

Executive Director's Report

The past month has been extremely busy for everyone in the SAILS office. Following a 3-day training session for the Systems Department, Steve and Todd began rolling out the Envisionware software. This has required that both of them spend several days at each library prepping the public computers and training staff. We have begun with 8 libraries using this software for PC reservations and print management. An opportunity for additional libraries to add this product will be made available later this year.

Telecommunications was a very hot topic within the office this month. Representatives from Verizon spent an entire day meeting with Steve and touring several libraries to get background data so they can submit a proposal to us for a network upgrade to begin next fiscal year. I have spent some time talking to our sales representative at Atrion collecting similar data. As we will be applying both for Erate funds and LSTA funds within the 3 months to provide funding for this upgrade to our infrastructure we have to begin data gathering now. We are resuming a plan we had begun in 2002 to provide high speed lines to all members. That plan was delayed because of the funding reductions we suffered.

Laurie set up an internal database accessible through the Web for Todd to use when he is providing on-site PC Support services to libraries. With this new database we will be able to track more easily how many times each library is visited and what pc's have been serviced with each visit. This will allow us to report back to you on the benefit of the service and enable us to easily see the service history on a specific pc. In order to roll this new database out, Todd has had to visit each library and gather more specific PC information for entry into the database. At the same time we are updating our PC Anywhere database so everyone at SAILS can more easily provide libraries using this software with remote assistance.

The Cataloging Services Department has been equally busy both with normal operations and special projects. Over the past 4 weeks roughly 30 percent of Kristin's time has been spent working on Acquisitions, 15 percent of Jennifer's time has been devoted to original cataloging, and 20 percent of both Claudette's and Jennifer's time has been spent editing cataloging records because of incorrectly submitted cataloging requests, error reports, duplicate title reports, or insufficient information in the OCLC record. At the same time Kristin has been responsible for converting the collections at the two temporary Norfolk sites back to Norfolk Public Library as well as working with Follett to output a file of the Taunton High School Library collection as part of a district wide collection assessment project.

In addition to designing the PC Support Database, Laurie has been working with Norfolk to convert

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Executive Director's Report

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patron and hold data, updating patron information for Middleboro and Somerset to enable them to use Envisionware to limit certain Juvenile card holds from Internet access, and has visited several libraries to do on-site training. She has been working to develop a new workshop on using iBistro and has reinstated regular Virtual Catalog workshops. She has been working intensively with Sirsi to make some internal changes to the system in order to avoid the types of problems we experienced this spring and summer during our software/hardware conversions. She was also responsible for working with Sirsi to remove Aboro-South and Fallriv-d accounts from the system.

I have spent a lot of time finalizing the FY07 budget, the Technology Plan, and new Strategic Plan. I attended a 2 day meeting of the Consortium Special Interest Group of the Sirsi Users Group and conducted several focus groups. The end result was a list of outstanding issues we have regarding their support of Consortial sites. We held our first Circulation Roundtable at the Attleboro Public Library on September 25 and despite the bad weather the meeting was well attended and discussion lively. I'm looking forward to our next gathering at the Lakeville Public Library on November 3.

As you can see the entire staff has been, as always, extremely busy. What has been unusual has been the amount of time most of us have had to spend out of the office. This may have caused some frustration for people trying to contact us. We are going to be establishing some clearly defined priority levels for service requests and set expected response times for each type of request. Once we have worked these out we will communicate those to everyone. We hope this may lower the stress level a little if everyone knows what to expect from us.

In November Steve is going to be attending 2 separate one week training sessions at Sun on administering our new server. I am going to be attending the annual Customers of Dynix conference in Minneapolis as incoming president of the Sirsi Users Group. Kristin will be working with Sirsi to finally complete our long delayed authority project which will take place on November 11. Sirsi should be transferring our data to a server hosted by them so we can begin Beta testing Release GL 3.1 and we are going to begin the initial steps to load GL 3.0 on our test server so we can begin testing the new staff client. In the upcoming months we will be sending out requests for volunteers to help us test the new software and new training materials we will be developing to assist people in becoming comfortable with the new look and feel of Workflows.

