

BACKGROUND – AMICUS AND THE NATIONAL UNION CATALOGUE

Background

AMICUS went into production in 1995 as a national bibliographic service supporting national search services, record distribution and resource sharing. It provides multiple views of its considerable database, including the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) catalogue, the National Union Catalogue (NUC), Canadiana Name Authorities, and certain collections such as the Theses Service and Public Opinion Research Service. AMICUS supports LAC's published heritage cataloguing, acquisition, serials control, and circulation. For the first five years of operations, AMICUS was offered on a cost recovery basis. Starting in 2000, the service was offered for free on the Web and as Z39.50. Canadian and foreign libraries, booksellers and others obtain cost savings in the order of 7 million per year by re-using our bibliographic records for Canadian and foreign publications from AMICUS in their catalogues or to support their library business operations. Annually, there are currently 8 million connection and 750,000 queries on AMICUS. Approximately 55 percent of all visitors coming to LAC's website are going to AMICUS.

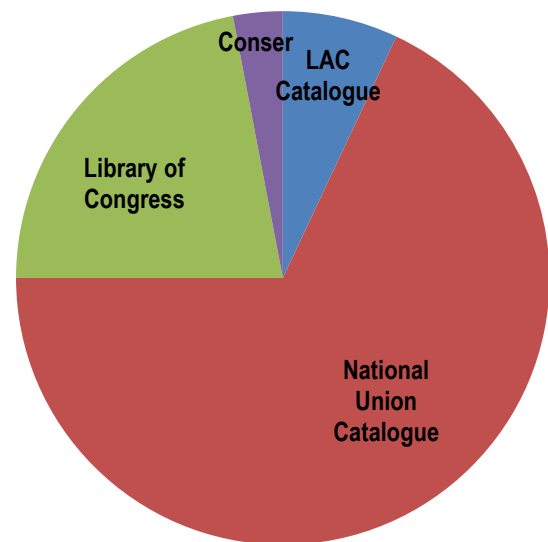
Today, AMICUS provides a wide range of important services to Canadian libraries, such as:

- Canadian libraries research and derive cataloguing for Canadian content represented in the LAC catalogue;
- Canadian libraries can download and reuse Canadiana Name Authorities created by LAC cataloguers;
- Canadian library patrons use the NUC view of AMICUS to discover and request resources held in libraries other than their own;
- Canadians can learn about particular resources held by LAC such as theses, rare books, newspapers, electronic journals, videos or digitized sound recordings;
- Canadians can consult Public Opinion Research Reports undertaken by the Government of Canada; and,
- Canadian book vendors derive MARC records to support discovery.



Currently, AMICUS hosts:

- 68% National Union Catalogue (27.5 million records, 63.5 million holdings).
- 22% Library of Congress Catalogue (9 million records).
- 7% LAC Catalogue (3 million records)
Includes 760,000 Canadiana Name Authorities and 4,500 Canadian Subject Heading Authorities.
- 3% CONSER (North American Cooperative Cataloguing Program 1.2 million records).



Benefits/objectives

In the current AMICUS-based context, the NUC has not kept pace with new technological functions, capabilities, and client needs. Contemporary features such as a user-oriented display and navigation, user customization, links to social media, and linked open data output were not available when AMICUS was implemented in the 1990s. As an aging proprietary system, maintenance is resource intensive and time consuming, and the expertise to maintain this outdated technology and infrastructure is scarce. Increasingly, a forensic approach to maintenance is required, rather than a modular, adaptable, and efficient approach, widely available in other contemporary systems. Therefore we are seeking to outsource with a qualified service provider to utilize its externally hosted web-based 21st century systems and related services.