Final Report - Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team Phase 2

Submitted to the Direction and Oversight Committee (DOC) of the University of California Libraries Advisory Structure (UCLAS) by the Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team Phase 2
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Introduction

The Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team (FRSPT) was initiated as a result of OCLC's announcement to retire and discontinue development of Virtual Desktop eXchange (VDX), the current University of California interlibrary loan (ILL) management system. This news, along with changing service needs in the resource sharing field and growing dissatisfaction with VDX, created an imperative to review options for migration to a new resource sharing system.

Phase 1

In August 2015, the Strategic Action Group 2: Access, Discovery & Infrastructure (SAG2) established the FRSPT and charged the Phase 1 team with investigating and making a recommendation for a new suite of resource sharing services. The team examined a recent UC ILL environmental scan, researched potential vendors, incorporated feedback from the 2015 systemwide ILL user satisfaction survey, sought peer institution feedback, created an initial set of resource sharing requirements, and sent out and scored an RFI. Phase 1 culminated in the team recommending OCLC's ILLiad as the UC ILL management system in addition to continuing investigation of both Request and Relais D2D as candidates for consortial borrowing system components.

Phase 2

FRSPT Phase 2 began in August 2016 with the objective of investigating and conducting the RFP process for selecting a resource sharing suite of services for the UC libraries based on the research and recommendations resulting from the work of the Phase 1 team.

At the beginning of the RFP process, three products were assessed as meriting further consideration, based on the RFI results:

1. OCLC's ILLiad
2. Relais International's Relais ILL
3. Auto-Graphics' SHAREit

During the time of the RFP process, two changes in OCLC product strategy and market consolidation changed the resource sharing product landscape and effectively removed the two top product choices from consideration:

1. OCLC announced its new cloud-hosted ILL product, Tipasa, as a replacement for ILLiad. Tipasa is the future migration path for ILLiad customers. According to OCLC, "Over time, existing ILLiad users will move to

Tipasa, and this migration has already begun. For new libraries inquiring now about ILL management services, we are recommending Tipasa so that libraries do not implement ILLiad and then need to plan to migrate to Tipasa in the near future." Tipasa is in an early release and not currently suited, according to OCLC, for large academic institutions. As a result, OCLC did not propose ILLiad as an option for the UC libraries.

2. OCLC acquired their primary competitor, Relais International, and is now in the early stages of merging Relais D2D, their consortial borrowing product, onto the OCLC WorldShare platform. When Relais D2D is fully integrated with OCLC WorldCat Discovery, it is intended to be a complete resource sharing system, combining ILL management and consortial borrowing services. OCLC intends to begin migrating institutions currently using VDX to Relais D2D. As a result, OCLC proposed Relais D2D, not Relais ILL as a solution for the UC libraries.

Therefore, only two products remained for us to consider:
1. a new Relais D2D (projected to be completed within the next couple of years)
2. Auto-Graphic's SHAREit

After reviewing the vendor RFP responses, testing vendor sandboxes, attending vendor demos, and consulting with stakeholders, the team concluded we had sufficient information to disqualify both of the remaining products from consideration. The ILL Operations Advisory Group (ILLOPS), comprising members from each campus, who had attended the demos along with ILL staff from whom they solicited feedback, unanimously supported our decision.

The absence of viable products on the market places the UC libraries in a difficult position. As OCLC will eventually discontinue support for VDX, the UC libraries must prepare for this event. It is not certain that any vendor will be able to provide an adequate replacement.

The team has identified a number of risks to the UC resource sharing system that will require mitigation and we have made a number of recommendations for mitigating the risks. These are described under the relevant sections below.

Product Assessment

Relais D2D

The OCLC product, Relais D2D, is in the beginning stages of integration with the OCLC platform, and in their estimation, will not be ready for use by UC for at least 18 months. We believe this timeline may be optimistic. The product features they were able to demonstrate failed to meet our requirements both as a consortial borrowing system and as an ILL management system. The following critical requirements were not met:
● It offers no reporting or statistical features.
● It is reliant on a desktop client for full functionality.
● It does not integrate with Article Exchange, the nationwide standard ILL article delivery mechanism.
● It does not manage requests in Docline, the National Library of Medicine-centered ILL network that is

used and preferred by most libraries in the health sciences and medicine.

We did take note, however, that OCLC's vision for their future resource sharing product, Relais D2D, aligns well with our needs, and demonstrates an understanding of the resource sharing requirements of the UC. We believe it is possible that in the future OCLC will be able to provide a suitable replacement for VDX; however, this is by no means a certainty.

