SAILS Network News

Library Network

Find Out More About SAILS

You may work at a library that is a member of the SAILS Network, but do you often wonder what it is SAILS does? Get some general information about us and what we did over the past fiscal year by looking at our annual report. This years' report is available on a new page off the SAILS public website called "About Us". Along with information about the SAILS staff, there is a map of the member libraries, what the network has accomplished over the year, and statistics for everything from help desk calls to circulation.

Although the report is available online, each library will receive two copies of the report and may request more for your trustees. The reason for the change to the online version is to save money on printing costs as well as present a visually interesting report which can be access from anywhere with an Internet connection.

If you haven't already requested extra copies for your library, directors may email support@sailsinc.org to do so. So keep your eye out for the report to be delivered sometime after Labor Day.

A New Digital Divide

On August 3rd, the post below was made on the Shifted Librarian blog. This is a great resource created and maintained by Jenny Levine, the Internet Development Specialist/Strategy Guide for the Metropolitan Library System in Illinois. Since then, there have been many interesting comments relating to the post and we encourage you to read more about this issue. View all the comments by reading the article online and clicking on the comments link at the bottom.

"Recently, I've had a few folks ask why libraries than join the new ListenIllinois contract for audio ebooks from Audible, OverDrive, and Recorded Books need to purchase their own MP3 player to circulate to patrons when patrons could just download OD and RB titles at home. Since my answer is the standard recommendation I make for any library circulating any digital audiobooks, I'm posting it here.

Back in 2001, I told folks that libraries would only be in the hardware business for ebooks and audio ebooks for about five years. For the most part, the increase in user adoption of devices that read ebooks (laptops, PDAs, cell phones) and MP3 players for audio ebooks have been pretty much on target for where I thought they would be. However, I also thought that by now, the vendors would have seen the wisdom in settling on one DRM scheme that worked cross-platform. That side of the equation has been an utter and total failure and as a result, publishers and middlemen are losing millions of dollars a year (at best). Think how much more revenue Apple, Overdrive, Recorded Books, Audible, Microsoft, and others could be reaping if all of the ebook vendors could make their products available on every operating system. Yet there is no movement to rectify the situation and the market grows even more splintered.
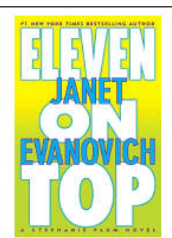
Readers Advisory—Integrated with iBistro

Have you been looking for a great source for readers' advisory to give to your patrons? SEMLS is still offering a 15% discount for a Novelist subscription. Mansfield and the Fiske Library in Wrentham have taken advantage of the deal and Norton's subscription begins this month.

As an added benefit to a subscription to Novelist is its integration into the iBistro catalog. Within minutes, SAILS can set up your library's account information into your iBistro profile and the next time you log into iBistro at your library, you'll see this icon for all records which have corresponding Novelist data; and there are tons! over 125,000 titles. Janet Campbell gave this good summary in her September newsletter, "NoveList is a fiction database that provides subject heading access, reviews, annotations, and much more for over 125,000 fiction titles. It also includes other content of interest to fiction readers, such as Author Read-alikes, What We're Reading, Book Discussion Guides, Book Talks, and Annotated Book Lists."

The question we always get at SAILS is if people will have access to Novelist within iBistro from home. The answer is no because patrons accessing from home log in with their barcode and PIN. Patrons are registered with profiles which are shared by all the libraries in SAILS. These profiles relate to an iBistro environment with specific session settings. In the environment is where your account information for the subscription goes.

Below is a screen shot from the Mansfield catalog for the title, "Eleven on Top" by Janet Evanovich. When you hover over the icon with your mouse, the phrase "NoveList Reader's Advisory" displays. It's difficult to find a fiction title without an entry in Novelist.
Please contact Laurie if you have any questions.

