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The CRIV Sheet

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From the Chair

Positive feedback highlights our accomplishments, and most individuals appreciate acknowledgment. As the CRIV Chair, many tasks have kept me focused on a variety of issues. However, I have tried to keep a mental list of those entities and individuals that I want to acknowledge for their contributions to a better legal information world. Thus, the first issue of *The CRIV Sheet* of the new year contains some accolades and affirmations that I want to share.

First, I want to mention the AALL New Product Award. Great minds may differ, but member consensus regarding a best new legal title demonstrates our expertise in recognizing product excellence. While it seems that law librarians spend a great deal of time working with publishers to resolve problems, the New Product Award provides an opportunity to highlight success. It is our opportunity to promote to other publishers the types of products that fill a niche, pioneer new territory, meet different user demands, or just outright shine with outstanding content and quality. This issue of *The CRIV Sheet* will highlight the librarian's perspective on the value of the New Product Award to our profession and to the legal information marketplace. The next issue of *The CRIV Sheet* will provide the vendor's viewpoint.

Second, another legal information product that merits my unabashed acclaim is the CRIV's very own *The CRIV Sheet*. Some new members may not know that *The CRIV Sheet* began as a separate AALL newsletter in the 1970s. Between 1978 and 1988, the title was *Publications Clearing House Bulletin*. Law librarians quickly appreciated *The CRIV Sheet's* reports on publisher issues — including both the librarian's problem identification and the publisher's response. *The CRIV Sheet* is now published three times a year in the November, February and May issues of *AALL Spectrum*. *The CRIV Sheet* continues to disseminate information relating to publishers and vendors, acquisitions tips, perspectives on licensing and fair business practices, and much more. Concerns have become more varied and complex since the first issues were produced. From 1988 to 1994, Ken Svengalis served as editor of *The CRIV Sheet*. He acknowledges that his stint as editor uniquely positioned him to monitor trends in legal publishing and to develop ideas

expressed in his highly regarded book, *The Legal Information Buyer's Guide & Reference Manual*, winner of the Joseph L. Andrews Bibliographic Award. The current *CRIV Sheet* editors Michelle Wu and Stephanie Edwards have done a wonderful job working on articles of importance to members, making sure that the latest reports regarding publisher discussions are timely, accurate and thorough. Members are always welcome to contact the editors about writing articles pertaining to legal information acquisitions and publishing.

Third, if ever there were hopes for a better new year, this is it. While there are all too many reminders about the events of Sept. 11, 2001, I want to note how heartened I was by the legal publishers' poignant messages and offers of support to the law firms affected by the disaster. Most of us outside of the New York and D.C. areas felt paralyzed and helpless, not knowing what we could do to help. In light of unimaginable circumstances, one can only hope that some law firms were assisted by the publishers' generous offers to replace volumes, provide office space and offer some free online services.

Fourth, I am pleased to report that the CRIV received positive feedback from the Annual Meeting Program Committee regarding two program proposals. The Orlando Annual Meeting will feature a program coordinated by Michael Saint-Onge, "Where Will It All End? Law Book Pricing Study, Part II." I will coordinate a second program co-sponsored by the CRIV and the State, Court and County Law Libraries Special Interest Section, "Value-added or Value-denied: John Q. Public and the Legal Information Marketplace." These topics should appeal to a wide group of law librarians as well as publishers.

Finally, the CRIV depends upon individuals and entities outside the committee to accomplish its goals. By working with members and publishers, the CRIV's efforts to communicate constructive solutions are a form of positive feedback to others. Thus, I want to applaud the members and publishers who have taken the time to work on problems and areas of mutual concern over the past months.

Editor's Corner

The pace of developments in the area of legal publishing continues to amaze us, even after working as law librarians for several years and serving several terms on the CRIV. We are struck by the fact that things **never** slow down around here. That is why we are committed to bringing you this publication dedicated to such changes. *The CRIV Sheet* is not only one of the ways we can disseminate timely news about the activities of the CRIV and the legal information marketplace, but it also provides some important reflection — after the fact — about changes that have taken place.

The current issue highlights *The Legal Publisher's List*, which will be maintained by the CRIV Tools Subcommittee beginning in 2002. We would like to express our thanks and highest appreciation to Rob Richards at the University of Colorado Law Library, who formulated the list in 1997 and has made this valuable resource available to colleagues in all libraries. We are pleased that the list will be added to the CRIV "Toolkit" and hope to continue to recommend it to colleagues seeking this kind of information.

With a deadline for nominations fast approaching in February, our focus in this issue is also on the New Product Award, which honors an outstanding new legal publication each year. Many people are not aware that the CRIV plays a role in the selection process for AALL's New Product Award, which is officially handed out at the Annual Meeting every year. The subcommittee responsible for the award solicits nominations, reviews new products and forwards a recommendation to the AALL Awards Committee. Frank Houdek's article details the background of the award, its importance for the AALL membership and what it is designed to accomplish. Look for an article in the next issue of *AALL Spectrum* on the award and its significance from the vendor's perspective. Further, towards the end of this issue, the CRIV is pleased to present a profile of the New Product Award subcommittee's chair.

