New search face at library next fall

By Marilee Groenendyk
STAFF WRITER

Students returning to the Hekman Library next year will find themselves face-to-face with new search engine software.

Library Director Glenn Remelts is in the process of looking for a new software system to replace the current search system: Dynix, a text-based system established in 1990. In its place, he is looking for a system with links to the Internet and other sources.

At present,m most people seem satisfied with the current system. But in recent times, some demands for improvements have been made.

"The system works pretty well, but it's not the most convenient thing to work with," said freshman Becky Haagsma. "The search [interface] is good, but there are too many codes to work with." Sophomore Kendra Toonstra added, "Overall, it is beneficial to use the Internet. The system is heading in the right direction, but it would be great to have access to more sources."

Karin Maag, professor of history and Director of the Meeter Center, directs her students on how to use the current system. She said the system is useful in her work with the Meeter Center when searching for articles. However, she also stated, "At times the system can get a bit slow. It would be nice to have networked PCs in the library so that all the information on databases, etc. would be accessible at the same time, rather than having students go from the library terminals to the PC terminals and back. It would make everyone's life easier."

Remelts is currently looking into six systems as possible replacements for Dynix. He explained how more is involved in a system than what the user sees on the screen. "It's only the tip of the iceberg." Everything is connected, he said.

Remelts is very clear on what he is looking for in the new system. "I would like the new system to be more user-friendly and much more Windows-based. I would also like to see more flexibility in terms of the 'helps' and integration on the Internet." He continued with his hope that the new system would allow students to get anything on the Internet even if the library didn't have it.

Remelts said the earliest the system would be established is next summer depending on the smoothness of transition and cost of the project.

In the meantime, the current system seems to be doing an acceptable job and most students and faculty are getting much use out of it, said administrators. Karin Maag summed up her thoughts with, "We have a fine library and a great staff. I'm surprised I don't see more students in the library, taking advantage of the fine collection!"

Calvin College Chimes, October 29, 1999