Computer will replace MIT card catalogs

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words, she said.

While some schools also use bar codes for meal purchases, MIT's food service does not plan to make use of the new bar codes, said Kevin B. Smith, administrative assistant for food services.

Food Service will continue to use the current system on Valentine Series A cards, Smith said. The new system, Luckers said, will allow library users to determine whether a particular book is on the shelves. It will also be able to detect invalid identification cards.

"People won't be able to have more than X dollars in fines and guarantors to check out books," Luckers said.

The new system can automatically send overdue notices, he said. It can record borrowing patterns, allowing the library to order popular types of books more frequently. Eventually, it may perform bibliographical searches, he said.

Switched catalogs in 1963

The MIT library system switched from the Dewey decimal system to the library of Congress system in 1963, Luckers said. The library system closed the Dewey decimal card-catalog and opened a new library of Congress catalog, instead of changing places for all holdings in the system, he explained.

Every library in the system split into two parts: one with Dewey decimal holdings, the other with Library of Congress holdings, he said.

The library acquired approximately 300,000 volumes between its beginning in 1860 and 1963, "not including microfiche," Luckers said. The card catalog of those 300,000 volumes, entered in the Dewey decimal system, has been unchanged since 1963, he said.

The MIT Libraries four years ago transferred the entire catalog into microfiche, placing a copy in each branch library, according to Luckers.

The libraries in 1925 began to subscribe to the On Line Computer Library Center. Every new acquisition by the library since then has been entered into the system, Luckers said.

The center is an on-line bibliographical database, which allows a user to search all of the entered records for specific information, Luckers said. The center can produce machine-readable tapes and catalogs of MIT's acquisitions since 1973, he said.

$600,000 to cut costs

The Sustaining Fellows Fund, a pool of unrestricted donations, is financing the system, according to Barbara B. Lewis, executive officer of the fund. Funding totaled $606,000 from 1980 to 1982, she said, enough to purchase the card catalog system for $600,000 to cut costs.

The system is a method of cutting costs, Luckers said, under the theory that it would take less time for a library worker to enter a book into the computer than it would into a card catalog.

The system will also improve management of the card catalog, Luckers said, and allow the library staff to spend less time tracking down overdue books.

"The last thing I want people to think is that [the new computer system] is related to other price increases," such as the recent rate hikes by the library system.

The new system will lower operating costs of the library system, Luckers said.

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