EFTS Newsletter

TheDOCLINE Billing Component

Spring 2008

From the Director…

This has been a banner year for EFTS, thanks to all your help! Here are some highlights:

Libraries continue to join EFTS, and we now have 1,234 members. We welcomed our **first** European member -- CHXAJD – from Bern, Switzerland! Lend transactions increased about 2% in 2007 for a total of 494,500. Our marketing campaign produced some innovative ideas – including this poster created by Melanie Norton, Stephanie Griffin and Michael Campbell for the MAC conference: https://efts.uchc.edu/EftsPublic/MAC-2007-Poster.aspx

We're totally redesigning our EFTS brochure and some of the handouts to incorporate suggestions we heard from several of you. The new brochure will be ready in time for the spring conferences. We continue to receive new Canadian members, and will again participate in their spring conference – in Halifax this year.

And finally, in our long term goal of becoming totally a cost-recovery service, we have implemented the first fee increase in our 11 years of operation. The fee for lending transactions was increased from 3% to 5% effective February 1st. This will also help defray added expenses associated with credit card fees. We'll continue updating the software – see Steve's overview of enhancements he's planning for 2008.

As always, if your biggest wish is that more people belonged to EFTS, please invite colleagues to join! They can easily explore the process by clicking this Join EFTS button from our website: https://efts.uchc.edu/common/joinefts.aspx

Thank you!

Evelyn Morgen, Director

Lyman Maynard Stowe Library

EFTS-L Listserv
The EFTS-L listserv is the primary mechanism for communication between Participants and the Office. New participants and software improvements are announced on the list. Participants can also ask questions and share information with others. Information on subscribing can be found under the Tools link on the homepage. Join today.

Microsoft .Net, What's the big deal?

By Steve Bazinet

What is Microsoft .Net (pronounced dot net) and what is the big deal? In January 2000, Steve Ballmer (a Microsoft executive) said, "Delivering an Internet-based platform of Next Generation Windows Services is the top priority of our company. The breakthroughs we're talking about here include changes to the programming model, to the user interface, to the application integration model, the file system, new XML schema....."

Since that time, the .Net products have continued to grow and develop. The product has gained a high degree of popularity with programmers and business in general. There are many reasons for the acceptance; many of which are technical in nature. First and foremost of these reasons is the .Net Framework. This framework is the infrastructure of the .Net platform. It is a common environment for building, deploying, and running Web Services and Web Applications.

Naturally, as the web grows big software houses like Microsoft and Sun wish to develop products which enable programmers to work faster, cleaner, and cheaper. A big part of these endeavors is a programming structure called interestingly, "libraries". A library is a collections of functional units called, "objects". The main point of these structures is reusability. For example, programmers may and have written libraries for doing 3D computer graphics. Such a library could be highly complex and mathematical but still a "lower level" programmer could do stunning graphics by using such a library.

Let's recap. The .Net Framework is essentially a collection of object libraries which do work common to all programs but in particular web programming. For example, it would be nice to have a library that helps one write information to a database.

Another major aspect of the .Net environment is its new object-oriented programming language called C# (C sharp). It is probably the most advanced object-oriented programming language available today. Of course, this is a debatable point since Sun devotee would argue that Java is the best one. In any case, C# is an advanced language that allows programmers to create reusable code in the form of objects with a high degree of stability and speed. Note the natural linkage between an object-oriented language and object libraries.

There are many more aspects of the .Net environment but I'll conclude with Web Services. A web service is a software system designed to support interoperable "machine to machine interaction" over a network. Although this sounds complicated it simply means that a given program on a given computer can ask another computer to do work for it. The best and most germane example with regards to EFTS is Microsoft's Reporting Services.

This web service provides services that would be very useful to our member libraries. For example, it allows one to provide reports based on a common template that can be generated in differing formats. So instead of only getting one's reports as a simple web page, one could request reports to be created as a Microsoft Excel file or an Adobe PDF file. This would afford easier access to accounting functionality when Excel is generated. And, definitely with a PDF file there is the advantage of sending the report as an email attachment.

Although this article only briefly touches on a few aspects of the .Net strategy, they illustrate the commitment of Microsoft to providing a full-featured set of products for developing world class web application. It is EFTS' intention to continue to bring forth more and more of these features in our product. Certainly, EFTS is on a very firm foundation for continued development and enhancement of our system.

FAQs—Promoting EFTS
By Jola Sliwinski

EFTS, the Electronic Fund Transfer System used to debit and credit member accounts for the cost of interlibrary loans, was started in 1996 and currently has over 1200 participants. There are now EFTS libraries in each of the 50 states, Canada , Mexico and Switzerland. In developing this service over the past eleven years, EFTS staff has had the opportunity to listen to many librarians who have raised questions, issues and concerns regarding EFTS. Here are some of the more common questions, concerns and answers about EFTS:

Has the use of EFTS eliminated or reduced the work associated with overdue bill collecting?
Yes; EFTS takes responsibility for making sure bills are paid. Large EFTS net loaners find that staff committed to billing and collections can be redeployed into other work areas.

We do not have staff to upload transaction files to EFTS.
You may be surprised at how little time it takes to create the transaction files. Many third party ILL management programs like QuickDoc, Illiad, Clio and DOCLINE file builder already support the creation of EFTS files. You may also enter the transaction data directly into the EFTS system. Remember that only transactions for which a loaning library has charged a fee have to be uploaded. The borrowing library doesn't need to do anything. Transactions can be uploaded at anytime and are processed immediately.

How can a library that is part of an institution that does not allow deposit accounts join EFTS?
This is a matter of perspective. One view some members have taken is that a journal subscription is a form of deposit account. Money is pre-paid for a product to be received in installments over time. Questions are not raised about the financial appropriateness of library subscriptions. Another view is that EFTS is a bill reconciliation service. Sufficient funds have to be kept on account to cover the cost of a library's ILL transactions. If a library is a loaning library, income from loaned transactions often covers the cost of that library's borrowing.

Why does EFTS charge a service fee to only the loaning library and not the borrowing library?
EFTS eliminates the need for invoicing on the part of the loaning library. The service fee is intended to replace the cost of invoicing. The expense of the latter includes not only sending the actual invoice but also following up on aging unpaid accounts. Additional costs for getting an article, unfortunately, may be the deciding factor in some cases as to whether or not the request is ever made. Therefore, no service charge for borrowing encourages resource sharing, which translates into more income for the loaning libraries without invoicing.

Efforts to expand our participant group are in full force, and we continue being committed to providing the best service possible to our membership. If your institution isn't already a member of EFTS, it *should* be. Please visit the EFTS website at: https://efts.uchc.edu.

Listen to Lucy...
By Lucy Piechowski

Did you know?

The EFTS billing system is not just limited to payment processing for ILL and Document Delivery articles. You can post charges for such things as lost books and other services or fees provided by your library.

Did you know?

There is no Low Balance Fee accrued when your account goes below a zero balance, unless the balance remains below zero for 3 consecutive months.

Did you know?

You can check if a deposit has been posted to your account simply by logging in to your account and clicking on the 'Reports' link, then choosing the 'Deposit' bullet under 'Accounting Month'. This will show the amount of the date of posting, the amount of the deposit, and either the check number or type of credit card used.

LIBID Deposits for February/2008

Date	Description	Amount
02/28/2008	LIBID - ch # 123456	$500.00
02/28/2008	LIBID - deposit via VISA	$750.00
	Total Deposits This Month	**$1,250.00**

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