

NICE Team Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 | 9:00 am - 11:00 am

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

ABSENT: Tammie Blomberg (Rib Lake), Katelyn Sabelko (MCPL)

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

Meeting started at: 9:03 am

Meeting Agenda

1. LSTA Update

NICE Team leadership shared that the group was granted a non-competitive LSTA grant of \$75,000, but it is conditional on a merger agreement and is to support implementation costs. There is a good possibility that a second grant of \$75,000 will be awarded in the following fiscal year. The group has applied in anticipation.

2. Holds Fulfillment Workgroup Recommendation

The Team reviewed the workgroup recommendation. The Holds Fulfillment Workgroup met three times and recommends that the shared ILS employ priority on local holds and that high-demand collections be allowed. Holds will be filled utilizing priority of local holds for all items not set to high demand. The Decision Highlights section was reviewed, as it notes that the group worked hard to reach a satisfactory compromise for this recommendation. There are several recommendations related to data collection, assessment, and refinement in the future. There were no questions.

3. Records Standards Workgroup Recommendation

The Team reviewed the workgroup recommendation. The Records Standards Workgroup met twice and quickly agreed upon standards for patron and item records for a future ILS. The group tried to avoid ILS-specific language and noted that, in some cases, fields will need to be combined. There were no questions.

4. Cataloging Workgroup Update

Project managers shared that the Cataloging workgroup has met and devised a set of recommendations. The group is reviewing the final draft and will submit it to the NICE team for their next meeting.

5. ILS Workgroup Update

The ILS workgroup met with the charge from this body to revisit the ILS recommendation in light of the feedback received from the membership. The group unanimously agreed to modify the recommendation from Koha to Sierra. Sierra has two options: NWLS to migrate into the current WVLS platform or both to migrate to a new instance. Most of the group felt the second option was the most equitable, though there were some concerns about data migration. The group is reviewing the draft and will submit it to the NICE team for their next meeting.

Leadership had some data updates to share. They met with folks at Innovative to ask some of the workgroup questions, especially what data will look different or be accessed differently. Historical data and circulation information were a key focus. Sierra circ trans files can't be migrated, but historical files are already limited. The reports could be pulled and archived for future access. Anything that is a system generated count field in patron and item records can be migrated. Patron history will be accessible in the discovery layers.

There is a test migration as part of an implementation process. The systems can work with a data analyst to determine what reports will need to be archived.

Innovative and others have indicated that there is always a lot of worry, but these worries often don't manifest in the actual implementation.

A. Johnson felt it would be helpful to share with the rest of the workgroup. It was clarified that patron reading history would not be directly transferred, however, If a patron has turned on reading history in Aspen, it is saved within Aspen. If a patron has never turned on reading history, there is nothing to migrate. Project managers will share the notes with the workgroup.

6. Overarching NICE Team Recommendations

Project managers shared that they have begun writing the final report for this phase of work. As part of this drafting, several overarching themes have been identified. The team was given a few minutes to read over the document and were asked:

- Overall thoughts? Does this document capture some themes that both reflect the process and offer some guidance for the future? Is there a theme, especially those that are future-facing or could offer guidance, that you think might be helpful to include? Is there anything in this document that should be removed that is not helpful?

- M. Lank-Jones thinks the document reflects her philosophy of any group working together. It is important to mention that there are things that everyone may not agree upon, but there are ways to work through that.
- P. O’Connell noted that building on the shared culture is important, and prioritizing flexibility is essential. We should build on that shared culture.
- S. Heskin agreed that this is necessary to include. Developing mission, vision, and value statements should include a common definition of good patron service, which would be helpful in moving the project forward.
- L. Ollhoff really likes the recommendation to find opportunities for library staff to meet and get to know each other. With the distance, they will need to be intentional about that and should have plans in advance to better accommodate schedules. This will allow the systems to build that shared culture, and people work better together when they know who they are working with.
- T. Schmidt thinks the assessment portion is essential and noted that there needs to be some thought put into what data should be collected at the beginning of this process. It was noted that information on benchmarking should be added to the recommendations.

