LIST OF QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING CD PRODUCTS

I. Librarians to consider:

Does product duplicate current print sources or online subscriptions?
Are access points improved over the print or comparable product?
Does usage of print source merit an additional access point?
Does product provide sources not currently available?
Is same product available from many different vendors?
Is update frequency sufficient?
Are ongoing subscription and maintenance costs reasonable when compared with cost of comparable print or online sources?
What is the reputation of the publisher?

II. Trial Period considerations:

Verify producer claims with sample searches.
Compare a complete citation from the CD product and comparable print product, or with another version of same product by a different vendor.
How readable is the product?
If abbreviations are used, are they logical for your average user?
Is the use of color, windows and other artistic qualities appropriate and valuable?
Are the screen layouts logical?
Do the commands make sense?
What access points are available?
What are the indexed fields?
Are the instructions and the help menus clear?
Is the order of events in the search process on the CD-ROM logical?
Are the number of keystrokes minimal?
Are printing and downloading available and easy to perform?
Will it be necessary to provide staff to assist patrons?

Are screens, commands, and prompts easy to understand?

For those with free online updates to the CD-ROMs, is the transition to online easy for end-users while being sufficiently well-controlled to prevent patron abuse or misuse of online services?

Is the system user friendly - i.e. can an unfamiliar user sit at the terminal and begin a search from onscreen aid?

III. Questions to ask Vendor:

Are products leased or purchased?

How many disks make up the product? Are there other CD-ROM versions with fewer disks?

Must superseded disk be returned to the vendor?

Are software enhancements included in the purchase or lease price?

What are ongoing subscription and maintenance costs when compared with cost of comparable print or online sources, if any?

Does the vendor provide replacements for lost or damaged products at nominal or no cost?

What does the subscription include? How frequently is the product updated?

Is there a backfile? What is the coverage? What is the cost?

Is downloading available?

Is equipment included as part of a subscription? What are the specifications? Is it required?

Is a reduced subscription price available if equipment is not included?

What are copyright and multi-use restrictions?

Can multi-station use be supported? (If multi-station use is desired, see Procedure for multi-station use)

Does the vendor provide maintenance for equipment included in a subscription?

Does the vendor provide assistance with installation?

Is there an easily accessible toll-free customer service?

Are help screens available?
IV. Questions to ask Library Systems Office:

Can currently available equipment be used or upgraded for use?

Are the storage and memory of currently available equipment sufficient?

Does currently available equipment have required color and graphics capabilities if required?

If equipment is provided as part of subscription-can it be supported?

Can multi-station use be supported? (If multi-station use is desired, see Procedure for multi-station use)

Is additional wiring, furniture, renovation or reconfiguration of space required?
Management of CD-ROM Databases in ARL Libraries

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