*I*mpressions

The Open Mind Company Newsletter

*A*utomation solutions for libraries worldwide

Mar 2009. Vol 2 Num 3

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Thank you for letting us share news and developments in the world of library automation solutions. Our goal is to give you the information and insight you and your library need to make the most out of your existing system - and to determine what tools you'll benefit from in the future. This is your space, so please contact us with topics you'd like us to cover.

What is **U**nicode?

You may have noticed that Unicode is a feature in the Web-based library automation system, Mandarin Oasis. In a nutshell, Unicode is a universal encoding standard that greatly simplifies the sharing of multilingual text.

Fundamentally, computers can only understand numbers, so each letter and character must be assigned a number. In the past, hundreds of different encoding systems were used to assign these numbers, since no one encoding system could contain enough characters to cover every language.

Imagine trying to represent multiple languages on a single page, such as Chinese, Hebrew, Arabic, and English. Even for English alone, no single encoding was adequate for all the letters, punctuation, and technical symbols in common use.

These previous encoding systems also conflict with one another. For example, two encodings can use the same number for two different characters, or use different numbers for the same character. Unicode, however, provides a unique number for every character, regardless of the platform, the program, or the language.

For software to handle Unicode, it must be designed from inception with

Unicode in mind. Oasis was developed in this manner. As long as you have the proper language packs installed for your operating system and the operating system itself supports Unicode, Oasis automatically handles text input, display, searching, and sorting, all in Unicode.

Another aspect of Unicode in a library automation system is the MARC record. The MARC standard provides for a variation that uses Unicode instead of ANSEL (a standard MARC encoding scheme), and Oasis understands the variation automatically. In fact, Oasis can support both record types simultaneously! Also, if you like, Oasis can convert all incoming MARC records to the Unicode variant on import.

If you have a foreign language collection or plan to, Unicode is a requirement. Looking forward to the future, no one knows where the records you have invested time and money into acquiring and creating will end up. Unicode will insure portability of these records to almost anywhere without problem. Those who have recently switched from another automation system to Mandarin or have memories of the conversion process know how important this is.

The Unicode Standard has been adopted by many industry leaders including Apple, HP, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP, and Sun. It is supported in Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Vista, Mac OS 9.2, Mac OS X, and all modern Web browsers.

*D*ownloading *R*ecords from the *L*ibrary of *C*ongress for *M*andarin M3

- Login to http://catalog.loc.gov/
- Locate desired record in the LOC Online Catalog.
- Click on "*MARC Tags*" tab at the top of the record.
- At the bottom of the record, click on "*MARC (save only)*".
- Click on "*Print or Save Search Results*".
- Click on "*File*" then "*Save As*".
- Rename the file from "*Pwebrecon_cgi*" to a name that represents your item.
- Click on the drop down arrow next to "*Save as type*" and change it to "T*ext File (*.txt)*".
- Click on *Save*
- Open the M3 Cataloging module and import the record.

*S*hare. *D*iscuss. *A*sk. *L*earn...

The forum for the Mandarin Community

The Mandarin Forum allows you and your colleagues throughout the world to share valuable information, give and receive important tips and open discussions on areas relevant to you and your library.

Join now and take advantage of this free, open and comprehensive resource open only to Mandarin clients.

Here's how:

- Current customers can access the Mandarin Forum through the Customer's Corner.

- Log in and choose Mandarin Community (lower right corner) and then User's Discussion Board.

Feeling a Little Hungry? Here's Some Food for Thought

Hungry minds are receiving a little nourishment at the Orphelinat des Garcons de Bingerville (OGB) in Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa! Visiting librarian, Kim Piot, has been working with students, administrators, and the library staff at this elementary boarding school for orphaned and poor boys to help develop a computer center and update their library with new books , videos, dvds...and the Mandarin M3 library automation system.
On an extended leave of absence from her position at Hudson County Schools of Technology (HCST) in New Jersey, who donated 10 computers to the orphanage, Ms Piot is working for the International Community School of Abidjan (ICSA) , an American curriculum K-12 school, and Mandarin Oasis Web hosted client.

Ms Piot was sold on Mandarin from the start, since ICSA and other librarians in the area had used the Mandarin M3 system as a cost effective solution for international schools in struggling economies. Read more

The Mandarin Team
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Get in touch with us by phone or e-mail, it's easy:

- To request a consultation with a library automation specialist, click here.
- To request a live webinar with a library automation specialist, click here.
- To request instructions for a free sample data conversion, click here.
- For Technical Assistance,
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