7. ILS Merger Key Considerations

The team reviewed and discussed whether the draft key considerations document would be useful as part of the final recommendation report or as a separate communication tool. Project managers again noted that this idea came up as the report was being drafted, but it also stems from some of the feedback received in the town hall, the website form, and even in NICE Team meetings. The Key Considerations are just that--key considerations that stakeholders should be aware of and take into consideration as they weigh the decision to support a merger or not.

The first section is focused on the findings of the feasibility study, findings that have not changed in this phase of work. Costs and lack of sustainability are still concerns should the merger not occur. Increased patron satisfaction, increased collaboration, and the possibility of saving money are still potential benefits. This section is, in some ways, a reminder of why people were supportive of an ILS merger. The second section answers the question of why a decision needs to be made now and what might be at stake should a delay occur. It was pointed out that this doesn’t mean a merger has to happen, simply that these are the known conditions. The final section is other thoughts that might impact how folks are thinking about the merger.

With this in mind, the NICE Team was asked:

- Initial thoughts or reactions. Is this helpful in distilling some of the main points? Is there anything that should be added as a key consideration? How should this document be used, if at all?
 - A. Johnson noted that it would be useful to add some elements of the concerns and feedback that has been received. K. Zimmermann asked where this should be noted and it was determined that under the Final Thoughts section would be beneficial. Some concerns to highlight or note would be the holds fulfillment and delivery. It may be good to note how these issues have been addressed as well.
 - J. Jackee disagreed with adding concerns unless they can be really big and broad themes. She is concerned that it would be divisive.
 - S. Heskin thinks this document is helpful and an at-a-glance document is something that was missing with the Project WIN but does have concerns about focusing on the concerns and would not want to see this as a pros and cons document.
 - It was asked if it would be good to include very high-level concerns. There was some agreement on this.
 - R. Metzler suggested that deciding where/when this document will be used and then understanding how to address any concerns may be easier.
 - It would be helpful to turn this into an at-a-glance document and include it or elements of it at the beginning of the report.
 - This could be a standalone document that could also be distributed in advance of or with the final report. In addition, it could be shared during or as a part of the town hall meeting.
 - K. Zimmermann asked if there should be a few more details in some areas as they are getting feedback requesting more details, specifically about patron experience, budget concerns, and the team of ILS experts that would be supporting the project.
 - M. Lank-Jones noted that, overall, this is a great piece to present to staff and library boards. She senses that the lack of immediacy has allowed folks to put any concerns on the back burner. This will bring it to the forefront.
 - S. Klemann noted that it covers key information to present to folks who have not been directly involved with the workgroups and decision-making. She noted she keeps hearing that this is happening in the short term; in reality, it has been a long process. A timeline of the process and progress of the project would be helpful. It was agreed this would be good to include as a slide for the town hall and in the final report.

8. Standing Item: Communication

June Town Hall meeting update

- The meeting has been scheduled for June 11th at 10:30 a.m. It will be recorded and shared with the membership. It would be helpful to have NICE Team members host again, at least one from each system.
- S. Klemann noted being a host for the last town hall was easy.
- NICE Team members were asked to let leadership know if they can help.

Any communication needs or questions that have come up, and what is the status of the replies?

- The leadership team has been working hard to address all feedback. This has been hard to keep up with. They are currently reviewing all of the feedback, refining and removing duplicates, and are trying to add items to the FAQs on the website. It was noted that the leadership team wants to know about concerns that members have and being able to address these issues is critical for this process. It is important to note that the system staff has received this feedback, and it has changed and formed how the group works and communicates. They are taking this feedback very seriously.
 - It may be important to note how feedback has been provided and addressed in the final report.

9. Recap of Important Decisions or Discussions

- The Cataloging Workgroup and the updated ILS Workgroup recommendation will be sent to the NICE Team for asynchronous review by June 4th.
- The ILS migration meeting notes shared at today's meeting will also be shared with the ILS workgroup for their review.
- Project managers and the leadership team will work to update the Overarching Recommendations document and Key ILS merger document with the comments shared today.
- It may be important to note how feedback has been provided and addressed in the final report.

Meeting ended at 10:21 am