In April, 2006, selected members of the Council of Chief Librarians, Electronic Access to Resources Committee (CCL-EAR) undertook a "hands-on" study of Baker and Taylor's Title Source 3 (TS3). The predecessor to TS3 was Baker and Taylor's Title Source II, which was first reviewed by CCL-EAR in 1999, the review was updated in 2002. This review incorporates some of the relevant content from that review.

Title Source 3 is a collection development and ordering tool. It includes an extensive database of bibliographic and acquisitions information on nearly 5 million book, audio and video titles from U.S. and foreign publishers. Information is updated daily. Searches of the database can be customized using approximately 48 search indexes and a very wide array of search filters. The product also offers sophisticated ordering and order-tracking tools for Baker and Taylor customers.

REVIEW PROCESS

Each reviewer independently, or in concert with other qualified professionals on their campus library staff, reviewed and evaluated Title Source 3. Though other faculty and/or staff may have helped in the review process, completion of the form was by the CCL-EAR committee member only and not transferred to another. Ratings were based upon the potential value of the service to the California Community Colleges as a whole and not solely on the needs of any specific campus.

RANKINGS

#1 --- No Support
#2 --- No Support at this time. Future support conditional, based on enhancements noted below in Comments Section.
#3 --- Support and Recommend proposal be forwarded to California Community College campuses for their acceptance or rejection. Would like to see enhancements in product noted below.
#4 --- Outstanding offer and opportunity. Recommend proposal be forwarded to California Community College campuses for their acceptance or rejection.

The following attributes were examined:

INFORMATION DATABASE
Consider functionality, appropriateness of format, database content, adequacy of coverage (retrospective, current), and value to the California Community Colleges as a whole.

SEARCH INTERFACE
Consider the functionality and ease of use of the interface. Is it intuitive or is an excessive amount of training required? Are any crucial features missing from the search interface?

USER SUPPORT SERVICES
What types of customer and technical support are available for end users and library administrators?

COST
If cost is available, does it seem reasonable in terms of comparable products?

AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE
Is access/connection to product reliable and stable? Is response time adequate? Is product accessible to users with disabilities?

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Based on the attributes listed above, is the product suitable for community college students?

Following are the results of the CCL-EAR Committee's review. Unless otherwise indicated, all comments are for Title Source 3 only.

INFORMATION DATABASE: (4)

Title Source 3 consists of a very rich title-information database, a highly configurable search engine, and an online selection and ordering system (for Baker and Taylor customers), complete with downloadable MARC records.

This product's primary value is to libraries that choose to use Baker and Taylor as their vendor. It is similar in format to amazon.com (in fact, amazon.com gets its data from Title Source, according to Baker and Taylor). The database contains almost 5 million titles. Of these, 1.9 million have book jacket images, 1 million have annotations, 634,000 have table of contents information, 362,000 have accompanying reviews, and 68,000 titles have excerpts included. Titles included are in print, out of print and not yet published. The database primarily lists titles available through Baker and Taylor, though titles from four or five other regional vendors are included. Many titles that are available only direct from the publisher are also listed.

Reviews available with the Premium package (see Cost, below) are from a variety of sources: AudioFile, BookPage, Choice, Criticas, Doody's, E-Streams, ForeWord Magazine, Horn Book, Kirkus, Library Media Connection, Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal, Voice of Youth Advocates , VideoLibrarian, and Voice of Youth Advocates.

A new feature in TS3 are E-Lists. These are selection lists in TS3 cart-format for different types of materials. There are nearly 500 of them for different types of materials such as best sellers, award-winning titles, and titles in high demand. E-Lists are displayed by and may be browsed by categories and sub-categories.

SEARCH INTERFACE (3)

After login, the first screen in TS3 allows access to search tools and tools to manipulate carts the user may have saved. On every page there is a convenient small search window in the upper-right hand corner. Users may, via preferences, configure whether their starting page is the Home page or the Search page. Most users will use the Basic search option, in which search indexes are selected through pull-down menus. There is an Advanced search option which allows use of a command language, e.g., doing a title keyword search with the command "kwti=community colleges." It is likely that only users already familiar with this command language will use it.

Unfortunately on both the Home page and the Search page the center of the page is taken up with advertisements (see Figure 1). Also, when a search returns zero results, ads for other books occupy the spot where search results normally be. There is only a small message near the top of the page, "Alert: Your search generated 0 results." This can be confusing for a user looking for search results.

