecommunications costs by migrating to the newer technologies, the OCLC support team counseled members on the potential cost reductions associated with choosing effective cataloging and searching techniques. To maximize members' use of OCLC's

Windows-based software and increase efficient use of its systems, staff developed several new training classes: OCLC Macros, Cataloging Shortcuts, and Effective Strategies for Searching OCLC. Staff also contributed to a network-wide directory of course materials.

A new generic email address for OCLC questions (askocfno@loc.gov) and an OCLC members' listserv greatly enhanced communication with members. In combination with the FLICC Web site, members achieved instant access to current price lists and standard usage reports that highlight administrative overhead and search-to-produce ratios, two areas that merit attention when libraries work to reduce OCLC costs.

By supporting OCLC reference products, federal libraries and information centers increased the efficiency of their migration to digital services. Staff who made site visits to member libraries emphasized using OCLC's FirstSearch and Electronic Collections Online services. Navy libraries and the Military Education Coordinating Conference (MECC) subsequently established consortial purchases of OCLC reference services while individual libraries, such as the Army Research Lab (Adelphi, MD), began significant use of electronic journals via Electronic Collections Online. Several federal library participants in the Depository Library program are also testing access to full text in ERIC via FirstSearch, a joint project of OCLC, GPO, and the National Library of Education. Another OCLC presentation, to 42 Marine officers, will result in 18 new FEDLINK/OCLC members, and opens the door to consortial purchasing through a network of Marine Corps libraries.

FEDLINK continued its participation in activities designed to improve communication between OCLC and the other networks. FLICC Executive Director Susan Tarr chaired the Regional Network Directors Advisory Committee (RONDAC) from July 1997 through June 1998. As chair of the Network OCLC Service Managers, FEDLINK's OCLC Program Coordinator Lynn McDonald helped establish meeting/training agendas and worked with task forces and committees to increase use of distance communication technologies between OCLC and the networks. FEDLINK staff also reviewed OCLC's newest products and documentation.

FEDLINK Internet/Technology Program

In Fiscal Year 1998, FNO conducted an active Internet training program, continued to enhance the content of the FLICC/FEDLINK Web site, sponsored institutes on Internet technology subjects, held Internet information sessions, and consulted with members on a variety of automation topics. In the Fall, staff conducted a three-day Internet training for the U.S. Army in Heidelberg, Germany. In the Spring, staff held two Internet training sessions for LC SOROS Interns and, as part of a cooperative agreement, conducted a regional version of "Library Acquisitions and Collections Development on the World Wide Web" class for federal librarians and the MINITEX Library Network. Staff also

customized the Internet class, "Military History Information: Finding it in the Web " for the U.S. Marine Corps.

With the assistance of other LC staff, FEDLINK initiated a new series of HTML classes designed to train federal librarians to offer their resources and expertise online. Attendees at follow-up classes, which offered additional hands-on exercises, highly rated the new classes.

During 1998, a special project conducted with the FLICC Information Technology Working Group and LC programmers resulted in an interactive Web-based survey instrument created to measure the state of automation in federal libraries and information centers. Once members complete the survey, they can download reports of how their libraries compare with other agency libraries, establish communications with other members who use similar hardware and software, and use the database as a resource when considering internal upgrades.

Throughout the year, staff also provided consultation to members on ILS projects, telecommunication issues, digitizing projects, and other automation topics.

Exhibits Program

FLICC/FEDLINK exhibited at three events in Fiscal Year 1998: the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) Users' Meeting in November 1997; the American Library Association (ALA) Conference in Washington, D.C. in June 1998; and the Special Library Association (SLA) Conference in Indianapolis in June 1998. At the ALA conference, staff debuted a new promotional packet that outlines both FLICC and FEDLINK initiatives and services.

FEDLINK Training Program

The 1998 FEDLINK training program included specialized training classes and contractual arrangements for customized workshops for members. Twenty-three librarians also attended an FEDLINK Descriptive Cataloging Institute in Heidelberg, Germany in October 1997. As part of its distance learning efforts, staff worked with the Air Force Education and Training Command to transmit a training video to 18 of its libraries. Entitled "Telecommunications and Networking Concepts," this video updates librarians on the latest telecommunications and networking technologies and how they can best be used for future program planning. The video was produced by the Alliance of Library Service Networks, of which FEDLINK is a member.

Other education/training events included a customized "An Introduction to MARC: Migrating from Datatrek," an onsite training program for the U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia, Washington, D.C. in December 1997. Staff also facilitated a benchmarking workshop for federal librarians at the Medical Library Association annual meeting and "Strategic Budgeting" for the Navy and Marine Corps in April 1998.