The impact of West's new Business Systems Initiative occupied much of the committee's time this past fall. Things have settled down since the implementation process began, but we felt that it would be valuable to members to reproduce the CRIV report on its conference with West. Although this report, and related documents, have been available at the CRIV's Web site for several months, *The CRIV Sheet* continues to serve as a valuable means of informing members about any major activities since the previous issue, such as the October teleconference with West.

In connection with the teleconference, Sara Galligan had the opportunity to tour the West Group production facility and see the label application system in action. She describes her tour in this issue.

Developments relating to West's BSI continue, as West mulls over and responds to some of the complaints and questions that have been referred its way both by individual librarians and by the CRIV. For example, in early December, West agreed to sort its subscription invoices by document delivery numbers. This was among the most fervent requests West received in October from library account managers, who were reeling as they tried to adjust to BSI changes. Although the major issues identified in a CRIV survey were presented to West in October, not all of the problems have been completely addressed. Chris Graesser of Brown Rudnick Freed & Gesmer, former CRIV chair, followed up with West after noting that some of the questions from the survey remained unanswered. An excerpt of her letter to West and the response she received will be of interest to customers still sorting out the account changes introduced with BSI.

As the articles in *The CRIV Sheet* indicate, communication is a high priority for both librarians and vendors. In addition to reporting on the CRIV communications with West, we also wanted to cover one vendor's outreach effort to librarians. In early 2001, CCH decided to survey law librarians on their Web wants and needs in order to obtain a better understanding of librarians' expectations for vendors' sites. In the last article in this issue, CCH will describe this survey's outcome, and how the company responded to the resulting issues posed by AALL members.

Thank you to all of the authors who contributed to this issue!

In upcoming issues of *The CRIV Sheet*, Linda Kawaguchi McLane of the University of California School of Law Library will bring us up to date on Aspen's progress with its new business system. On the heels of finishing the new edition of his *Legal Information Buyer's Guide & Reference Manual*, Kendall Svengalis will offer some tips on keeping "write for order" subscriptions on track. Ed Hart of the New England School of Law Library has agreed to write an informative article about the new Amazon.com corporate accounts. As always, we want your expertise and perspective, too! If you would like to write an article for *The CRIV Sheet*, contact Michelle Wu, mwu@central.uh.edu, or Stephanie Edwards, sedwards@law.rwu.edu.

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A Legal Publishers' List: A Cooperative Success

"We are born for cooperation, as are the feet,
the hands ... " — Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

The history and story of *A Legal Publishers' List: Corporate Affiliations of Legal Publishers*, available at <http://www.colorado.edu/Law/lawlib/ts/legpub.htm>, exemplifies successful cooperation between law librarians and representatives of legal publishers.

Where to Send Claims and Payments?

After I had started as technical services librarian at the University of Colorado Law Library in early 1997, the acquisitions and accounting technicians frequently knocked on my door to ask, "Whom should we claim this from?" and "Whom do we pay for this?" My wise supervisor, Georgia Briscoe, pointed me to Kendall Svengalis's indispensable history of the legal publishing industry in the *Legal Information Buyers' Guide and Reference Manual*. [The most recent version of this remarkable resource is "A Brief History of Legal Publishing," in Kendall F. Svendalis, *Legal Information Buyer's Guide and Reference Manual 5* (2001)]. I also learned further details by monitoring listservs and sharing information with law library acquisitions colleagues. Cynthia Aninao and the AALL Technical Services Special Interest Section Acquisitions Committee offered particularly helpful guidance.

To make the basic publisher-ownership information available to the library's support staff, I wrote up a simple diagram, a legal publishers' corporate affiliations tree. Once a month I updated the List and printed out copies for our support staff. Information on additional publishers came from acquisitions and accounting technicians, occupational articles and resources, and conversations with colleagues.

When the public services librarians expressed interest in the List, we held an in-service training about the corporate affiliations of legal publishers. Our discussion at the training raised two concerns about the future: (1) the likelihood of steep price inflation due to monopolization in many submarkets of the publishing industry, and (2) the control by non-U.S. corporations of so many U.S. legal sources.

In the beginning, then, our home-grown *Legal Publishers' List* (hereinafter, List) helped us send claims and checks to the correct publishers. The List also put us on cost-alert; it cued us to budget for high inflation in the coming years, to scrutinize prices for new editions and subscription renewals, and to implement "write-for-order" acquisitions in some cases. Further, the evidence of the List impelled us to address our growing concern about the problem of non-U.S. control of key U.S. legal information resources in our professional associations.

Getting the Word Out and Getting Help

Later in 1997, colleagues at law libraries of all kinds, who were as puzzled as we had been about whom to claim from and whom to pay, asked me to share our List with them. With the encouragement of Prof. Barbara Bintliff, our director, and

Georgia Briscoe, I posted our corporate affiliations tree to the law-lib, LAWACQ, and GOVDOC-L listservs. I received more than a dozen responses. Some readers sent thanks, while others contributed ownership information about additional publishers; I added this information to the List.

