# 1967: Project Intrex

In 1967, CLR awarded $250,000 to MIT to help support work on Project Intrex (Information Transfer Experiments)—specifically to conduct basic research on the potential for remote access to printed text.

The effort was headed by Carl F. Overhage, a professor of engineering at MIT. The project, which also received support from the National Science Foundation and other sources, sought to develop and operationally test a remote-access computer-based catalog, as well as the ability to search and retrieve information in graphic form electronically.

A semiannual activity report on the project, dated September 15, 1968, is available here.

The description at right is taken from the 11th annual report of the Council on Library Resources, Inc., for the period ending June 30, 1966, pp. 14-15.

**Project Intrex** In a press release dated January 16, 1964, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced that Dr. Carl F. J. Overhage, who had been director of its Lincoln Laboratory for the previous seven years, would on the 1st of July following become a professor in the School of Engineering with the assignment of establishing the bases on which the technical library of the future might be modeled, with the ultimate objective of designing a library of engineering and science that could be put into operation at M.I.T. between 1970 and 1975. This announcement was of more than usual interest to the Council, which immediately made collaborative overtures to Dr. Overhage. After some months of initial exploration of the problems, he organized at Woods Hole, in August-September 1965, a five-week conference to explore the problems of information exchange looking to the design of an investigation. A report of the conference, presenting the main elements of the design, was promptly published.[11]

In June 1966 the Institute approached the Council for major support of what had come to be known as Project Intrex (*Information Transfer Experiments*). Although the Council could not meet the entire request, in January 1967 it made a substantial grant to enable the Institute to investigate, for one year beginning March 1, 1967, the possibilities for improving the arrangements for access by users to printed text. Experiments with real library users in actual working situations are planned, using a variety of new techniques for full-text access to determine their economic feasibility and degree to which they satisfy user requirements. Examples of promising technologies include the following: graphic storage of full-text in microfilm or other reduced format; automatic selection through a time-shared computer utility; transmission of a scanned-image electrical signal over a communication network and display and/or reproduction in full size or microform for temporary and/or permanent retention by the user; digital storage of encoded full-text in massive random-access storage; selection and transmission through a time-shared computer system with display and/or reproduction for use through remote computer terminals. The research and development efforts are under the direction of Professor J. Francis Reintjes, director of the Institute's Electronics Systems Laboratory.

[11] Carl F. J. Overhage and R. Joyce Harms, eds.: *Intrex. Report of a Planning Conference on Information Transfer Experiments.* Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The M.I.T. Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, [c. 1965]. 276 p.