During the year, staff conducted 103 OCLC, Internet, and related classes for 753 students. Of the 103 classes held, 52 were at field sites, primarily as part of the Air Force's continuing effort to train its librarians. Besides the Heidelberg, Germany program, FEDLINK staff held training sessions in Panama, Arizona, California, Delaware, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Additional contract training, also provided through FEDLINK, included 31 OCLC Pacific Network sessions, 276 CAPCON programs, two PALINET courses, and 13 SOLINET classes.

Procurement Services

For serials subscription services, Fiscal Year 1998 was a year of research and planning for a new statement of work, pricing structure, and evaluation criteria for a Request for Proposal (RFP) to establish new serials basic ordering agreements (BOAs) for the upcoming Fiscal Year 1999 procurement which will be effective for Fiscal Year 2000-2005; these BOAs will serve as the basis for competitions for more than 300 federal libraries' individual serials requirements. This new RFP will predict and anticipate changes in the serials industry that will be critical to federal libraries and information centers over the next five years. To this end, staff met with incumbent FEDLINK serials vendors, attended national meetings of serials professionals and classes on licensing, and talked with members about their experiences and plans.

The arrival of Web-based book distributors like *Amazon.com* has made FEDLINK books vendors operate in a more competitive environment. In Fiscal Year 1998, FEDLINK assisted federal libraries and information centers as they took advantage of this new market and its better prices and services. Staff also added an expanded pricing section to the FLICC Web site so that members can compare FEDLINK publisher discounts across an array of subject, format, and source categories. With this information so readily available, librarians can apply federal contracting principles to their acquisitions work by confirming reasonable prices for orders less than \$2,500; locating three potential vendor sources for orders between \$2,500 and \$100,000; comparing FEDLINK prices with those of outside sources; and identifying potential vendors for Requests for Quotations (RFQs) for larger requirements.

FEDLINK conducted just such an RFQ for the Air Force Library Program's million-dollar requirement to provide paperback book kits to libraries and detachments of Air

Force personnel worldwide. Through competition, the Air Force could select a single vendor to meet the Air Force's tight delivery schedule at a discount rate that reflects the volume of their order. FEDLINK also worked with the Army to help define its requirements for a similar paperback service for the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

Staff also worked closely with several vendors and members to take advantage of provisions in the current electronic information retrieval services BOAs that allow specialized offerings and volume pricing plans tailored for individual customers. Negotiations with Lexis-Nexis, for example, secured participation in Lexis' volume bonus plan for both LC's Library Services and the Congressional Research Service. Under this fixed-price, unlimited usage plan, these LC units will save approximately 30 percent on their online legal and current events information.

Pricing issues remained significant during negotiations for Fiscal Year 1999 BOA renewals with incumbent vendors. Through close review of the pricing proposals from FEDLINK's three largest online vendors (Dialog, Lexis, and WESTLAW) FNO's contracting officer's technical representative (COTR) for online services uncovered significant changes in the vendors' pricing approaches. These changes posed a serious threat to members' library and information center budgets. Working with C&L, staff identified specific negotiation points and alternative approaches that ultimately avoided the proposed price changes.

FEDLINK also continued its efforts to develop license agreements for electronic publications services that will meet both federal legal requirements and serve library and information center interests. The project's goals are to forestall redundant negotiations at multiple agencies and reduce the likelihood of a serious conflict between terms in the FEDLINK BOAs and those in locally-negotiated licenses. FEDLINK's model license agreement was part of the open season RFP for electronic services issued during 1998 and will serve as a basis for negotiations with incumbent vendors.

A consortial licensing task force of the FLICC Information Technology Working Group formed to further this licensing initiative and to explore opportunities for forming a consortium of FEDLINK members interested in joint acquisition of electronic journals. FEDLINK met with two publishers to discuss their consortial offerings and invited the vendors (and others) to respond to the open season RFP. Staff also identified ways to create a consortium within current FEDLINK interagency agreements, delivery orders, and accounting procedures so that libraries and information centers can combine their funding and earn greater discounts. Navy technical libraries and other intra- and inter-agency groups are considering this consortial option for purchase of traditional online services such as Dialog.

In July 1998, FEDLINK issued the RFP for electronic information retrieval services (with minor revisions) in an "open season" to invite new vendors to join the program. Staff reviewed proposals from 12 vendors, many of which will be added to the program for Fiscal Year 1999.

After reviewing the volume of technical processing services members continue to use, staff recommended that C&L renew BOAs with the five technical processing services vendors, the Copyright Clearance Center, and the Interlibrary Loan Fee Payment Service vendor. The technical processing COTR developed simplified procedures for specifying requirements for selecting vendors to handle small cataloging projects (less than \$2,500) and continued to consult extensively with members on projects of larger size. Web versions of *FEDLINK's Technical Processing Services Kit* and its "Specifications" forms will debut in early Fiscal year 1999, ready for broad distribution to members.