In the summer of 1997, I updated the List for publication in *The CRIV Sheet* in the November issue. Through listservs, I solicited more information on mergers and acquisitions in the legal publishing industry. Librarians and vendor personnel generously shared what they knew about current corporate relationships and upcoming mergers. I began posting the revised List to the listservs approximately once per month.

Next, the CRIV asked if the list could be posted on a Web site. Bintliff and Briscoe graciously agreed to host the List on our library's departmental site, where we could regularly update it. The CRIV then provided a link to the List from its Web site.

At first the Web version of the List contained just the affiliations diagram without any hotlinks to publishers' Web sites. After finding that most colleagues used the List by printing it out periodically and posting it near their workstations, I chose to format it on a single HTML page, with very simple coding for easy printing. Next, our acquisitions assistant added as many hotlinks as we could find; Anna Belle Leiserson's comprehensive list of publishers' Web sites, at AcqWeb, <http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/acqweb/pubr.html>, proved invaluable.

Because librarians also needed to be informed of recent mergers and acquisitions in legal publishing, a "News" component was added to the site. The List then began to function as both a current awareness tool and a corporate affiliations chart.

Once the List was available on the Web, I periodically posted updates on the listservs. The editors of *The CRIV Sheet* and *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* (1/2/1999) publicized the List in their publications. The latter version was also published in *The Political Economy of Legal Information: The New Landscape 23*, ed. by Samuel E. Trosow ed.

A team of loyal information suppliers — both law librarians and representatives of publishers — alerted me to pending mergers and corrections to the List. So many professionals supplied information that all of their names would not fit on the List's acknowledgements page. Although I thanked each contributor personally, the acknowledgements page includes only the names of those who contributed information about corporate affiliations of multiple publishers or imprints. We are all indebted to these professionals for their generous and informed contributions.*

The List Today and Tomorrow

When first published in *The CRIV Sheet* in 1997, the List included 168 publishers and imprints. As of Nov. 17, 2001, the List provided corporate affiliation information for about 500 publishers and imprints.

The List divides legal publishers into three categories: (1) subsidiaries of the major international publishing conglomerates; (2) subsidiaries of other corporations or owners of multiple publishers; (3) independently owned publishers. Of the three largest conglomerates, the Thomson Corporation appears to control the most legal publishers and imprints — a total of 91 by our best estimation; 30 legal publishers and imprints are under Reed Elsevier's umbrella, while Wolters Kluwer owns 21.

We have identified 31 smaller, multilevel legal publishing concerns; these control a total of 91 publishers or imprints. The number of independent publishers is, happily, significant — 121 university presses and 172 independently owned publishing companies. (The List seems to bear out Susan M. Yoder's prediction of a thriving independent sector; see "The Rise of the Small: The Effects of Industry Consolidation on Small Legal Publishers," *Legal Reference Serv. Q.*, Num. 1/2 1999, at 59. Also published in *The Political Economy of Legal Information: The New Landscape* 59 (Samuel E. Trosow ed., 1999). Independently owned legal publishers and university presses make up approximately 60 percent of legal publishers and imprints identified on the List, while the smaller conglomerates represent nearly 20 percent

The Web version of the List now receives an average of 2,000 hits per month. In October 2001, 2,490 users visited the List.

In January, the CRIV took over maintenance of *A Legal Publishers' List*. I wish to thank the committee, and especially Anne Myers, Janice Snyder Anderson and the CRIV Tools team. Barbara Bintliff, Georgia Briscoe, Anna Belle Leiserson and the leadership of the CRIV and the AALL TS SIS Acquisitions Committee have steadfastly supported this project from its inception; I am deeply grateful to them. Their vision and encouragement have fostered this rewarding experiment in professional cooperation.

* I'm especially grateful to: Teddy Artz of the University of Dayton Zimmerman Law Library, Margie Axtmann of the University of Minnesota Law Library, Mike Beaird of the University of Arkansas Little Rock Law Library, Bob Berring of Boalt Hall Law Library, University of California, Berkeley, Marilyn Bromley of BNA Library, Elissa Campbell of Freehills, Stephanie Edwards of Roger Williams University School of Law Library, Lori Hedstrom of West Group, Anna Holeton of Campney & Murphy, Vancouver, Anna Belle Leiserson of Vanderbilt Law Library, Angela Man of American Lawyer Media, Atty. Ellen M. Poler, Laura Orr of the Lillian Goldman Library, Yale Law School, Chug Roberts, Eric Sleight of Carswell Thomson Canada, Holley Marker Thompson of LexisNexis, Jane Thompson of the University of Colorado Law Library, Lawrence Thompson of Martindale-Hubbell, and M. Walters of Wolters Kluwer U.S.

A Librarian's View of the New Product Award: Looking for the Positive

The New Product Award, approved by the AALL Executive Board in fall 1994 and first awarded (to Shepard's/McGraw-Hill for How to Shepardize, a computer-based tutorial) in 1995, was designed to honor — and thereby encourage — new products that enhance existing law library services or procedures or improve access to legal information or the legal research process. That statement alone ought to be sufficient to explain why any law librarian should applaud the annual presentation of this award — to do otherwise would be like dissing apple pie — but perhaps a little history would also help to explain why this recognition is one of the more important things AALL does to encourage productive librarian-publisher relations.