SAILS Offices—Upcoming Events

SAILS will be rebuilding the authority database beginning Veterans' Day.. Cataloging services will be turned off from then until Monday, November 14. SAILS offices are closed November 11th for Veterans' Day. We'll also be closing at noon on the 23rd and all day November 24th for Thanksgiving.

Who's Live—OverDrive

OCNL is now lending items to patrons of OCLN libraries. They're just in the "soft" phase of their roll-out, but will be advertising the service in the future. They currently using the same circulation rules as SAILS, knowing it's a good place to start and if they need to change they may do so. Their collection ranges from bestsellers to foreign language study and they've also purchased a set of 50 always available audio titles.

Congratulations!

SAILS wishes to congratulate the following libraries for their hard work and good fortune (mostly hard work!).

- **Greene Elementary School, Fall River**—Began circulating to students last month.
- **Mattapoisett**—“Cheers erupted in the Old Hammondtown School lobby last night when the town clerk announced that voters overwhelmingly approved construction of a new library. Library supporters hugged one another; tears welled up in one woman's eyes... [The] vote appropriated about \$1.4 million toward the library project. The rest of the funding for the \$5 million project will come from a \$1.5 million state grant, \$1.6 million in private donations and \$500,000 from a 2002 Town Meeting vote.”
- **Norfolk**—After a year of construction which more than tripled the original library, the renovated library will open this month to the public! They are also the first library in SAILS to use RFID technology for self-checkout.
- **Normandin Middle School, New Bedford**—Began circulating to students last month.

21st Century Literacies

“21st Century Literacies” is the first collaboration of its kind, bringing together the interests and cooperation of the Massachusetts Library Association, the New England Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries, and the Massachusetts Center for the Book. The conference is divided into two themes revolving around the literacies of today and of the future, with the first day centering on literacy and readers’ advisory programs, and the second day focusing on technology issues. These programs point out the many overlapping is-



Thinking Inside the Box
©Jeri Riggs 2001
55 x 55 inches
On exhibit at the New England
Quilt Museum, Lowell

sues we are facing in our library profession, and the importance of reaching across associations to partner with a diverse network of colleagues. We are also pleased to host this conference in the multicultural city of Lowell, offering us an exciting backdrop of culture, history, and learning.—Michael Colford, Gianna Gifford, & Nanci Milone Hill, Conference Co-Chairs

For [full details and online registration](#), visit the Massachusetts Library Association web site.

Early registration rates end Friday, November 4th, so make your plans today.

Network Suggestions & Comments

Suggestion: Is it possible for SAILS to send system emails to patrons with overdue items, rather than for libraries to do mailings? Seems like that would be a good idea, especially with a potential increase in postage.

Answer: The option to email overdue notices has been available for several years but the request to do so must come from the library director. We have several libraries that do this. The greatest difficulty is that patrons often change email addresses and up the settings of their spam blockers and the notices don't go through.



We do email reminder notices to all patrons with an email address 3 days before items fall due.

Suggestion: Could patrons be notified before their cards expire?

Sometimes holds won't take because the card had expired between the initial hold and the receipt of book at the library.

Answer: It would be possible for us to email notification to patrons before their cards expire. Everyone would need to agree how far in advance we would notify them (30 days?) but this would be very easy to implement it. I'll add this to the agenda for the October 19th Directors' Meeting
- great idea!

(Follow-up—SAILS began mailing these notices after the approval of the directors at the October meeting.)

Suggestion: Would it be possible for a future enhancement allowing individual libraries to run and print Holds Alert reports on demand and as often as they chose?

