FCLA's Mark Hinnebusch Honored for Work on Library Computing Standard

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A national group recognized FCLA's Mark Hinnebusch for his educational efforts and work on a computing standard used by librarians nationwide.

Hinnebusch, associate director of the Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA), received the honor from LITA. LITA is the Library and Information Technology Association, which is a division of the American Library Association that deals with technology issues in libraries. Hinnebusch received the 2000 LITA/Library Hi Tech Award during LITA's President's Program on July 10 at the American Libraries Association Conference in Chicago. The award includes a $1,000 stipend and a certificate of merit recognizing outstanding achievement.

"The award is for educating the library community on the benefits and details of the Z39.50 standard, which is a computer-to-computer search-and-retrieval facility," Hinnebusch said.

According to LITA, Hinnebusch has built an outstanding 10-year record of publications, presentations and tutorials explaining the benefits and applications for the Z39.50 integrated inquiry and records standard. The standard allows searches to flow among various information systems and return clear and integrated results to library patrons. His nationally presented tutorials are celebrated for their clarity.

Hinnebusch taught seminars, wrote tutorial articles, and co-authored a book about the Z39.50 computing standard, which was recently adopted by librarians nationwide. He also co-founded the Z39.50 Implementation Group in 1990.

"The standard is essential because no library can house all the information sources that faculty, students, and staff need to do their job well. There has to be a mechanism to find and retrieve the needed information regardless of where it resides," Hinnebusch said.

Z39.50 allows computer to computer searches regardless of the platforms that each library uses.

"Other communities are adopting the standard now: biology (for the dissemination of biological information), the earth-observation satellite group, art museums, and the natural-history museum community. The standard is geared toward computer-to-computer rather than people-to-computer (like the Web, for example) interaction. It allows different systems that researchers use to make sense to other computers. It's a 'lingua franca,' or a common language for the computers to speak to each other," said Hinnebusch.

His interest turned to the fledgling standard 10 years ago. "I got involved in the standard in 1990, because we were interested in hooking the LUIS system into the community college library system. This effectively expands the use of the library systems," he said.

The award recognizes outstanding achievement in educating practitioners within the library field about library and information technology, according to LITA.

The honor of this award reflects not only on his work, but also on the field, he said. "This award recognizes the importance of Z39.50 to the library community. Having put so much of my life into it, it makes me very happy to have won this award. It's very satisfying," he said.
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Mark Hinnebusch accepts the LITA Hi Tech Award in Chicago. Behind Hinnebusch is Michael Seadle editor of Library Hi Tech. From left, Michael Gorman, LITA President; Marcia Deddens, award committee chair; Mark Hinnebusch; and Michael Seadle, editor of Library Hi Tech.

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