

■ NETWORKING

Suffolk County System Installs Gale's Total Access

"Meta search engine" linking Suffolk's OPACs and Gale's databases is a foreshadowing of what is to come

When Gale Research, Information Access Company, and Primary Source Media were merged to form Gale Group in 1998, one of the new organization's first announcements was of InfoTrack Total Access, described as a "meta search engine that helps a library organize all of its web-based information resources into a single virtual online system."

The Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, NY, is among the first libraries to install the Total Access system. The installation was "pretty simple," Edana Cichanowicz, the system's electronic resources librarian, told *LI*. Most of the 54 libraries in the Suffolk system needed little more than "browser upgrades" and to be "Java enabled...no more than minor tinkering," Cichanowicz said.

Link from databases to OPAC

Cichanowicz said Suffolk is using its Total Access as a conduit between its Gale Group databases and its OPAC. According to Cichanowicz, Total Access performs a "parallel distributed web search that simultaneously accesses diverse target databases [on the web], including library OPACs, licensed databases, and selected web sites. Total Access passes the user's query to all target systems in a form that is optimized for each. Each target then executes the query by using its own native search engine. The hit counts per target are presented to the user, and the user is free to enter each target site to examine the contents." Most targets are keyword searched, but Gale Group can configure sites according to individual library needs.

"Products such as Total
Access 'represent
the future' "

—Suffolk PL's Edana Cichanowicz