SHAREit

The Auto-Graphics product, SHAREit, was by contrast, a mature product, but one lacking in features needed by academic institutions and is primarily used for sharing monographs in public library consortia. Many of our needs would require new or custom development, including the essential ability to integrate with the nationwide standard ILL payment processing system, OCLC's Interlibrary Loan Fee Management, or IFM.

Requirements not met by either product

Critically, neither product demonstrated the ability to process lending requests for serials with holdings determined at the volume level. Without volume-level holdings, ILL units will need to revert to manual processing to determine holdings, a process not done manually at the UC libraries for consortial borrowing since the early 2000s. More specifically, lending units will receive requests for titles that they hold, but will have to "not-supply" these requests after taking time to determine that they do not hold the specific volume needed by the patron. Similarly, borrowing requests sent to local campus document delivery services (DDS) will have to be manually checked to ensure that the requested volume is held on the home campus, when the request could have been sent directly to the lender, had the system been aware that the specific volume was not held on the home campus. For these reasons, the loss of automated volume-level holdings processing would result in longer wait times for our patrons and place a substantial burden on ILL and DDS units.

Neither product offered integration with the CDL's Request consortial borrowing system. The requirements specifically asked the vendors to assess their capabilities for integration with Request; however, both vendors responded that they would only offer to replace the Request product, not integrate with it. The lack of an integration option would complicate efforts to preserve existing Request features such as SFX integration, document delivery workflows, and Pubmed multi-item requests, all of which were stated requirements for the consortial borrowing system. Lack of an integration option would also limit development of desired future integrations, such as with Alma to obtain electronic links from Alma link resolvers, or with an ERMS to automate determination of ILL licensing terms to support electronic resource lending.

Finally, neither product demonstrated the ability to process incoming requests from discovery applications without passing the user through another discovery application, resulting in a confusing user experience. Both products are dependent on their own discovery application, and have yet to be fully modified to accept requests from other discovery systems, such as WorldCat Local, Primo, EDS, A&I databases, and Google Scholar.

Risks

The recent market consolidation and change in product strategy by OCLC, coupled with the absence of other viable products on the market, has placed the UC consortium at risk of degradation of its resource sharing system. The team believes the following risks (listed in the order of highest impact) need to be considered as the UC library system plans a strategy to address its future resource sharing needs:

1. OCLC may terminate support for VDX without providing a replacement that is adequate for the UC libraries. The team believes this is possible based on experience with OCLC development efforts over the past decade, during which OCLC has made multiple failed attempts to replace VDX, coupled with the current lack of competition for OCLC in the resource sharing domain, which may reduce economic incentive to address customer concerns.
2. Customer support for VDX is likely to degrade as OCLC loses VDX expertise to attrition. This process has already begun as departing VDX support staff have not been replaced over the past five years.
3. Individual campus libraries may opt to discontinue use of VDX and find other solutions, resulting in a fragmented system or even the inability of these campuses to participate in the consortial resource sharing system.

Recommendations

The team believes it is critical the UC libraries take action now or risk a breakdown of UC library consortial resource sharing. Only one vendor, OCLC, contends they will provide solutions that fully support our existing model for resource sharing, which relies on integrating multiple integrated library systems (ILS). If OCLC is not successful, and if we do not change our current model for resource sharing, then we could end up in a situation where the UC libraries can no longer effectively share resources as a consortium.

We offer the following recommendations (listed in the order of importance) with the aim of safeguarding and improving the UC resource sharing system. We believe the optimal solution is to move the UC libraries to a consortial ILS system (recommendation 1), which would open up new possibilities for resource sharing by fundamentally changing the capacity for collaboration among the UC campuses. The remaining recommendations (2-5) are oriented toward preserving our existing resource sharing model, and would be especially important if recommendation 1 is not pursued.

1: Reassess the benefits of a consortial ILS

We recommend that UC reassess the benefits of implementing a systemwide consortial integrated library system (ILS) with robust resource-sharing features.

In Fall 2014, a UC libraries task force concluded "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...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." (SAG 3 Shared ILS/RMS Feasibility Task Force Report, 10/3/14, section V. Conclusion, p. 8)

Since 2014, the product landscape has further evolved and numerous large consortia have moved to a shared ILS system, including the California State Universities. ExLibris' Alma has matured and now dominates the market for large academic consortia, and two UC campuses (UC Davis and UC Santa Barbara) have purchased Alma. A UC consortial ILS system would address many of the needs of resource sharing without the need to purchase additional software to enable resource sharing among the UC campuses. The majority of UC resource sharing would be processed entirely within the consortial ILS, and the overall cost and complexity of resource sharing would be reduced. We would no longer need custom software for consortial borrowing, since we would be using the features built into the consortial ILS.