In a "Proposal for New AALL Award" submitted to the Executive Board in November 1994, the CRIV, through a subcommittee chaired by Marcia Zubrow, explained why the Association should establish a new product award: "There is no AALL award that honors the work and dedication of publishers and companies in developing new products or redesigning existing products in the legal information field" (AALL Executive Board Book, Nov. 4–6, 1994, Tab 43). It was no accident that this language was carried through into the minutes documenting the board's approval of the award (Minutes of the AALL Executive Board, Nov. 4–6, 1994, at 2034) — the very description of the award's purpose was itself meant to be a public recognition of the important contribution publishers make to the world of legal information.

Not surprising since creating the award was a conscious effort by both the CRIV and AALL to introduce a *positive* element into what had increasingly become strained relations between law librarians and publishers.

Perhaps the nature of those relations is best illustrated by this description from the November 1993 issue of *The CRIV Sheet*: "The CRIV Open [Publisher] Forum puts officials of the highest publishing ranks in the hot seat. Law librarians come prepared to voice complaints or exact promises from vendors. It can't be easy for a president of a large company . . . to face the demanding questions of the customer. The same issue, like most others of the period, contained much polite (but pointed) parry and thrust between librarians and publishers over problems, practices and issues related to specific publishers, publications or both. Though Richard Vaughan was referring both to the city's weather and the excitement generated by CRIV activities during the conference when he described the 1993 Boston Annual Meeting as "HOT" in his "From the Chair" column (p.3), it also was a fair characterization of the temperature of librarian-publisher relations at the time.

Librarians had reasons to be hot. In his final "Editor's Corner" column (2/94:2), Ken Svengalis wrote of "a period of mergers and buy-outs, corporate restructuring, proliferation of legal materials and significant technological breakthroughs, [that has had] an enormous impact on law libraries, which have witnessed

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1998–2000

the transformation of corporate identities and longstanding relationships. The consolidation of the industry has also brought with it a variety of practical difficulties, from improperly merged accounts, misdirected shipments, and payment problems to sharply rising supplementation costs." The pages of *The CRIV Sheet*, not to mention postings on law-lib and other electronic discussion lists, eloquently conveyed the dismay, concern and frustration of librarians over the serious headaches engendered by the events and practices of the time.

Nevertheless, a year later, CRIV Chair Betty Kern wrote in her "From the Chair" column (11/94:3) about the proposed establishment of a new product award: "This award reinforces the goal of this year's committee to promote cooperation between librarians and publishers for mutual benefit." Similarly, a new editorial policy for *The CRIV Sheet*, adopted by the Executive Board in July 1994, emphasized that the newsletter's "primary aims are to provide general information on vendor/library relations and to foster a constructive dialogue." Moving from the "hot seat" to "cooperation for mutual benefit" and a "constructive dialogue," such rhetoric signaled AALL's intention to include positive as well as negative recognition in the program of librarian-publisher relations. (Not that such recognition was entirely new. In the November 1993 issue of *The CRIV Sheet* quoted above, Editor Svengalis noted that in the period from the mid-1980s librarians had "witnessed a host of positive developments [in the world of legal publishing].")

While it would be foolish to pretend that today everything is absolutely hunky-dory between librarians and publishers, the

environment in which those relationships are established and conducted is much different than that of a decade ago. A very proactive CRIV works closely with the highest levels of the publishing community to solve problems (or head-off situations before they become problems), communicates frequently with law librarians through electronic CRIVGrams as well as *The CRIV Sheet*, visits publishers on a regular basis to engage in constructive conversations about their practices, and generally does all it can to promote a productive working relationship between librarians and publishers. Law librarians now work hard to publicly praise publishers when approbation is merited — such as noting on law-lib when customer service has been particularly helpful in responding to a budding problem — to go along with the criticism they still offer on those occasions when a publisher's actions leave them justifiably "hot."

And is this all the result of the New Product Award? Of course not, but it certainly played a role in changing librarian-publisher relations from an environment that emphasized the negative to one that acknowledges the positive as well. Just like librarians in their own jobs, publishers sometimes do well and sometimes do poorly. It is both fair and appropriate to honor the good — in this case, when publishers develop innovative products, such as *Health Law & Business Series* (1997), *Congressional Universe* (1998), *KeyCite* (1999), *Indexmaster* (2000) and *Hein-On-Line* (2000) — while continuing to point out the bad. AALL's New Product Award helps law librarians and publishers alike see the positive side of their ongoing relationship.

Sara Galligan

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A Tour of the Label Application Process at the West Group Production Facility

Prior to the teleconference discussion that the CRIV and West Group held in October to discuss its Business Systems Initiative, I was invited to tour West's label production facility in Eagan, Minn. Due to the numerous concerns law librarians have expressed this fall about West's new label process, I quickly accepted the invitation.

