CoUL is now discussing the SAG 3 Shared ILS/RMS Feasibility Task Fort Report. CoUL has made no decisions on the recommendations or actions in this report, but would like to share this report with UCLAS and campus library employees.

Strategic Action Group 3 (Collection Building & Management) Shared ILS/RMS Feasibility Task Force Report
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(Revised December 2014)

Prepared by the Shared ILS/RMS Task Force and consultant Marshall Breeding:

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Executive Summary

Over the last several years the UC Libraries have addressed the possibility of a shared Integrated Library System/Resource Management System (ILS/RMS), but the discussion has been deferred partly because the products on the marketplace were not sufficiently advanced to meet system-wide needs and partly due to other priorities. The current "UC Libraries Systemwide Plan and Priorities 2014 – 2018" clearly defines the challenges we face in managing and continuing to develop the UC collections. In order to position ourselves for a productive future as one of the largest academic collections in the world, it has become imperative to come to grips with these challenges.

CoUL charged Strategic Action Group 3 (Collection Building & Management) (SAG 3) to: (1) assess the feasibility of implementing a shared next-generation ILS or RMS for the UC Libraries; and (2) make a recommendation to CoUL based on this assessment. The focus is on the back-end system and not the front-end discovery system. The Shared ILS/RMS Task Force engaged Marshall Breeding to help assess the interest in and technical feasibility of implementing a shared ILS/RMS system for the UC Libraries. He worked with the Task Force from April 1 through August 29, 2014.)

The feasibility study did not presume that the UC Libraries would choose to adopt a shared ILS/RMS, either as a single institution or by a subset of the campuses. It was conducted through four lines of investigation. The first was conducted by the Shared ILS/RMS Task Force; the other three were conducted by Marshall Breeding:

1. A survey to establish the status of each campus about its current ILS and its plans to migrate to a new ILS, thus determining which campuses might be interested in pursuing a shared ILS/RMS system.
2. A survey about the general expectations and current practices on the campuses. A conference call was held with key representatives of the California Digital Library to obtain further information.
3. An environmental scan to identify candidate systems that could provide a shared automation environment for the UC libraries.
4. A study on current initiatives similar to the proposed scenario of a systemwide automation system for the UC libraries.

The survey conducted by the Shared ILS/RMS Task Force indicates some UC Libraries are considering migration to a new system in the next few years. So the opportunity for exploring a shared ILS/RMS across the system (or with a subset of the campuses) is timely and at a critical juncture as campuses make local migration decisions and then commit staff and financial resources to implement their local decisions.

Marshall Breeding has concluded that although the University of California Libraries (in aggregate) form an extremely large and sophisticated consortium with complex functional requirements, there is a strong likelihood that the UC Libraries could successfully implement a shared library automation platform. There are several products available now that are capable of meeting our general requirements: Ex Libris Alma; OCLC WorldShare Platform; Kuali OLE; Sierra from Innovative Interfaces; and ProQuest Intota.

The successful adoption of shared systems by large consortia makes it clear that not only is a shared system feasible, but that movement to a next-generation shared system is fundamental to collaboration between libraries. Orbis Cascade; the University System of Maryland & Affiliated Institutions Library Consortia (USMAI); Bibsys; and Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) are examples of consortia currently pursuing and/or implementing next-generation systems to improve the management of shared collections of electronic, print, and digital resources.

The decision to conduct this feasibility study emerged from observations and recommendation in many of the surveys and reports generated by the various UC Libraries' NGTS Phases, Power of Three Groups and Lightning Teams that were conducted over the span of the last five years. They highlighted the usefulness of a shared ILS system to facilitate a number of NGTS recommendations, including the development of system-wide technical services and system-wide collection development activities. Next-generation systems have been designed to better support collaboration by allowing for the selection, acquisition and cataloging of materials for a group of libraries or on behalf of another library.

In short, the UC Libraries have a commitment to collaboration, but we have reached the point of diminishing returns working within the limits of our campus-based systems. We have identified numerous opportunities to manage collections at scale and to streamline our operations. In a genuinely shared environment, the UC Libraries will be able to manage major initiatives more efficiently and with better outcomes. These initiatives include: building a UC Federal Documents Archive; coordinating the de-duplication of the print serials archives in the RLFs; coordinating the retrospective shared print monographs; and supporting demand-driven acquisitions of e-books.

Based on Marshall Breeding's assessment of potential product capabilities; the expectations articulated by the UC libraries; and the number of campuses considering migration to a new system, we recommend that the UC Libraries seriously consider the implementation of a shared next-generation system.

SAG 3 and the Shared ILS/RMS Task Force strongly recommend that UC Libraries take these next steps:

1. Explore the concept of a shared resource management platform with decision-makers and practitioners throughout the UC Libraries
2. Engage in an inclusive process to assess the current level of consensus for a shared system and secure commitment from interested campuses.
3. Determine whether the wording and placement of this initiative on the UC Libraries Systemwide Plan & Priorities needs to be revised

After consensus and commitments are secured, the next steps are to:
4. Develop a consortial governance model to support the selection, implementation, and ongoing management of a shared ILS/RMS for the UC Libraries
5. Identify a process to produce a practical vision, set of requirements and road-map for a shared ILS/LMS infrastructure. From that effort should emerge a more detailed assessment of requirements and the assembly of the documents and processes needed to begin the RFP process.

If the UC Libraries goes forward with the above next steps, it is acknowledged that: a) there is still a great deal of information gathering and analysis that would need to take place; b) this would take a significant amount of staff resources and funding; c) this would entail an RFP process; and d) this initiative would happen in phases that might take several years.