The Definitive Guide to Using a Scroll Wheel Mouse with Workflows

Do you use the scroll wheel on your mouse when surfing the Web or reading a Word document? If so, you may miss this functionality in Workflows. The nice people at the Suburban Library Cooperative in Michigan created instructions specifically for using a product called Flywheel, and are available at: http://www.libcoop.net/wheelxp2.htm.

This procedure should work with any wheel mouse on computers running Windows 98 or XP for Workflows and any other program that did not previously support a scroll wheel mouse. It says it is not for Windows 2000 but it is working on Kristin Slater's computer without a problem.

Please note, this isn't necessarily supported by SAILS so if you have PC Support, you may wish to confirm installation with Steve or Todd.

A New Digital Divide

(Continued from page 1)
I'm not going to get into another debate about whose fault it is, but for us, the most unfortunate side effect is that libraries are caught in the middle. So you have situations like what happened to the Fairfax County Public Libraries in Virginia earlier this year. In case you didn't see it make the rounds of the blogosphere, the Libraries began circulating Recorded Books/netLibrary audio ebooks, which are not compatible with iPods, Macs, or Linux machines. Is this the Libraries' fault? No, it's not. Is there a single service out there that offers current, popular bestsellers that they could circulate to iPods, Macs, or Linux machines? No, there isn't. Is that the Libraries' fault? No, it isn't. So the Libraries got stuck with a product that works for a high percentage of users, but certainly not all of them. Hal Cauthen was upset about this, so he asked Phil Shapiro to compose a song about the problem and put it on the web. Phil was particularly outraged because he had helped set up a low cost Linux computer lab for tenants in affordable housing units in Fairfax County. Is he right to be upset? Certainly. Is he wrong to blame the Libraries? Yes. I'm sure the Libraries would love to circulate titles to Linux machines and to iPods as well, but Phil doesn't need them to get public domain texts, and there just isn't anything else out there that fills the current, bestseller void for libraries. So what would Hal and Phil have them do? Not serve the other half of the patron base that can use these audio ebooks? As Greg Schwartz noted in one of his podcasts, should they then get rid of large-print books, CDs, Braille books, etc. because they serve only one segment of the population? Of course not.

Unfortunately, Phil doesn't really propose a resolution to the problem, probably because he's just as caught in the middle of all of this as libraries are, and he's just as powerless, even though he is an active supporter of the Digital Divide Network. I sympathize with him (after all, I can't circulate these titles to my Archos player, either), but it's not like the Library ignored a valid option that would have given him access to the titles. Or did they?
Well, unfortunately, I think they did, and that's why I'm posting this. If you are an OverDrive or Recorded Books subscriber, then you need to understand that you are not providing access to those titles to a segment of your population, even though it's not your fault. Here's how Phil puts it at the end of his essay:"The train has left the station on building a more participatory and inclusive world. Would you care to be a passenger on this train?"

It's a valid point. So what could the Fairfax County Libraries have done to help this situation? Like ListenIllinois, they can try to put pressure on the vendors, but we just don't have that much clout. More immediately, though, they could circulate their own players in order to provide access to these titles to everyone. Not just those iPod users or the affordable housing tenants or even seniors, but everyone. It's a proven fact that libraries help bridge the digital divide, and now we need to step up and help bridge what is a growing digital audiobook divide. It's simply unethical to say you're not going to circulate players because it would be too much of a hassle for your staff. This is the future format of audiobooks, and we need to make them available to everyone, especially because there are some titles that are available exclusively in this format. There are so many reasons to circulate your own players right now that it's almost a crime not to. If you look at it from a PR standpoint, do you really want to be the one standing up in front of the microphone explaining why you couldn't spend $70 on one measly player for those patrons that don't have one of their own?

So that's why ListenIllinois requires participants to purchase at least one MP3 player, and that's why you should circulate players, too. Is it ideal? No. Is it as convenient as letting these folks download titles at home? No. Would it cause long waits (and maybe force you to buy more players because it's a popular service)? Yes. But it's access nonetheless and as the community and literacy center that you are, it's the right thing to do. If you circulate audio ebooks, you have to circulate players, too. It's that simple. ~ Jenny Levine (The Shifted Librarian)

SAILS Responds

This month there were a lot of comments and suggestions from library staff. Here they are with the answers from SAILS.