After a lengthy walk through West Group's corporate headquarters, Lori Hedstrom, program manager for librarian relations for West Group, and I arrived at the less familiar entrance to the production facility. There we met our escorts, Mark Lerud, director of bindery and distribution, and Paul Buerkle, operations manager for subscription services. They guided us on a tour of the plant where label application occurs. We ambled along wide aisles, sometimes following yellow directional lines in the floor. In the massive plant area (approximately 1.1 million square feet), forklifts quietly overtook us as we walked among endless stacks of collapsed corrugated cartons and a scattering of conveyer belts. Numerous stacks of print publications indicate that print is still a prominent product for legal publishers.

The first line we observed had two spools of labels affixed 2 feet apart from each other. The first spool on the conveyer belt contained a roll of the larger shipping labels. We watched as equipment automatically applied a label to a shipping carton. The carton moved to the next spool, where the smaller "Peel Here" label was affixed over the account information on the larger shipping label.

As we walked around the conveyer belts, material and inventory control systems directed which shipping cartons and print materials were situated near the lines. However, Buerkle pointed out that one objective in a shipping operation is to move materials out of the area quickly. Thus, when one line is down, stock will be moved over to another line where workers can keep materials moving. When this occurs, print materials are sometimes placed in shipping cartons that were lined up for another product. Thus, tradition yields to efficiency when titles normally packaged in pull tab boxes are placed into boxes without pull tabs.

We watched a second application of the new label stock where shrink wrap was used as the shipping material. In this case, the conveyer passed through the heating machinery that causes the plastic to shrink on to the conveyed material. The material then moves a short distance to the first spool of labels. Although it is still warm at this point, the plastic shipping material has cooled down enough to adhere strongly to the shipping label. The second label is precisely calibrated for application on top of the shipping label. The material then moves to the end of the line, where workers remove and stack the material. According to our guides, the new system will apply 8 million labels a year.

A Minnesota company produces the new labels. Lerud and Buerkle explained that after two defective label stock runs, the third label stock was much improved. West began using the improved label stock in mid-October. Our guides demonstrated the new features of the improved labels, including a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch margin on the left side of the label for easy lifting. The label released easily and left no sticky residue. While the label curls slightly at first, it relaxes within moments and appears to

remain flat. The glossiness of the stock is as low as possible yet appropriate for the thermal printers. This process also allows it to be receptive to ball-point ink.

We discussed other features of the labels. Lerud and Buerkle explained that a wrap-around technique in the printing will allow for longer title information to appear on the shipping label. They also said that the labels applied on shipments of new orders are equipped with a peel-off return label. Lerud suggested that returns for subscription titles be handled differently — a library that wants to decline receipt can simply write "Return to sender" on the unopened box and send it back to West without paying postage.

Although West's production facility was previously unfamiliar to me, I readily recognized the now notorious label stock. It was a great relief to see firsthand that the latest label stock was far superior to its forerunners. I appreciate the time Lori Hedstrom, Mark Lerud and Paul Buerkle took to describe and demonstrate the label application.

Report of the CRIV Meeting with West Group Regarding Review of the Library Community's Response to West's Business Systems Initiative

Carol Rogers

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The CRIV met with West Group representatives on Oct. 10, 2001, to discuss the library community's responses to West's Business Systems Initiative. Since the CRIV's request for responses occurred before most libraries completed their full billing cycle, most of the discussion centered around the new shipping labels and the subscription invoices.

The discussion opened with a brief introduction and a bit of trivia. The much-talked-about shipping labels are actually not a part of the BSI. They were a separate initiative that West rolled out with BSI.

Shipping Labels. West readily admits to problems with the shipping labels. The first batch of labels, which was referred to as "phase one," had an incorrect adhesive applied, were cut incorrectly and were printed on defective stock. Most problems were corrected with phase two, which ran through Oct. 7, 2001. Phase three of the shipping labels began on Oct. 8, 2001, and West believes that this phase has corrected the sticky peeling problem. It has implemented a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch "peel here" strip with no adhesive and has adjusted the cut to allow more of the title to appear and wrap as necessary. Testing of the new labels showed a clean peel and little curling. West did not test "date stamping" the labels and recommends a ballpoint pen for writing on the labels. However, this new label is less glossy than the previous labels.

The labels are placed on specific parts of the box to make sure they don't pull off as they travel through the machinery. As for UPS labels applied over the West label, West has reported the problem to its mail centers with some positive results. Anyone who continues to have problems with the UPS labels should report those problems to West.

The delivery number printed on the shipping label has replaced the former reference numbers. This number also appears on the invoice and should be used for reconciliation of shipping notices and invoices. One library reported a document delivery number that did not match the delivery number on the invoice; that example has been sent to West for research.

As of January 2001, there have been no separately itemized amounts for shipping on the packing slips. Tax is broken out on the invoices. The goal was to remove the tax information from the reconciliation slips and place it on billing documents so that both West and the libraries would be able to prove that sales tax had been paid.

Clarification is needed for multiple copies. The quantities on the subscription notices refer to the number of items in the shipment, not the number of items in the individual carton. A shipment can consist of multiple cartons.

The purchase order number field on the shipping label is frequently not used and can be customized to contain whatever special information is useful to the library. Page 7 of the billing guide shows an example of the purchase order number field. Libraries that want to use this field must contact West.