Answer: I know there are some major changes coming for this report in GL 3.1 scheduled for late spring 2006. We are supposed to be beta testing that release later this fall. It is now possible for you to run this on demand but you would see the results for the other libraries. If you are interested in us setting up the report template and are willing to scroll through the results to get to your library's we would be happy to do that right now. We would probably have to test this for a few weeks to make sure it wasn't affecting anything else.

Suggestion: We've noticed that some patrons have 2 accounts, but one of them is set as LOSTCARD. What is this profile for?

Answer: There are 2 ways to indicate that a patron has lost a card.

1. You can replace the barcode in the patron record.
2. You can use the Lost Card wizard which changes the profile for the lost barcode to LOSTCARD and creates a new record with the new barcode.

We do not have a network policy requiring which procedure is used.

Suggestion: I'm new. Do you have any workshops dealing with how circulation functions.

Answer: At the present time we do not offer circulation training. In the past these workshops were not well attended and many of the questions related to local policy rather than using the system. However, we do offer on-site visits if that would be helpful. Please ask your supervisor or director to request this.

Suggestion: Would it be possible in a future release or update to allow patrons to suspend their own holds from home? Or an option to do ALL holds rather than do each individual hold?

Answer: We're happy to say that in the next version of iBistro, patrons will be allowed to suspend their holds as well as modify their pickup locations.

Network Suggestions & Comments Continued...

Suggestion: Is there anything you can do if you have a patron who goes to different branches of the same library system and takes out just new books. Usually all the best sellers. Is there a way that the patron can be stopped from doing this?

Answer: It is possible to set a limit on the number of items a patron can have by item type and I don't think this would solve that problem. There really isn't any way the software can prevent this.

Suggestion: Is it possible for senior citizens to have a longer loan period for books like teachers do? After all they count too.

Answer: The network does not set policies for loan periods. This is a local decision.

Contacting SAILS Staff – How to Get a Fast Response

One of the main goals the SAILS staff established for this year was to improve customer service to our members by providing multiple avenues for our users to contact us. We have made several of changes this fall to improve the way you can get assistance or information when you need it:

- A new 800 number – many respondents to the staff survey we conducted last spring indicated that it was impossible for them to call our office because it was a long distance call from their community. In September we reestablished our incoming 800 service. If you need our help, just call **800-331-3764**. Put it on speed dial! This connects you to the regular SAILS voice mail system.
- Instant messenger – If you use an Instant Messenger at the library, you can contact the SAILS staff using IM instead of using email or voice mail. A list of staff with contact information is listed on the SAILS website <http://sailsinc.org/network/staff.asp>
- Informal information roundtables – we have received several suggestions that we hold regional, informal meetings to discuss cataloging and circulation. We have held one cataloging and one circulation meeting and plan several more for this year. This gives us an opportunity to visit more libraries and may allow people to attend who wouldn't normally be able to travel to a meeting at our office.
- Mobil training lab – if your library has a wireless connection to the Internet and a meeting room for up to 6 people SAILS can conduct on-site training in specific areas – Using Workflows, General Circulation, Searching. We have 6 laptop computers now available to take on site for customized training. Directors may request this by complete a Consultation Request on our website http://sailsinc.org/directors/CE_ConsultationRequest.asp

We are also maintaining our standard methods to contact us:

- Email – If you have a general question that could be answered by anyone on staff you can email support@sailsinc.org. If your library subscribes to PC Support, you can send email to pcsupport@sailsinc.org. If you have a cataloging question, contact catsupport@sailsinc.org.
- Off-hours support – You can email a short (very short) email to oncall@sailsinc.org if you are experiencing a problem that is preventing you from using Workflows. You can also call (508) 958-2207
- Suggestion Box – If you want to submit an anonymous suggestion about how the software could be improved or network policies/procedures enhanced you can click on the suggestion box on the SAILS staff website or go directly to <http://sailsinc.org/forms/suggestion.asp>. If you have a question specific to a problem you are encountering, please email us directly.