Suggestion: I would like Workflows to block renewals on Virtual Catalog items. I would also like to see a renewal block on ILL items that are fast added when the home location of ILL is used.

Response: There are several ways a VirtCat item may be renewed.

A staff person used the override to allow the renewal. This is easy to do if you are renewing all items on a patron record. If a VirtCat item was automatically created by the system.

- It will be blocked from renewals.
- It will not be blocked from holds, since a hold is placed for the patron so they receive a notice.
- It is shadowed.

Sometimes a VirtCat item is mistakenly created as a fast add without the proper item type and location. This may result in the item not being blocked. VC items should have the item type of VirtCat and the location of HOLDS.

For an ILL fast add (incoming ILL items) to be properly cataloged, it should have the item type of ILL and the location of ILL. The item type of ILL is non-renewable.

Item types control what is renewable and non-renewable.

Suggestion: If the code for Easton-Br was changed to Easton-WH it would be easier to remember that it should say whistlestop!

Response: We are unable to change any of the codes in the system as they attached to the item database. We are limited to 10 characters per agency code and at the time we set up the naming convention (late 1999) delivery abbreviations were not such a great concern. We have contacted Sirsi to see if we could have custom programming to display the full library name when scanning an item in discharge or trap holds but the software can not support this. The codes we have are what we have to live with.

Suggestion: It would be helpful if the email notices told people to bring their library cards in order to pick things up. When we call we try to remind them of this routine. Thanks.

Response: SAILS network policy does not specify that libraries require patrons to bring library cards - that requirement is made by each library. As the notice language is generic, we can't include statements particular to one library or group of libraries.

Suggestion: Is there anyway that holds can be adjusted.? Is there any way that someone can renew books more than 2 times? Also can you send out books that are from another library if they have holds.

Response: At the present time the holds queue can not be modified other than to put someone to the top of the list. It does fill local holds first.

The policy regarding the number of renewals was set by the directors of the SAILS libraries. There is an override to allow more than 2 renewals but use of that is dependent about local library policy and should never be done if the item belongs to a library other than your own.

I am not sure what you mean by sending out books from another library if they have holds. If you provide a specific example we'll provide an answer right away.

Suggestion: Is it possible for the system to automatically block a family when one member has lost items? Perhaps by using the group number info?

Response: At the present time this is not possible. Sirsi has stated this will be a functionality in a future release (not to far in the future). How it will be implemented will probably have to go to the Membership for approval because not all members may want to do this.

Suggestion: I want to know why New Bedford patrons can't get books from BCC or MMA.

Response: New Bedford patrons can borrow books from BCC and MMA. Last year more than 800 items were loaned to New Bedford patrons from these libraries, representing 6% of their total ILL transactions.

It has been suggested to me that this comment referred to on-site loans rather than loans through the system. MMA does have restricted physical access to its collection but it does loan materials through SAILS. For every item that MMA borrowed last year it loaned 12. BCC does allow direct loans of its materials at its Fall River Campus. New Bedford residents were the heaviest users of its collection after Fall River residents. BCC does maintain a small library in New Bedford but that collection does not circulate - it is for reference purposes only.

Did U Know?