Decisive, timely action is urged, because currently there are parallel RFP processes happening at several UCs, exploring upgrading or migrating each campus's local ILS, as well as an exploratory process to attempt to combine both RLF catalogs. In total, this represents a tremendous amount of UC staff and technical resources to attempt to hold together and maintain the patchwork of systems we currently have in place.

These efforts could be better used to discover and implement a consortial ILS, similar to what Orbis Cascade and other higher education institutions in California (California State University Libraries, California Community Colleges) have done.

The team asked the RLF directors to comment on how this recommendation related to their project, and whether they would endorse this recommendation. They responded on March 24, 2017:

> "The Shared RLF ILS group's goal is to identify strategies and tactics that the RLFs can use to better serve UC needs for shelving of and access to materials. Our work to date has shown the importance of systems that work effectively across UC libraries at the metadata, discovery and access levels. A key challenge that we have found is that the work required to connect different systems (e.g. separate ILS/LMP systems on campuses) introduces complexities that would be easily addressed if UC libraries were on shared systems that had interoperability "built-in." The difficulties that the Future of Resource Sharing group has found around building connections for resource sharing, particularly around disaggregated ILS platforms, are also a factor in the Shared RLF ILS group. As such, the Shared RLF project directors support the proposal to study shared systems." -- Erik Mitchell (NRLF Director) and Cathy Martyniak (SRLF Director)

2: Continue to monitor and assess vendor software

We recommend that CDL, in collaboration with the ILL Operations Advisory Group (ILL-OPS), monitor and report on OCLC development of Relais D2D and Tipasa to assess when it might be feasible to use either of these products

as a replacement for VDX. CDL and ILL-OPS should actively provide feedback to OCLC and advocate for product features required by the UC libraries.

Other product development should also be tracked, especially the growing resource sharing capabilities of next-generation ILS.

3: Explore integration with alternative resource sharing systems

We recommend that CDL mitigate risks 1 and 3 by developing strategies for integrating Request with ILL products other than VDX (Relais D2D, Tipasa, and WorldShare ILL) as well as with the ILL features available in next-generation ILS.

4: Understand campus workflows and dependencies on VDX

We recommend the Interlibrary Lending Services Common Knowledge Group (ILL CKG) form a working group to examine and document campus ILL workflows and dependencies on VDX. Building on earlier work of the UC ILL community, best practices should be researched and adopted where possible and shared across all UC campus ILL units. Practices that have been developed due to limitations of VDX functionality should be acknowledged, separated out, and documented. These represent workflows that are currently required due to VDX and are not necessarily best practices. When future consideration for a new ILL (or ILS) software is underway, these practices should not be used as determinants for whether a new system is desirable.

5: Address high priority VDX issues

Given a replacement product for VDX will not be forthcoming for 18 months or more, we recommend that the UC libraries and UC senior management work with OCLC to address known issues in VDX and/or priority be given to finding workarounds for these problems. Patrons reported many of these issues in the systemwide ILL survey conducted by the ILL CKG in spring 2015.

Reference

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B. Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team Phase 1 final report:
   http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/frspt/docs/FutureofUCResourceSharingProjectTeam_Phase1FinalReport.pdf
C. Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team Phase 2 charge:
   http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/frspt/docs/FutureofUCResourceSharingProjectTeam_Phase2charge.pdf
D. Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team Phase 2 final report:

http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/frspt/docs/FutureofUCResourceSharingProjectTeam_Phase2FinalReport.pdf

E. Shared ILS/RMS Task Force 2013-2014: http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/sag3/shared-ilsrms-tf-documentshttp://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/sag3/docs/SAG 3 Shared ILS RMS Feasibility TF Report Exec Summary Oct 2014rev.pdf

F. ILL Operations Advisory Group roster: http://www.cdlib.org/services/d2d/ill/teams_contacts.html

G. Interlibrary Lending Services Common Knowledge Group (ILL CKG) roster: https://wiki.library.ucsf.edu/display/UCLCKG/Interlibrary+Services+CKG

H. Future of UC Resource Sharing Project Team Rosters: http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/frspt/roster

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