

# Abstract

The purpose of this poster is to illustrate the different functions of the DLA (Digital Library Assistant) and the Pros and Cons of each function as used in the College of DuPage Library. The problem for Circulation Services was to determine whether the DLA was beneficial, by either saving time in staff hours or increasing accuracy, with the daily Circulation tasks. Each of the DLA's nine functions; Check Shelf Order, Collect Data, Pull Items, Sort and Shelve, Find Items, Search for Items, Shelve Items, Change Security, Show Item Info, were tested under normal working conditions to check performance.

The results were mixed. Due to the nature of the RFID signal, with tasks requiring pinpoint accuracy such as Shelve Items, Pull Items, Sort and Shelve, the DLA proved less helpful. Greater positive impact was felt using the DLA for Check Shelf Order, Collect Data, Find Items, and the Change Security functions.

In conclusion, the DLA can be of greatest help with the Check Shelf Order function. This replicates shelf reading and is faster and more accurate than is possible by staff. To a lesser degree but important are the Collect Data and Change Security functions. Using the Digital Library Assistant requires proficiency in the DLA software, and in Access Reports or running reports from your ILS; but the DLA can be your friend and is valuable for time saved and improved collection management.

## Collect Data

Overview – This function is used to collect data on the memory card for further processing.

Pros – This is a fast way to gather item records for updates, which can then be processed through Voyager's Pick and Scan function. We use this function to gather barcodes for item location changes, for example books going on display or items moving from New Books to General.

Cons - Items being changed should be manually counted and agree with the DLA counter to ensure all items have been updated.

Conclusion - Batch changes, including the counting of items, still takes less time than making the change to each individual item.



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## Check Shelf Order

Overview - This function is used to read the shelf and find items that are in the wrong order. The HD section of the COD library contains approximately 4,800 items and was tested with the following results:

- Pros -
- Found 70 (1.4%) items misshelved either within the same call number range or outside of it.
  - Found 19 items (.39%) on the shelf but not in the database
  - Found 83 items (1.7%) where the security was not activated
  - Found 1 book with wrong call# - tag info did not match spine#
  - Found 1 book with tag coded with a different barcode

- Cons -
- Identified 27 items in the wrong order which were not
  - Did not catch 10 items which were in the wrong order
  - Did not identify a book in the wrong place because the book contained a CD
  - Read a tag on the shelf below because it was a tall book and the tag was inserted incorrectly at the top of the spine.

Conclusion – Although the percentages are small, the DLA finds misshelved items in less time than a staff member reading the shelves manually. It also identifies items not in the system, which is information not known in manual reading. This is helpful with a large collection, our general collection has 205,000 items.

## Shelve Items

Overview - The Shelve Items function finds the correct location for items to be reshelved.

Pros - The DLA works quickly and accurately to find the correct SHELF.

Cons - The DLA requires a shelf order list on the memory card to perform this function, our shelf order list has flaws (see Sort and Shelve). The DLA uses beeps and a Distance Indicator on the display to locate the correct place on the shelf.

Conclusion - The DLA is neither faster nor more accurate than staff when shelving.

## Sort and Shelve

Overview – This function simplifies sorting and shelving of items.

Pros - None.

Cons - This module does not work according to the instructions in the DLA User Guide. The problem the DLA is having with shelf order could be the result of the way our call numbers have been entered over the years. Below is an example of the results of an Access Report query for a Shelf Order list. Whether a space exists between the call letters and numbers affects their order.

```
P COD_Shelforder
ITEM_BARCODE  DISPLAY_CALL_NO
31304002415304  GV 583 .H5 1991
31304002607017  GV 709 .W58 1989
31304000891977  GV 854.9 .C7 I4 1977x
31304002366259  GV 875 .A45 L4 1992
31304000288638  GV1790.G5 A3 1980
31304000788439  GV1790.L5 P5 1961
31304003570115  GV1790.S5 T3 1982
31304002415098  GV504 .T3 1992
31304002414943  GV504 .T3 1992
31304002414869  GV504 .T3 1992
```

Conclusion - This module has not shown any time saved versus a staff person sorting and shelving.

## Find

Overview – Find is a quick way to use the DLA to locate an item without creating a list.

Pros - You can input data directly into the DLA. This is helpful when you have only a few missing items, rather than running a list of missing items in the database.

Cons - The DLA directs you to where the item SHOULD BE on the shelf. In testing this module to find misshelved items, it beeps where it belongs, not where it actually is on the shelf. When using this module it is helpful to scan the section through the Security module first. This eliminates alerts for security reasons which can be distracting.

## Change Security

Overview – Change Security allows you to scan a group of items to change their security.

Pros – This is a quick way to change security for a group of items. It is also a double-check system used after checkin to make sure the security has been changed and that the item is discharged. In approximately 1% of our items scanned, the items had not been discharged.

Cons - None

Conclusion - This module is useful beyond its title function and quickly corrects conditions that are important but not apparent to staff.



## Pull items

Overview – This function assists in locating items to be removed from the collection either temporarily or permanently.

A list must be generated from an Access Reports and exported to the SD card for the DLA.

## Search for Items

Overview – The Search for Items function can quickly check a group of items for any that may be on an active search list.

Pros – This is not only the fastest way to search for items outstanding on other lists, it is the least intrusive. There is no other purpose than to scan lists stored on the DLA. Student Aides can be sent into the collection with the DLA to use this module.

Cons - This works only if you have generated search lists such as Missings, Pull, or Weed through the Circulation System and and import them to the SD card used by the DLA.

Conclusion - This module can be a real timesaver in finding items.

## Show Item Info

Overview – Show Item Info allows you to scan an individual item and display detailed information about it.

Pros - Using this function the DLA is able to locate errors such as, the barcode of an item Not In System or a barcode incorrectly scanned onto an RFID tag.

Cons - Circulation uses the Show Item Info function with the Check Shelf Order function, toggling between the two.

Conclusion - This is a quick way to get information on an individual item when working in the stacks where a computer is not handy.

For more information: <http://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/6697500/digital-library-assistant-wince-users-guide.pdf>

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