# Computer helps locate Maag library materials

YSU's Maag Library has installed a public service computer terminal to help students and faculty locate library materials.

Library director Richard J. Owen explained that the terminal provides a quick and easy alternative to using the library's card catalog in finding books. It also helps librarians locate books available at other libraries to order through the inter-library loan service.

Owen said that in installing the terminal, Maag Library followed a precedent set by Heidelberg College and Case Western Reserve University, whose libraries previously used public service terminals.

The terminal is available through YSU's membership in the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC), a non-profit cooperative made up of over 600 libraries in 35 states, which aims to increase the availability of library resources among its member libraries, explained Owen. YSU has belonged to OCLC since its beginning in 1967, and has used its computerized services in the cataloging and acquisition of books in recent years.

By key-punching abbreviated forms of authors and titles on the terminal, individuals in OCLC's member libraries have access to records for all materials cataloged on the entire OCLC system, said Owen.

Assistant Librarian Carol Wall explained that each record has all the information found on an ordinary library card, as well as symbols for each member library that has the book. Therefore, when a student locates a record, he can immediately tell if YSU owns the book. If not, he can proceed to inter-library loan, and the book can be ordered from another member library.

Maag Library staff members created a special instruction booklet to help students familiarize themselves with using the terminal. Some students, Wall said, have a little trouble at first, but most catch on very quickly. She added that library staff are available at all times to assist those using the terminal. She hopes to prepare a slide-tape presentation for fall term, which will help explain the terminal to students said Wall.

Reference Librarian Hildegard Schnuttgen reported that so far most students "are very happy" with the new service. She said that since it has only been available since May 16, it is still too early to estimate how heavily the terminal will be used during the regular academic year, but she anticipates very good student response.

Faculty are among the terminal's biggest users, as it is an excellent tool for helping them prepare bibliographic projects, Wall said. She also reported that some music students have been given specific assignments by faculty members to locate materials on the terminal.

Special advantages of the computerized system, Wall noted, are that users can locate materials without knowing complete information about them. For instance, if a student knows only an author's last name and first

# Library Materials

initial, the terminal can help him complete the author's name and give him a list of the author's works.

On the other hand, Wall continued, if a student knows a title and does not know the author, the computer can again supply the missing information more easily than the card catalog.

One current problem with use of the terminal, Owen warned, is that all of YSU's books are not yet recorded on the OCLC system. Since the system is still relatively new, the staff has not been able to add to it all the books which were cataloged at YSU before the system began. At present, he said, 49 percent of YSU's books can be found on the system, and the staff are constantly adding more. Owen said he hopes the entire card catalog will be added to the system within the next few months. Until then, he urges students to check the card catalog as well as the terminal.

Another disadvantage of the system, Schnuttgen reported, is that the terminal can locate library materials only by authors and titles, but not by subjects. Schnuttgen said that in the future OCLC plans to offer a subject service, but she felt that it will "probably be four or five years away."

One additional problem reported by Schnuttgen and Wall is that since the OCLC system is so large, computer "response time" varies. Heavy use of terminals at other libraries will slow down use of Maag Library's terminal, Wall explained, and many students do not know this.