Streamlining Initiatives

FEDLINK's 1997 Business Plan calls for serious consideration of ways to streamline processes to increase efficiency and improve services to members. One of the first streamlining proposals suggested a different approach to the authorization of direct pay purchases under FEDLINK BOAs.

Purchasing reforms instituted in the early 1990s called for all direct pay purchase orders issued to vendors to be sent through FEDLINK for review (for current IAG status, scope of the order, procurement compliance, etc.). This process delayed the start of services for direct pay customers and added a processing burden for the members' agency, FEDLINK and C&L. During Fiscal Year 1998, LC's General Counsel confirmed that this procedure was not legally required. FEDLINK decided to move with the spirit of federal procurement reform to depend on member agency contracting officers to issue orders under the simplified acquisition threshold (\$100,000) in full compliance with FEDLINK BOAs. For orders more than \$100,000, experience suggested that in the interest of the members and LC, FEDLINK should continue to consult and offer oversight. This revised procedure is already in place for Fiscal Year 1999; members are authorized to send purchase orders for requirements less than \$100,000 directly to vendors and to route orders over that threshold through FEDLINK.

By the end of Fiscal Year 1998, FEDLINK engaged in a series of discussions with C&L and the LC General Counsel about the application of Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), the Federal Acquisitions Streamlining Act (FASA), and other reform legislation to FEDLINK operations. Streamlining activities will continue into Fiscal Year 1999.

FEDLINK Fiscal Operations

During Fiscal Year 1998, FEDLINK processed 9,489 member service transaction requests for current and prior years, representing \$53.2 million in current year transfer pay, \$3.2 million in prior year transfer pay, \$64.8 million in current year direct pay, and \$365,000 in prior year direct pay service dollars, saving members more than \$9 million in cost avoidance and millions more in vendor discounts. Staff issued 56,617 invoices for payment of current and prior year orders, incurred virtually zero net interest expense for late payment of FEDLINK vendor invoices, completed Fiscal Year 1993 member service dollar refunds to close out obligations for expired appropriations, and successfully passed the Library of Congress Financial Audit of Fiscal Year 1997 transactions performed by Clifton Gunderson, LLP. FEDLINK also successfully completed steps to streamline its finance and procurement policies and procedures to enhance the efficiency of customer service operations and ensured that administrative expenditures/obligations did not exceed program fee projections. Staff also made significant progress in addressing the challenges associated with procuring a replacement financial system and maintaining SYMIN, its current system, through the year 2000 while simultaneously improving the efficiency of FEDLINK's financial processes.

FEDLINK Vendor Services

Total FEDLINK vendor service dollars for Fiscal Year 1998 alone comprised \$53.2 million for transfer pay customers and \$64.8 million for direct pay customers. Database retrieval services represent the largest share of service dollars with \$13.7 million and \$52.4 million spent, respectively, for transfer pay and direct pay customers. Within this service category, online services comprise the largest procurement for transfer pay and direct pay customers, representing \$13.3 million and \$51.2 million, respectively. Publication acquisition services represent \$33.2 million and \$12.4 million, respectively, for transfer pay and direct pay customers. Within this service category, serials subscription services comprise the largest procurement for transfer pay and direct pay customers, representing \$25.5 million and \$11.9 million, respectively. Library support services represent \$6.3 million for transfer pay and zero dollars for direct pay customers. Within this service category, bibliographic utilities constitute the largest procurement area, representing \$5.1 million for transfer pay customers.

Accounts Receivable and Member Services

FEDLINK processed Fiscal Year 1998 registrations from federal libraries, information centers and other federal offices that resulted in 695 signed Fiscal Year 1998 IAGs. In addition, FEDLINK processed 2,653 IAG amendments (1,164 for Fiscal Year 1998 and 1,489 for prior year adjustments) for agencies that added, adjusted, or ended service funding. These IAGs and IAG amendments represented 9,489 individual service requests to begin, move, convert, or cancel services from FEDLINK vendors. FEDLINK executed service requests by generating 9,094 delivery orders that LC/Contracts and Logistics issued to vendors. For Fiscal Year 1998 alone, FEDLINK processed \$53.2 million in service dollars for 2,567 transfer pay accounts and \$64.8 million in service dollars for

199 direct pay accounts. Included in the above member service transactions are 621 member requests to move prior year (no-year and multi-year) funds across fiscal year boundaries. These no-year and multi-year service request transactions represented an additional contracting volume of \$3.5 million comprising 997 delivery orders.