West has clarified the purpose of the posting numbers and delivery numbers. The posting number is issued after the delivery number and is linked to the accounting payment record. The delivery number is referenced between the shipping label and the subscription invoice but is not carried over to the accounting payment record.

Subscription Invoices. The shipping label is not regarded as a payment document. It is to be used as a record for internal workflow for the customer. The delivery number is not used on West's financial reporting side.

Posting and delivery dates do not match because of actual delays in West's internal processes. The posting number is what stays with the cash application system on West's financial reporting side. West of course prefers that libraries pay invoices by referencing the invoice number. In cases where the library cannot pay by invoice number, West recommends that the posting number be referenced. West announced that it will begin sorting shipments on the subscription invoice by document delivery number, though a date for this change has not been set. Several respondents raised this issue to both West and the CRIV. (*Editor's note: West has in fact responded to the library community's request that items appear on Subscription Invoices in order of document delivery number. West announced this change on Dec. 5, 2001, and it was published widely as a CRIVGram.*)

West advises that the subscription invoice clearly indicate what is being paid, especially if there are any discrepancies. In these cases, the payments will be applied as indicated by the posting number. When invoices are altered, they are sent from the lock box system directly to customer service for review and application.

All Rutter accounts should have been converted to West and now appear on the subscription invoice. The intention is to have one consolidated account. Anyone who still has multiple accounts for Rutter and West should contact customer service.

Annual renewals remain an issue. The difficulty of distinguishing between monthly and annual subscriptions has not been addressed yet. West cannot include the renewal date on the subscription invoice. Renewals are triggered by the anniversary dates for subscriptions and are automatically invoiced in the billing cycle of that anniversary date. One solution is to go to annual billing, but beware of the possible loss of associated discounts with other subscriptions. West will work with customers on a case-by-case basis for a resolution regarding anniversary dates.

Miscellaneous. West concedes and recognizes the problem with missing and delayed shipments. Its distribution center is now working around the clock and will continue to do so until the backlog is cleared. West expects to be caught up by the end of November.

Some librarians have been told that there is a chance that paper packing slips would be re-implemented. There is no plan at West to change the new external labeling procedure.

Conclusion. The CRIV would like to thank the library community for responding to our request for feedback to West's BSI. We would also like to thank West for working with us and the library community to respond to and clarify issues raised.

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Eagan, Minn.

Additional Questions on Business Systems Initiative: An Excerpt from Follow-up Communications

The West Group-CRIV teleconference in October 2001 attempted to address all the numerous concerns librarians have with West's new system changes and their direct impact on library accounts. After reading the CRIV report and West's subsequent response posted on the CRIV Web site shortly after the conference, Chris Graesser posed some follow-up questions to West's Mark Witzany, director of customer service at West Group. Because of the continued interest among AALL members in the details of the BSI implementation, *The CRIV Sheet* editors have deemed it worthwhile to print an excerpt from her communication with Witzany, along with his responses to the questions she raises. (*References in Graesser's letter are to the questions collected by the CRIV from the AALL membership and published on the CRIV Web site at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/criv/mediation/westbsi/responses.htm>.*)

Oct. 31, 2001

Thanks to West Group and the CRIV for working so hard to answer questions that customers have about the new BSI system. However, going through the questions and answers in detail, I found that some questions were addressed in spades and others weren't touched, at least as far as I could tell. So I'm going to break down the points that still seem to need attention.

1. New and monographic orders: How are those invoiced? Do they appear as separate invoices or are they included in the monthly subscription invoice? (Q 2)

Are electronic services invoiced separately? I know that WESTLAW is, but what about CDs? One librarian complained that monthly CD charges did not designate the month for the charge appearing on the invoice. Why not? (Q9)

2. How are subaccounts (i.e., multiple shipping locations, offices, etc.) recorded on invoices? The librarian wanted to know if they're consolidated or on separate pages. If they are not separated, does the library have an option to request that they be separated? (Q 4, 11)

3. What's the correct way to handle Rutter invoices? Can West be more explicit in designating Rutter account charges, rather than an obscure TRG abbreviation? Are there other subsidiaries or divisions that libraries need to be aware of in terms of how they are billed? (Q5)

West's Response

Nov. 8, 2001

Dear Chris,

I appreciate your feedback regarding West Group's Business Systems Initiative. I have reviewed your comments and have provided responses that I hope will help resolve your questions.

New orders for print and CD-ROM bill differently. New print orders will be invoiced in one place only: the New Sale Invoice. Unlike new print orders, new CD-ROM orders are billed on a monthly or annual basis along with other subscription update charges on the monthly Subscription Invoice.

Under BSI, there is a dependence upon the original entry date of the CD-ROM subscription and the date of the invoice. Instead of a monthly CD-ROM subscription charge posting on an account the first day of each month, the charge will post to the account each month on the day it was entered on the customer's account. It is the posting date month under BSI that reflects the days of coverage for a monthly or annual subscription charge.

For this reason, CD-ROM and print renewal dates are not indicated in the product description for these charges. Because each renewal date is specific to the date on which the subscription was added to an account, the renewal period will be unique for each subscription. Attached is a document we have slated for posting on ServiceNews in the near future describing the process of billing monthly and annual subscriptions in BSI.

