Thank-you for your email of March 9, 2015, requesting information from the Canadian Library Association's (CLA) Technical Services Network regarding the replacement of Library and Archives Canada's (LAC) AMICUS system by OCLC. Since fall 2012, LAC has been actively engaging the library community about replacing AMICUS through the National Union Catalogue (NUC) User Round Table. Input from the community is always welcome. While we cannot provide details on our position during contract negotiations with OCLC, we believe we have a solid understanding of these issues and are doing our best to represent the library community.

Below is a summary of the issues raised in the CLA's Technical Services Network and LAC's response.

Access – NUC and AMICUS should be free and openly accessible for all Canadian libraries, in particular small libraries

Leading up to the current negotiation, LAC took steps to survey Canadian library associations in 2013. The results of this survey underscored concerns by almost half of respondents about their ability, and in some cases their willingness to pay for an improved NUC. For this reason, LAC is pursuing a NUC model where costs to users in the library community will be minimal. Financial support for small- to medium-sized libraries will be at the heart of our negotiation with OCLC. Finally, as you are aware, searching in OCLC WorldCat system is currently free.

Transparency – Lack of access to information about factors involved in OCLC's decisions

OCLC is a nonprofit library cooperative that helps libraries around the globe share information and finds ways to reduce their costs through collaboration. The needs of library members guide their actions and investments. Through a shared governance structure, librarians also manage and direct the cooperative.

Transparency – Ownership of records and the right to freely distribute records

With respect to intellectual property rights, LAC's Advance Contract Award Notification for the replacement of AMICUS specified that the service provider must certify that it currently complies with, or will comply with the requirements for specific attribution of data source ownership for individual bibliographic records. LAC is committed to ensuring that the library data currently contained in AMICUS remains a public asset available to all Canadians. And finally, while OCLC is headquartered in the United States, it is incorporated as an international not-for-profit cooperative with members in 170 countries, including Canada. Hundreds of Canadian libraries, and several active and engaged Canadian regional networks already use OCLC services.

You can be assured that Canada's documentary heritage and metadata will remain under the control and direction of LAC.

Transparency – Making the details of OCLC negotiations public with the opportunity for input

Beginning in 2012 and continuing into this year, LAC convened a series of four teleconferences with the NUC Round Table (which includes the President and Executive Directors of all of the main library associations in Canada) to discuss the replacement of AMICUS. The issues and concerns raised during these meetings are central to our negotiations with OCLC. While discussions with Public Works and Government Services (PWGSC) are taking place, LAC is unable to speak to any detail under negotiation. We anticipate having a contract in place in the spring of 2015, when we will be in a position to communicate broadly to the Canadian library community and to other AMICUS stakeholders.

Technology – Accessible technology especially for remote parts of Canada with older internet access and support for character sets in various languages

Before LAC selects a solution to replace AMICUS, we will make sure that any potential solutions meet several mandatory requirements for accessibility. Since 2013, the Government of Canada has established stringent web accessibility and usability guidelines to ensure all Canadians can get the information they need. LAC plans to apply the same guidelines and expects OCLC to provide similar or better performance than our current website. Also OCLC already supports character sets in various languages. The WorldCat database already supports most of the Unicode character set. It is possible to create data using Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese, Korean, Thai, Hebrew, and Cyrillic characters, as well as Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics and more.

Canadian Standards and Policy — Canadiana Authorities

OCLC is aware that LAC requires both English and French authorities and we will be analyzing how best to proceed in conjunction with OCLC. One option under consideration will be merging our English language headings with those of the Library of Congress Name Authority Cooperative Program. As for French language authorities, we will analyze this with OCLC and other French language libraries that use OCLC. One option may be the creation of a parallel program for French language authorities.

Canadian Standards and Policy - Canadian Subject Headings

LAC is committed to the ongoing development of the Canadian Subject Headings within our current resources and is investigating options for how this can be best achieved going forward with OCLC. LAC continues to provide funding to Université Laval to support the maintenance of the Répértoire des Vedettes Matières.

Canadian Standards and Policy - Canadian Cataloguing Identity and Multiple Records

LAC is currently preparing rule interpretations for Resource Description and Access (RDA) that we will share with the Canadian cataloguing community. LAC will also continue to permit the creation of multiple records for the same item to accommodate different cataloguing preferences.

In summary, LAC is committed to keeping the Canadian library community and other AMICUS stakeholders informed about the status of this project as it moves forward. As key users of the NUC, your feedback and engagement in this process are essential to our success. We appreciate the time taken by the Technical Services Network to develop this feedback, and want to thank the CLA for forwarding these comments to our attention.

Once again, when a contract is in place, LAC will communicate broadly with the library community. Should you have further questions and feedback on this process in the meantime, feel free to contact Diane Beattie, Director, Description Division directly at 819-994-6879.