After the richness of the database itself, the power and flexibility of the TS3 search engine is TS3's biggest strength. Complex searches of the database can be customized with Boolean operators in any of 40+ search index criteria. The database can be searched either by browsing an index or by any combination of about 48 different search options (All Subjects - (Keywords), Author - (Keywords), Author - (Last Name, First), LC Class, Publisher/Supplier, Title (Keywords), Title (Begins with), ISBN, etc.). Searches can also be limited by product type: books, video, music, or software and games.

Search filters are a powerful feature in TS3. With these a user can include or exclude titles based on their binding, publication status, language, publication date, B&T Stock status and many other criteria. Over 100 different filters (limits) can be applied to a search. So, for example, one could search for all titles with the words "recovered memory" in any field, written in English, from commercial publishers (i.e. no university press pubs), written for a community college, undergraduate or general level audience, including reviews in the TS3 record, published since 2004 but excluding out of print and not yet published titles. One reviewer commonly uses the Publication Status filter to exclude items that are out of print, out of stock, not yet published, or publication cancelled. Another useful filter is the Binding filter, which can be used to exclude cassette tapes, CDs, and Netlibrary ebooks from search results.

After a search the user can click on the Hide Search button to minimize the search options to allow more room for display of search results. This is almost a requirement,

because otherwise the user will have to use the left-right scroll button on the browser to see the right-hand side of the search result data.

Several views of the search result data are available. Both the brief and extended views show about 20 titles per page, but the brief view does so more compactly, showing information in a compressed, tabular format. Real-time inventory (on hand/on order and 30 day demand) is listed for each title in the search results page.

When titles are found for purchase they can be added to a shopping cart easily. Carts can be named, and a user can have any number of carts. Operations within carts are quick and efficient. Titles can be moved from cart to cart singularly or as a group. Users can set up different carts (e.g. for different selection areas) to organize and track their selections and orders. Notes can be added to each record added to a cart. These notes are free-text. A library might use them to include requestor information; a fund code, disposition after purchase, etc. Notes can be mapped to fields in the MARC records available for download. Contents of carts can be transferred from one user's cart to another's (e.g. from a librarian's cart to the acquisitions assistant's cart). Each cart's display shows a running total of number of titles, volumes and dollars spent for that cart. Users can download MARC records for titles which are selected.

The "Search History" feature is very useful for going back to an earlier search. If a user wishes to repeat the same search on a regular basis, they can save the search, then redo it from the Search History without having to reenter all their search criteria.

The interface is well organized and functional. An exceptionally large number of fields are searchable and an almost limitless number of involved search queries are possible. Moving from screen to screen is fairly intuitive. The addition of filters for search refinement is useful where the same limiting criteria are to be used in a number of, or all searches, for example to eliminate juvenile publications.

One searching problem recently solved with use of the TS3 search engine was that too many large print editions of books were in search results; this was resolved by using a boolean "not" and the name of the offending publisher to exclude those records.

Records can be exported as text or MARC records, the MARC records are suitable for import into local online catalogs. The MARC Profiler feature allows custom mapping of TS3 fields to fields in MARC records which can be downloaded for import into a local system. One reviewer's library uses the line notes field for each title for fund code information, and also exports the cart name, the list price, the order quantity. This information is then imported into the local library system and used to create order records in the acquisitions system. TS3 has an optional (added cost) "Grid Template" feature which can make this process easier.

TS3 has several market-specific login pages which display content and collection development resources chosen for that market; the academic market login page will be of

most interest to CCL users, but there are others for the international market, public library market, retail market and school library markets.

While there is not an administrative module as such, there is an ability to set many preferences for each user account. These include enabling or disabling various features and permissions which can be used to create accounts which have different roles in the ordering process. An account can be given the ability to add items to a cart but not to order the items. Other customizable features include inactivity timeout, the order in which review sources are displayed, the default search fields displayed, and the default result display format and sort order.

TS3 has an option to setup search of ISBNs in the local online catalog; instructions are given for several of the most common systems. This can be used to check for exact duplicates. If configured, this option shows up next to each title entry in the extended and detailed views.

TS3 also supports duplicate checking within a cart and between carts. If a user adds an item to a cart and that item has already been added to another cart a popup will warn the user and refuse to add the item unless the user clicks OK on the popup.

Batch ISBN entry is supported, though it is unclear if this feature would be of use to most community college libraries.

If a title is out of stock there is a link to buy a used copy from Alibris.