More than half (54%) of all online teens say they have gone online from a library, up from a little more than a third of teens (36%) who reported utilizing library internet resources in 2000. - July 27, 2005 Pew Internet and American Life Report - Teens and Technology

Teens Build Their Own Web-based Community with My Own Cafe

By Linda Braun, LEO: Librarians and Educators Online

Imagine a Website where teens living in southeastern Massachusetts connect with other teens to find out where to get the best deal on a prom dress, how to find the best summer job, where the best sporting events will be held during the weekend or discover tools to use for finding and using information. My Own Cafe, a new site under development by SEMLS, will not only provide all that but will also give teens the chance to add to the site information they have about what's hot and what's not in southeastern Massachusetts. This project is being funded through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners with funds from LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act), a Federal source of library funding provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

SEMLS didn't decide to build an online community just because it sounded like a good idea. The Region held focus groups with teens and administered an online survey – completed by over 300 area high school students. The information gathered clearly demonstrates that the thing teens in southeastern Massachusetts want the most is an online environment where they can virtually talk with others within the same geographical region. The teens already have access to sites that tell them what's going on in other parts of the world, but what they need is a one-stop shop for local information and news.

SEMLS is going to give it to them. Pixel Bridge, Inc. (PBI), a Web development firm in Boston, is developing the site. PBI analyzed the data collected from teens and came up with a series of recommendations. They, along with SEMLS staff and librarian and teen members of the My Own Cafe Advory Board, are now determining the look, feel and technology that will make the site work. Some of the features that will be included are

- discussion forums
- Reviewing
- news and information on topics of interest to teens
- easy access to the library catalog and databases
- downloadable local music
- information about local activities including sporting events and jobs.

At this time, SEMLS is looking for local bands to submit downloadable music to the site, as well as teen volunteers, either individuals or a group that can work together, to moderate the message boards. Volunteer forms are available on the SEMLS web site at www.semls.org/teenportal.

Once the site is complete, librarians and teens will be trained on how to maintain the site's content. If there are teens in your community who would be interested in helping develop, build and maintain the site, let us know. Send an email to Linda W. Braun, My Own Cafe project consultant, at *lbraun@leonline.com*, and stay tuned for MyOwnCafe updates and news.

G. Chomsky Visits Long Island

Well, G. Chomsky is really getting around this summer. First to Miami, now Fire Island, LI. He had a great time playing in the surf, and as you can see from the photo below, nearly got washed away in an unexpected high tide.

We've heard that he arrived to his next adventure in New Jersey in good shape and high spirits and eagerly awaits a trip into New York City.

New for OverDrive...

We now have excerpts for all the OverDrive eAudio Books! These play right in the Internet Explorer, or open up Windows Media Player It's a great way to get a little preview of the title without going through the checkout process and holding up the title for the next person. SAILS will be working on adding the link to the excerpt into the bib records, so they are available in iBistro. They're currently on the Digital Library site only. Feel free to add one of the excerpts to your web site as a promotional tool. Follow this link to see an example.

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Upcoming Training & Meetings

Upcoming Training

Detailed descriptions and registration information, are available on the SAILS website.

Envisionware Training
09/13/2005 (Full)
9am to 1pm SAILS Meeting Room

WebDewey Training
09/20/2005 (Full)
9:30am to 11:30 SAILS Meeting Room

Beginning Cataloging Training
09/28/2005 (Full)
9am to noon SAILS Meeting Room

Upcoming Meetings & Events

PubPac Committee Meeting
09/7/2005
9:30am SAILS Meeting Room

Board Meeting
09/21/2005
10am SAILS Meeting Room

PC Support Meeting
09/21/2005
11am SAILS Meeting Room

Tech Services Roundtable
09/16/2005
10am Wareham Free Library

SAILS Network Statistics

FY06 Overview	December	November	October	September	August	July
Total Intranetwork Loans						41,289
Total Items Circulated						366,421
VirtCat Items Borrowed						774
VirtCat Items Loaned						286
Cataloging Requests						2,227
MARC Records Added						2,638
Patrons Added						2,977
Holds						29,586
Total MARC						931,459
Total Holdings						3,367,637
Total Patron						522,864
OverDrive Circulation						235

FY06 Overview	June	May	April	March	February	January	Total FY06
Total Intranetwork Loans							41,289
Total Items Circulated							366,421
VirtCat Items Borrowed							774
VirtCat Items Loaned							286
Cataloging Requests							2,227
MARC Records Added							2,638
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