Customers who would like to confirm what the West Group BSI systems show as their subscription start date can call West Group Customer Service at 800/328-4880.

Another question of yours was how subaccounts are recorded on Subscription Invoices. If an account has multiple shipping locations and all charges are billed to one location, the charges will be consolidated into one monthly Subscription Invoice. The invoice will indicate the billing address, listed on the lower right-hand corner of the Subscription Invoice, and will include a breakdown of charges for each ship-to location. We are in the process of enhancing this document to include the option of a page break between each ship-to location.

The Rutter Group subscription charges are designated with the recognized TRG prefix. It is true that charges from The Rutter Group updates are now billed on the West Group monthly Subscription Invoice, along with the changes to BSI. No other sister companies of West Group are billing in a similar fashion at this time. We will investigate the option of adding "The Rutter Group" as a long product description to our billing documents.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me for further clarification. If you have additional questions, please call me directly at 651/687-1737.

Respectfully,

Mark Witzany
Director, Call Center
Customer Service

Asking the Customer First: CCH's Spring 2001 Survey

In May 2001, before updating the tools and overall design on its customer support Web site, CCH decided to run a survey of law library customers to get feedback on the utility of the Web site, and on Internet-related customer service issues. Leslie Bonacum, the librarian liaison at CCH, contacted the CRIV and asked if it would be appropriate to announce the survey in a CRIVGram. The CRIV was happy to post the announcement on library listservs, in keeping with the committee's mission to promote effective dialogue between vendors and the law library community. From our point of view, a request for input, especially when accompanied by the words, "We are very interested in hearing from you," represented an opportunity for librarians to deliver an honest evaluation of vendor services.

After the CRIVGram went out, we did not hear about the survey again until the AALL Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, where CCH demonstrated the new features of its redesigned customer service Web site (<http://support.cch.com>) in the Exhibit Hall. Though CCH's enhanced Web site is not unique per se (other vendors also feature customer support via the Internet),

it piqued our interest especially because the new design incorporates the feedback CCH received from the survey of law library customers.

I asked Leslie Bonacum if she would share some information about the survey for *The CRIV Sheet*, since it may be of interest to those who didn't respond to the survey as well as to those who took part in it. Specifically, I asked her to address what led CCH to conduct the survey and to what extent the survey changed the way the company provides Web support.

To those of you who told CCH what you expect and what your preferences are, note that it's *your* Web site, to some extent. Tell CCH if it got it right or not. Ask other vendors to give you the options you want. Don't wait for a survey!

The following article was solicited by the editors of *The CRIV Sheet*, but it was written by CCH. It is in no way intended to be an endorsement of the vendor or its products by AALL or the CRIV.

Stephanie Edwards

Roger Williams
University Law Library
Bristol, R.I.

About the Survey

CCH INCORPORATED began considering enhancements to its customer service Web site (located at <http://support.cch.com>) in the spring of 2001. CCH already had a site in place but wanted to use new technology to upgrade the functionality and services on the site, besides enhancing its ease of use and visual appeal. The company had already collected feedback from a number of sources (including the CRIV site visit to CCH in the spring of 2000 and the reverse site visits made to libraries in the fall of 2000) to ensure that the site would be an effective tool for law librarians.

With just several months' time before the AALL Annual Meeting, where CCH planned to relaunch the new Web site, the company sought to identify key improvements that would be of value to law library customers. We knew that time and logistics were working against us. (If you've tried planning a meeting recently, you know what I mean.)

Seeking the most efficient way to access a large group of geographically dispersed people, CCH turned to AALL and the Internet. Believing an Internet survey would be an effective way of gathering feedback on the CCH customer service Web site, CCH approached the AALL Committee on Relations with Information Vendors to ask if the customer service survey could be announced in a CRIVGram. The CRIVGram asked those who were interested in taking the survey to communicate directly with CCH and not the CRIV.

The survey consisted of two main parts: Part A relating to general information and Part B relating specifically to CCH's Customer Support Web site. Part C was optional and offered respondents an opportunity to provide other comments.

In Part B, we asked participants questions relating specifically to CCH site functionality:

- Have you used our Replacement Pages & Reports, Unlock Code, or Order Status tools on CCH's Customer Support site? If so, what do you like about these tools? What do you dislike?
- If you designed a new page for CCH's Support group, what categories of information would you include? Please name three to five categories.
- What is missing from our site?

We also queried respondents on general organization issues, visual appeal and other sites' effectiveness:

- If you browse through the links on our site, do you find them useful? Are they organized logically?
- What would you add to make our site more visually appealing?
- Can you give examples of Customer Support Web sites that you enjoy using? (These do not have to include publishers' sites.) What do you like about these sites?

We also wanted to address what we thought might be a sensitive issue: whether respondents had any concerns about accessing support over the Internet. CCH has consistently stated that our goal is to provide excellent customer support in whatever way a customer prefers to work with us: by customer service representative, by automated phone service, in writing or over the Internet.

The Survey Says ...