The FEDLINK Fiscal Hotline responded to a variety of member questions ranging from routine queries about IAGs, delivery orders, and account balances, to complicated questions regarding FEDLINK policies and operating procedures. In addition, the FLICC Web site and email contacts continued to offer FEDLINK members and vendors 24-hour access to fiscal operations. Staff continued to schedule appointments with FEDLINK member agencies and FEDLINK vendors to discuss complicated account problems; senior staff concentrated on resolving complex current and prior year situations. FEDLINK ALIX-FS maintained current and prior year transfer pay accounts in Fiscal Year 1998 and continued to provide members early access to their monthly balance information throughout the fiscal year. FEDLINK prepared monthly mailings that alerted individual members to unsigned IAG amendments, deficit accounts, rejected invoices, and delinquent accounts.

Transfer Pay Accounts Payable Services

For transfer pay users, FEDLINK issued 56,617 invoices for payment during Fiscal Year 1998 for both current and prior year orders. Staff efficiently processed vendor invoices and earned \$2,800 in discounts in excess of interest payment penalties levied for the late payment of invoices to FEDLINK vendors. FEDLINK continued to maintain open accounts for three prior years to pay publications service invoices ("bill laters" and "back orders") for members using books and serials services. Staff issued 91,769 statements to members (26,954 for the current year and 64,815 for prior years) and continued to generate current fiscal year statements for database retrieval service accounts on the 30th or the last working day of each month and publications and acquisitions account statements on the 15th of each month. FEDLINK issued final Fiscal Year 1993 statements in support of closing obligations for expired Fiscal Year 1993 appropriations. FFO issued quarterly statements for prior fiscal years including Fiscal Year 1994 and supported reconciliation of Fiscal Year 1994 FEDLINK vendor services accounts.

Financial Management

FEDLINK completed all unfinished work associated with reconciling Fiscal Year 1993 vendor obligations and payments and collaborated with LC/Financial Services to refund members' remaining account balances. This facilitated member agency compliance with statutory requirements for retiring obligations associated with Fiscal Year 1993 expired appropriations.

FEDLINK also successfully passed the Library of Congress Financial Audit of Fiscal Year 1997 transactions done by Clifton Gunderson, LLP. Staff completed the limited review of FEDLINK's automated financial system for the Library of Congress 1998 financial audit and invested time and effort to support the audit including: (1) financial systems briefings, (2) documented review and analysis of financial system, (3) testing and verification of account balances in the central and subsidiary financial system, (4) financial statement preparation support, (5) security briefings and reviews, and (6) research and documented responses to follow-up audit questions and findings.

FEDLINK also hired a Fiscal Systems Analyst to provide technical guidance and help systems staff address the challenges associated with procuring a replacement system and maintaining SYMIN over the next two years.

Budget and Revenue

During Fiscal Year 1998, FEDLINK ensured that administrative expenditures and obligations did not exceed the program fee projections. As Fiscal Year 1998 ended, FEDLINK service dollars fees were approximately 2 percent below Fiscal Year 1997 levels for the same time period. FEDLINK earned 96 percent of its Fiscal Year 1998 operating budget in fee revenues from signed IAGs.

Financial Management Systems

FEDLINK completed requirements for a new automated financial system that would replace the current SYMIN system. Last year FLICC executed a contract with Price Waterhouse to develop a systems requirements analysis for the replacement financial system. In their final report, Price Waterhouse recommended that FEDLINK use a public sector customer-off-the-shelf (COTS) software package to meet its processing requirements. They concluded that a public sector COTS software approach provides the best overall approach to meeting FEDLINK's requirements for the new financial management system. FEDLINK is now in the process of requesting proposals from GSA providers of financial management COTS software packages; FEDLINK expects the procurement to be completed during Fiscal Year 1999.

Although FEDLINK is in the process of procuring a replacement SYMIN system, the new system will not be in place by the Year 2000 (Y2K). Most of the Y2K work is underway and SYMIN is currently using database software which accommodates a four-digit fiscal year. FEDLINK continued to pursue the following initiatives to make SYMIN Y2K compliant: 1) migrating SYMIN from a Banyan Vines network operating system to a Windows NT network operating system; 2) changing SYMIN tables, forms, and reports to accommodate four character years. FEDLINK also established task orders for Y2K technical support deliverables under the LC Information Technology Service's contract

with United Communications Systems, Inc.(UCS).

FEDLINK made progress toward automating the IAG billing process through contract work with American Management Systems (AMS) to automate the IAG billing process. Completion of this automation effort in December 1998 will benefit FEDLINK members by significantly reducing the IAG billing turnaround time and billing operation cost.

FEDLINK successfully completed the implementation of a turnkey document imaging and archiving system for the Accounts Payable Operations to improve the retention and retrieval of accounts payable records. Current plans entail extending the use of the system applications to Accounts Receivable and FEDLINK Contracting Operations.