5. Resource Sharing Developments in coming two years

Stephen Elfstrand and I had some of the same ideas in discussing the impact of WorldCat Local and WorldCat.org as well as Open Source ILS developments and how they impact resource sharing. In addition, as we improve some of the interoperability between automated ILL systems, how does that affect resource sharing? And, we now know a lot more about the planning underway at OCLC that will impact our MnLINK Gateway operation over the next two years and we’ll discuss this also.

A. MnLINK Gateway…

- As Becky indicated in her report:
- VDX ILL will be enhanced and continued as a major component of OCLC resource sharing products.
- **ZPORTAL will be replaced by a new product (WorldCat Exchange?)**

This change could be two years out but it could change how users make requests. We’ll be meeting with OCLC staff during PLA to begin this discussion.

We do know that OCLC’s new discovery tool will be offered in two different ways:

- As a physical union catalog using WorldCat Group Catalog
- Second option will be offered to regions where WorldCat would not serve well as a union catalog. This option would have the federated search capabilities of ZPORTAL. It will include the “next gen OPAC” features that users expect - still in planning phase

NOTE: basically, from what we know, the MnLINK Gateway will fall under the second option. We don’t know what the additional cost would be but we expect it would be some addition to our current Gateway software and maintenance costs.

B. WorldCat Local. For individual libraries or for consortia within the MINITEX region. This is an additional cost for those libraries or consortia wishing to purchasing this product as their interface for their end users.

C. Open URL Link Resolver. We are aware that the majority of libraries are not able to afford some of the important tools that are now available to enhance and improve discovery of their resources and delivery to their end users. One example is the Open Resolvers that quickly show end users which electronic journals their library has authorized access to and delivers the wanted article directly to the end user. A library can purchase from a vendor or there are Open Source products now available. I estimate there are a couple of dozen libraries in the region using these products: Serials Solution, SFX are two well known products.

D. Interoperability.

  a. MINITEX, using the University Libraries’ Aleph ILL server, receives requests from MnPALS and ODIN libraries as well as the University of Minnesota campuses. It is technically possible to link the Aleph sites together, but there are policy and interoperability issues involved that cause everyone to tread lightly in this direction.

  b. We are actively testing the option of linking the MnLINK Gateway and MnPALS Aleph system for interlibrary loan purposes, but the hurdle continues to be the Aleph software.
c. We continue to at least know that some day we may want to link the MnLINK Gateway and the Autographic system in Wisconsin.

d. With OCLC’s resource sharing developments over the next two years, they may well be able to offer methods of successfully linking the above scenarios for the library community – but at some cost.

e. Open Source Integrated Library Systems will affect resource sharing in the MINITEX region in what way? This is an unknown. Will they just link with existing automated interlibrary loan systems because they can? Or, will they bring their own ‘ILL systems” with them that we’ll have to figure out how to link with our other existing services? There are more questions than answers here. I know Koha was developing an ILL module but I haven’t seen what it is.

All of the above will require some additional policies and procedures and guidelines and best practices to be developed by the library community in the MINITEX region. A major question will be with libraries already feeling the impact of increased interlibrary loan, will they want to make it even easier for their end users to search and initiate requests with additional groups of libraries?

In thinking through the above, and leaving the Minnesota state budget situation out of the equation for the moment, I believe we would have a good argument for requesting legislative funding to take the MN academic and state government libraries to the next level of resource sharing by introducing the important tools that are now being made available. However, these new tools are expensive. If we want to make them available statewide among academic and state government libraries, then the MN Office of Higher Education and the legislative higher education committees would be the pathway.

How would the public libraries and school libraries fit into this model? Do they need these type of tools? What other tools would they need that we could fold into a funding package?