

NICE Team Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 | 9:00 am - 11:00 am

ATTENDEES: Tammie Blomberg (Rib Lake), Sue Heskin (Superior), Alexander Johnson (MCPL), Jackee Johnson (NWLS), Sara Kelmann (Eagle River), Molly Lank-Jones (Hayward), Rachel Metzler (WVLS), Peggy O'Connell (Minocqua), Gina Rae (NWLS), Katelyn Sabelko (MCPL), Teresa Schmidt (Mercer), Kelly Wiisanen (Superior), Katie Zimmermann (WVLS)

ABSENT: Laurie Ollhoff (Merrill)

PROJECT MANAGERS: Melody Clark (WiLS) Melissa McLimans (WiLS)

Meeting started at: 9:00 am

Meeting Agenda

1. Holds Fulfillment Workgroup Update

Project managers shared that the Holds Fulfillment Workgroup met on April 15th. After their first meeting, several recommendations were drafted from the conversation, and the group reviewed those possible recommendations. They discussed whether to employ priority of local holds for all (the current NWLS holds processing way) or to utilize a high-demand collection that fulfills local holds only that reverts to a browsing collection for a set period of time and then fulfilling holds in the order they were placed (the current WVLS holds processing way), or a third option of a combination of those two where the ILS would employ priority on local holds and high-demand collections would be allowed.

After that meeting, the group is leaning towards the shared model. In addition, the group agreed to recommend that paging priorities be maintained within each consortium's delivery area with an additional layer for cross-system, and agreed that a system identifier for NWLS and WVLS be added to any printed transit slip so it is easier for delivery sorters. Finally, an evaluation is recommended after one year. That evaluation will include several factors.

The project managers are drafting the recommendation options for the group to review. They will meet again on April 30th to finalize the recommendation and run it through the NICE decision-making principles rubric. Workgroup members were invited to share their perspectives. Members felt the summary covered all the information.

2. Records Standards Workgroup Update

Project managers shared that the Records Standards Workgroup met on April 2nd. The group reviewed a comparison of both patron and item fields. The group focused on

discrepancies between the two systems and what is needed by both systems for their patron card applications and statistical and reporting purposes. The group identified fields for both patron and item records that will be needed in a shared ILS. The group will meet again on April 22nd to review the compiled list, ensure there is no information missing, and finalize their recommendation.

Workgroup members were invited to share their perspectives. There were no comments noted.

3. Cataloging Workgroup Update

The workgroup is set to meet on May 9th. The group will be tackling issues around bib records.

Project managers noted that with so many workgroup meetings coming up, the NICE team may need an additional NICE team meeting in May or June.

4. Overarching NICE Team Recommendations

Project managers shared that in a recent NICE Leadership team meeting, the concept of overarching recommendations emerged. The workgroups are working on precise recommendations focusing on specific shared ILS features or needs, from delivery recommendations to decision-making. The NICE team was asked if there were any recommendations that the NICE team as a whole might want to consider or have as part of the final recommendation report. These overarching recommendations would span across all recommendations.

Project managers shared examples, pulled from the leadership team meeting and project feedback that included:

- A recommendation that all of the workgroup recommendations be assessed at the end of the first year.
- The new shared ILS be supported by a shared organizational culture, which would be grown through the development an ILS strategic plan, foundational elements such as a mission and vision, and possibly values.
- A recommendation that at least one in-person meeting of library directors or ILS folks occur per year or that there are other mechanisms to help library staff from both consortia get to know each other better.

The team was asked if this was useful and, if so, what recommendations they might suggest. Most of this discussion focused on larger process concerns rather than overarching recommendations. However, it was suggested in the meeting that the Town Hall Model of information sharing was appreciated and could be recommended as an effective method of communication going forward.

Several members of the team discussed concerns about the current timeline and the idea that may be necessary to extend the process timeline overall. The current rough timeline is the recommendation report is completed in June of 2024, consortia and board votes occur in Fall of 2024 and implementation would take place in early Fall of 2025. A. Johnson indicated that he felt it might be necessary to hold off on a vote and implementation for another year. He confirmed that he would like to see pushing the decision-making to 2025 and migration happening in 2026.

Other timeline considerations include LSTA funding, as DPI is setting aside money for implementation in the next fiscal year. Also, NWLS may need to move on to a new contract with Sierra for significant cost savings if the process is delayed, putting them in another contract cycle.

Members of the team shared that there are concerns about current WALTCO Delivery service delays and declines in WVLS and worries that a merger would put more stress on the delivery system. K. Zimmerman noted that WVLS is exploring the ability to sort in-house to remove any current delays. It was noted that these delays are not permanent.

