

NTRLS IT: Real Stories
Some things to consider when buying software for your library

Issue / Problem:

Software, we all need it to do daily tasks on our computers

Background Information you should know about:

State of Texas DIR contract list – These are companies that have been negotiated with so that state and local government entities and non-profits can buy software or hardware from them. A couple of vendors I have found to use for software purchases at relatively low pricing, www.techsoup.org and www.texas.gs.shi.com.

Resolution / How we solved the problem:

Buying software for your computer needs can get expensive and I have run into a few libraries that could have saved a lot if they had purchased from any of these organizations instead of buying from retail. I would like to recommend that you check into buying your software from companies that have made the DIR contract list for the state of Texas because you can save hundreds to thousands depending on your needs. Here are a couple of vendors that I like to use due to pricing and ease of use. Be sure to check into the current Texas DIR list here:
<http://www.dir.state.tx.us/store/contractsbulletin.htm>

1. Try Techsoup first for your software needs if you can qualify to purchase from them. In order to make purchases from Techsoup, you must qualify as one of the following: A U.S. organization that has 501(c)(3) status and is not a public library, a U.S. public library that has 501(c)(3) status, a U.S. public library that does not have 501(c)(3) status, a Canadian organization that is recognized as a registered Canadian charity by the Canada Revenue Agency or a Canadian library. Techsoup isn't on the Texas DIR list because Techsoup is nationwide, not just for Texas alone. Once qualified you can purchase software from Techsoup at really low prices such as Windows Vista for \$10.00 per license and this includes the CD Media to install your software with. The only catch here is that when your purchase from Techsoup, 1) they have to have the software in stock, and 2) you can only purchase from them ONCE PER YEAR. So make sure you have all the software selected from them that you wish to purchase because it will be another 12 months before you can do so again. Here is their website:
<http://www.techsoup.org/stock/default.asp>
2. SHI is on the Texas DIR list and so are many others, but I have found that dealing with them is easy and their software is very inexpensive when you can't purchase what you need or are out of the purchase period for Techsoup. Comparing their software prices to Techsoup, as an example, Vista is about \$50.00 per license not including the CD Media. The advantage of using a company like SHI is the fact that you can still save a ton of money buying software at just about any time of the year, and the range of software to choose from. Those companies can be found here: http://www.texas.gs.shi.com/Contracts/DIRcontracts_software.asp

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at abeatty@ntrl.org.