Overall, respondents favorably reviewed the existing site. They deemed it to be easy to use because it was well-organized, easy to navigate and functional. They told us what they liked most about the site: that it was easy to read and search. From these findings, we knew what site elements should be retained. Hence, our goal was to keep the redesigned site straightforward: not a lot of snazzy graphics, just a clean presentation and quick access to information.

Respondents also recommended specific improvements for the site. The relaunched version of the site incorporated the tools and information that were requested, including:

- **An Updated Mailing Schedule:** allowing customers to view the mailing dates of product updates for CCH subscriptions products as well as the tentative mailing date of the next product update. Users can check subscriptions by account number, alphabetically by subscription title or by keywords. In the near future, users will also be able to track newsletter mailing information.
- **Account Inventory:** This new feature identified by survey participants allows customers to view their current subscription inventory. To keep account information secure, the site requires the use of an account-specific PIN that is supplied by a customer service representative over the phone. Both the PIN and account number are required to use this tool.
- **Additional Information:** More than 100 new documents have been added in the Account Services, Product Support and Orders sections of the site. These documents answer customers' most frequently asked questions (several identified by survey respondents).
- **Information Currency:** Respondents told us that keeping the site current is critical. To that end, we added a News feature to the home page. News stories cover the major issues that customers are calling us about today. We also established a related process to review all information on the site regularly so that it remains timely and accurate.

When asked if they had concerns about using a Web site for support rather than contacting a person by phone or in writing, the respondents told us that they liked having different service options to pick and choose from, depending on their needs, as long as customer-service representatives remain available to work with them, if the customer so chooses or requires.

CCH's hunch about using an Internet survey was right. We received excellent new ideas and feedback that helped launch an improved customer-service tool for customers (on time!), and we reached people we probably would not have been able to visit under our scheduled time frame. From new functionality to look and feel, ideas from participants of the AALL survey were

incorporated into our new site in a timely way and gave us plenty of ideas to work on in the future. In the meantime, we'd love to hear your good ideas about <http://support.cch.com> at any time. Just visit the site and access the "Feedback" option on the home page, then send us your comments.

CRIV Member Profile

Quick Biography: Michael Bushbaum is the newly appointed associate director for access services at Valparaiso University School of Law Library. He oversees all aspects within the public areas of the law library, including circulation. He coordinates and teaches the first-year legal research program and the advanced legal research course and monitors the day-to-day operations of the student computer labs. He is a recent appointee to the Indiana State Bar Association's ProBono Commission, responsible for the distribution of funds to service low income residents of Indiana who otherwise cannot afford the legal representation they require.

"This is my second term on the CRIV. I have seen the evolution of the committee over the past five years into what I think is one of the best committees within AALL. I had heard about CRIV when I was in library school at the University of Washington and was 'forced,' as part of one of Professor Hazelton's assignments, to examine old issues of *The CRIV Sheet*. Having a business degree background, I was fascinated to learn that such a small group of individuals as AALL members could have such a powerful influence over legal publishers. No other association that I was aware of even attempted to link the interests of their membership to the people supplying the product they worked with.

"During my first term, I watched and was part of the resurgence of the CRIV under the leadership of strong committee chairs such as Frank Houdek. I was part of the first site visit to a publisher

(West) and was able to see first hand the respect and willingness of publishers to work with and understand their primary clientele. I saw the site visit process transform a meeting that may have been viewed with trepidation into an interaction that was welcomed by the publisher. During this time, the CRIV was also able to sponsor Annual Meeting programs that allowed all the membership to interact with executives from the major publishers.

"Having returned to the CRIV during the 2000 meeting, I was able to again see first hand the necessity for having a committee like the CRIV. This committee has made a vital difference in how we as law librarians are perceived by the vendors and in how law librarians can interact with vendors. Because of the CRIV, vendors are now less willing to 'stonewall' individuals and are more willing to work together to reach a solution that works for both sides. It has been both an honor and a privilege to serve on the CRIV. I can think of no better way to serve the members of AALL and to give back some of what I have been given.

"As part of that cooperation, it is also the CRIV's responsibility to recommend for the New Product Award a new and significant product that has helped us do our jobs better and more efficiently. It is a chance to reward a vendor or publisher who has taken the time to understand our needs and has made the effort to fill that need. I would strongly urge all law librarians to take a minute and see if there is some product or service that is worth recommending for this award."

Michael Bushbaum

Chair of CRIV's New Product Award Subcommittee

Request for Mediation: Committee on Relations with Information Vendors

CRIV's Mediation Subcommittee was formed to assist AALL members in resolving disputes with vendors. AALL members may file a formal request for mediation. The form is available online at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/criv/mediation/requestform.htm> and may be sent electronically or through regular mail. Complainants will be expected to have made a reasonable effort to resolve the problem by contacting the vendor in writing and by phone. The CRIV recommends that librarians in charge of resolving vendor issues for their libraries keep a publisher log in order to have a detailed record of each transaction.

The request form should be accompanied by documentation of correspondence and conversations with the vendor. Requests for mediation and any general questions about vendor mediation may be addressed to:

Carol Rogers, Chair
CRIV Mediation Subcommittee
Latham & Watkins
520 South Grand Avenue, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90071