S. Klemann noted that, based on the questions, she is not feeling confident about the merge after the town hall. T. Blomberg shared that she met with the other county directors last week, and it helped them to assure them that this has been in discussion for a long time and is not a rushed process. She also noted that the WALTCO issues must be addressed regardless of the merger and should not necessarily stall any merger.

S. Heskin noted that it would be great to stay on the timeline and that adding more time might not be beneficial. She noted that this process has been going on for a long time.

T. Schmidt agreed that there has been a lot of discussion, and there is no migration, even within a system, that isn't overwhelming. Adding more time will likely not make people feel more confident.

It was asked if the concerns that folks are hearing are about the overall migration or in the ILS. A. Johnson noted both.

S. Klemann thinks there is a general feeling of not wanting to change.

It was asked if the recommendation from Holds Fulfillment would be helpful. T. Blomberg noted that, yes, she thinks it will be helpful, as the recommendation does focus on the patron experience and its benefits.

It was asked if there were suggestions for recommendations for change management. P. O'Connell suggested that sending out a review/overview for Koha or a town hall meeting on Koha would be helpful for members.

G. Rae noted that an issue with change is that we need to stop making the new thing like how the old thing is. Wants to be able to share her enthusiasm for change and future potential.

S. Heskin asked if other systems that have recently merged changed how they managed holds and delivery after one year. It was shared that G. Rae has been a part of merger/ILS changes and noted that the processes were always a little difficult but overall successful.

M. Lank-Jones asked if there was a possibility to have a few in-person informal town halls for folks to attend. A. Johnson noted that WAPL may be a good venue for that.

K. Sabelko noted that she has had staff ask for another town hall and share that their staff is super engaged, curious, and concerned—which she thinks is a really good thing. They care so much and felt honored that we heard them out at all levels—not just the big picture. Honoring the reality of what they are worried about helps bolster their confidence in leadership.

5. Standing Item: Communication

April 9th Town Hall meeting debrief

The group discussed feedback in part in the previous agenda item. The notes from the Town Hall meeting were shared with the agenda. The group was asked their thoughts from the meeting and/or notes.

In addition to the questions that came from the town hall meeting, ILS staff at WVLS have connected with all of the directors in V-Cat. A summary of their feedback was provided, along with responses received so far from the NICE Recommendations via the website form. Workgroup members took time to review.

It was noted that feedback showed overwhelming support from V-Cat and would be interested in a poll of NWLN directors. One team member wondered if the staff are being left behind in communications while directors seem to have a fuller understanding of the process and outcomes.

Based on the town hall meeting discussion and the feedback from the V-Cat directors, the group discussed whether they wanted to revisit the ILS recommendation, especially in light of the fact that enough V-Cat directors indicated enough hesitancy that a recommendation might not pass. This conversation discussed two main approaches: re-activating the ILS workgroup based on the feedback and relying on better

communications, such as a clearer recommendation one-pager and a second town hall. A third option was proposed to do a combination of both.

The benefits of reactivating the ILS workgroup were seen as honoring and recognizing the concerns and questions of the member libraries, especially related to the selection of the ILS vendor. It was seen as a concrete way of shoring up support for the project.

However, there was concern that no new data had been collected that would (or should) impact the workgroup's decision, and by reactivating the workgroup, the project's principles and design could be undermined.

After discussion, most team members agreed that the feedback and concerns related to the ILS recommendation were important enough to reactivate the ILS workgroup. The workgroup will be asked to review the information (feedback gathered) and discuss whether it changes their decision. The workgroup will not be starting from scratch, nor will they meet multiple times. They will be using the existing structures (i.e., the process principles and rubric) to determine if the new information changes their recommendation or not.

The group asked if it would be possible to obtain NWLN feedback on the ILS and to have a full picture of the workgroup. J. Johnson will consider and discuss this with the leadership team.

There was some discussion around the idea that switching to Koha and merging is too much change, too fast, and that's what is causing the hesitancy. Members noted that it might be less a fear of change and more a consideration of staff capacity.

The group also agreed to schedule a second virtual town hall in early June to discuss the workgroup recommendations, especially the holds fulfillment recommendation and ILS recommendation, in more detail.

The team also discussed an in-person meet-up around WAPL. It sounded as though a Friday lunch might work, but team members were encouraged to use the team email to work out details.

6. Recap of Important Decisions or Discussions

The ILS workgroup will be reactivated and provided with new information from feedback. If possible, feedback from NWLN directors will also be obtained and shared.

Project managers will develop overarching recommendations for the next meeting; NICE team members will share feedback with project managers/leadership team by 4/30 via email.

The leadership team will discuss a second town hall in early June

The team will try to meet up at WAPL, if attending.

Meeting ended at 11:03