

# Brocade *FAQ*

# Isn't Brocade SLIM?

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The Western Cape Provincial Library and Archive Service is on the verge of migrating from PALS to Brocade, or as the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) calls it, SITA Library Information Management System (SLIMS) powered by Brocade Library Services®. This change is due to the fact that the cost of the hardware to support the PALS data is becoming prohibitively expensive so a significant number of public libraries and provincial library services have requested that a new option be made available to them.

This article is not about the migration process, but rather about the questions that are asked every time one mentions Brocade or SLIMS. I hope to answer the most frequently asked questions while giving readers the opportunity to pose questions that can be dealt with in a follow-up article if warranted. At this point I would like to thank Johan Stoltz of SITA for providing guidance and insight on some of the anticipated queries.

## 1. What is Brocade/SLIMS?

SLIMS powered by Brocade Library Services®, or more popularly known as Brocade, is the library information management system that SITA and a user-based selection team had settled on as the replacement for PALS after an extended process involving a request for information (RFI) from companies to submit their products based on a user requirement document compiled by SITA and a user-based selection team, with input from all the interested provinces and metropolises (such as the City of Cape Town).

Without going into detail, Brocade was the combined first choice based on cost and adherence to the user requirements. Brocade

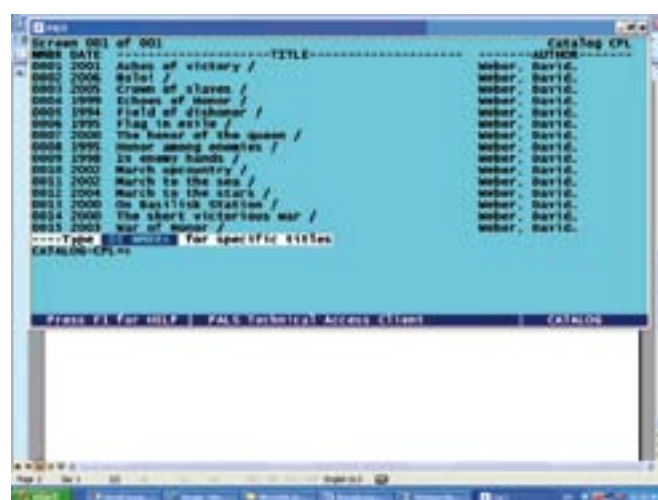
Library Services® is the product of CIPAL, a company in Belgium that performs a similar function to SITA in South Africa.

## 2. How does it differ from PALS?

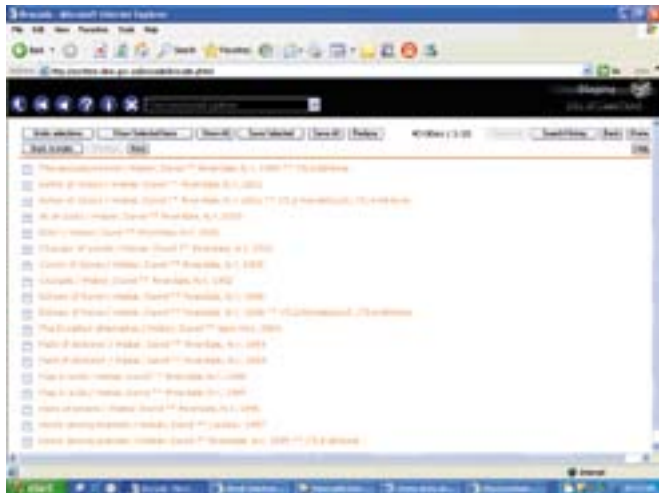
The major difference is that SLIMS is Web-based (like GOOGLE) while PALS is DOS-based (line-command driven). The other major difference is that PALS requires a (more expensive) static Internet Protocol (IP) address while SLIMS will be using a dynamic IP address.

An advantage of SLIMS is that you can work anywhere (even at home - or in the bath - that is, if you have a laptop and suicidal tendencies) as all you need is a computer connected to the Internet, the web site address, and a user name and password.

Another difference is the 'look':



PALS



SLIMS powered by Brocade Library Services

### 3. Why do we need to move from PALS?

Due to the older technology that PALS is based on, it has become too expensive to run on currently available hardware. Another reason is that SITA was requested by certain provincial library services and public libraries to investigate an alternative to PALS for those who wanted to migrate to another system.

### 4. What is the difference between the Internet and the Intranet?

The Intranet is an internal closed network usually only accessible to approved users, like government workers having access to the INTRAWP web site from their terminals. Other Internet users cannot access the Intranet web site from Internet café's or their homes.

The Internet on the other hand is accessible to the general public. Some sites can also only be accessed after registration, which sometimes requires a financial transaction or the go-ahead to be sent lots of commercial information.

### 5. Is there going to be a Selection Section?

The Selection Section could possibly be loaded as a separate library and will still be accessible to public libraries. However, this has to be discussed with SITA and CIPAL to determine if it is possible and feasible.

### 6. How much is it going to cost a library/municipality to run on Brocade?

The only cost to the municipality will be hardware and network

related. Please note that the initial configuration costs for municipalities not using the same initial parameters and configuration is still under negotiation between SITA and CIPAL and should have been communicated to all participating provinces by the end of June 2010.

Thus, if the library already has PCs and an Internet connection there will only be a slight increase in running costs, especially if it already has ADSL. There will, however, not be ongoing operational costs as a province could add as many libraries as are required under the current license agreement. This means that the current monthly transaction bill the libraries pay will fall away as soon as they migrate to Brocade.

### 7. How much will it cost a library/municipality to migrate to Brocade?

The Western Cape Provincial Library Service is outlaying R5.5 million for the initial implementation of Brocade for the Library Service and one public library. One of the factors that will affect a library/municipality migration quote from SITA is the configuration of the particular library. This will include the library hours, item and patron classes and so on. If it is different from the current configuration it will have to be changed and at this particular time we are not sure how much the changes will cost.

### 8. Can I still use my PALS card or do I need a new card?

One of the user requirements of the new system was that it must be able to read both the PALS and Bookplus barcodes. Item and patron records are part of the conversion and migration of data from PALS to SLIMS. As a result patrons should still be able to use their existing PALS cards to take out books from their library. If you are not sure if your card will work it is advisable to take documentation such as your ID book and rates or electricity bill to join as a new member. Thus, a member of the City of Cape Town Libraries could have a PALS membership card, a Bookplus membership card, a 'pocket' library card (for the manual, non-computerised library) and a SLIMS card (not to be confused with a smart card) for the next year. By July 2011 it is hoped that the only card that will be valid will be the SLIMS card as all the libraries in the City of Cape Town will have hopefully migrated by then. Item barcodes will also still work. This will save time as librarians will not need to re-barcode all the library material.

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