Public access to Title Source 3
For a nominal fee a library can allow public access to Title Source 3. This is called "Anonymous login" on the TS3 login page. Public users are not able to order items, but they can browse the database and read reviews. Baker and Taylor does not have any means of allowing public access from outside the institution's IP address space, though the EZproxy program or a proxy server can make this possible. No usage statistics are available for TS3, so it is difficult for an institution to gauge use of the public login. Similar access to bibliographic information is available from Amazon.com and many other free online resources, so it may not be worthwhile to purchase the public access. It is questionable whether Title Source is very suitable as a resource accessible to the public. Its interface is very complicated and many of the features of that interface are disabled in the public mode.

Figure 1 *Title Source 3 Home page after login*

Figure 2 *Title Source 3 search results page*

USER SUPPORT SERVICES: (2)

Online Help
Title Source 3 offers an extensive online help system. Though the web-based help is not context-sensitive, it does have a well-arranged contents page. Key words and terms can be browsed in an index and there is a search feature. There is also a 6-page "B&T Academic Title Source 3 Cheat Sheet" available as a PDF on the website and an 18-page "How-to" document for TS3.

Telephone Support
Telephone support from Baker and Taylor is of mixed quality. Voice-mail menus are confusing, many levels deep and repetitive. Baker and Taylor has offices in many parts of the country and the voice-mail menus sometimes bounce the caller from office to office. Some menu options end by advising the caller to dial another number. Others end in asking the user to leave a message. Tech support and customer support staff are helpful if and when and if you reach them and if your question is within their area of responsibility. Support hours are limited: Monday through Friday, from 8:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (i.e. Tech support stops at 4:00 P.M. West Coast time.) Since technical problems or questions often need answers quickly and since they do not always occur during normal business hours, this is inadequate support for California customers, whose libraries are undoubtedly open well past 4:00 P.M. and also on weekends.

E-mail support
Several e-mail addresses and online feedback forms are listed on the TS3 and B&T sites. A request for information on Title Source 3 sent to the e-mail address listed on the B&T site was never answered. A request for technical support sent to the e-mail address listed for tech support also was never answered.

Online Customer Support
There is a prominent link on the TS3 home page for Customer Service. Selecting the link currently generates the message, "Direct access to B&T Customer Service from within TS 3 will be available soon." According to Baker and Taylor, this will allow access to invoices, and information on backorders and will be up by July, 2006.

COST: (3)

Baker and Taylor offers two version of Title Source: Premium (also know as Gold) and Standard (also known as Silver) The Standard version does not have access to the reviews, and lacks the ability to customize the MARC records available for download and some other advanced features. The Premium (Gold) version is more expensive.

The pricing for TS3 is by version (see above) and per staff user ID, with the first user being one price and each additional user being a separate, lower price. When considering how many user licenses are needed at a particular library, keep in mind that the first user ID is the system administrator's, with permissions and capabilities that you wouldn't necessarily want the rest of the staff to have. More than one person can use each user ID

(though not simultaneously), but if multiple users use the same user ID, they can see, add to, delete and otherwise affect the contents and features of the selection and order carts for anyone else using that ID. Optimally, each user would have his/her own user ID, but price considerations would determine whether or not that were possible in community college libraries.

Public access is available for a minimal fee (but see comments in the User Interface section of this review on the public mode)

Reviews from Booklist are available for an added cost.

There is a "Grid Template" feature which enables entering and transfer of acquisitions information to the local ILS; it is available at an added cost. Similar functionality can be achieved through use of the MARC profile customization; it is not clear whether the Grid Template component is worth the added cost.

AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE (3)

There are occasional problems with poor response time from the Title Source servers at peak periods during the day. Sometimes access is slow. This has improved over the last few years, and it is hoped that it will continue to improve.

Authentication methods: Staff accounts can log in with their vendor-supplied username and password on or off campus. The anonymous (public) account is authenticated based on IP address. For the public, access from outside the campus IP address range is only possible with the EZproxy program or a proxy server.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT (3)

Baker and Taylor's Title Source has seen extensive development since its first release in 1999. In its current form, Title Source 3 is a well-developed, smoothly-designed collection development and acquisitions system. There are some problems with B&T customer service and the online system is slow at some times of day; it is hoped that Baker and Taylor will address these issues. TS3 is an ambitious and complex product which has a definite learning curve in order to use it to its full potential. The reward is improved efficiency of collection development and acquisitions operations and better use of the limited time of community college library staff.