LINK+ Feasibility Study for the Palo Alto City Library

June 28, 2007

LINK+ Investigation Team

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Part I: Overview of LINK+

General Description

LINK+ is a consortium of 47 academic and public libraries, predominately located in California, sharing a centralized server and catalog that contains the bibliographic, item and customer data of each library to facilitate the loaning of their book collections. This centralized server and catalog provides for searching and requesting materials using the proprietary INNREACH software of Innovative Interfaces, Inc. (III). The LINK+ system is managed by III staff at the direction of, and with the financial contributions of, LINK+ members.

LINK+ differs from other solutions that provide loans across library jurisdictions (resource-sharing), like Interlibrary Loan, in that customers place their own requests electronically and the items are delivered via courier service to the customers' local libraries. Another big difference is that there is no charge to the customer. The costs for providing the LINK+ service to customers can not be passed onto those customers, as stated in the LINK+ bylaws.

The biggest advantage to LINK+ is the enormous collection of materials that libraries can borrow at no cost to the customer. The second biggest advantage to LINK+ is the inclusion of the delivery of materials to a customer's home library.

The ILS Issue for Palo Alto City Library (PACL)

Currently, all the libraries participating in LINK+ are running the III software (called Millennium) as their Integrated Library System (ILS). As a non-III library, PACL would need an additional server, called a Direct Consortial Borrowing (DCB) server, which would be located, administered and managed at the City of Palo Alto or at III headquarters in Emeryville, CA.

The SirsiDynix Company developed and maintains the Horizon ILS currently in use at PACL. SirsiDynix recently announced that it will no longer develop the Horizon product. A system migration in the next 2-5 years is therefore assumed for PACL. If PACL decides to purchase the Innovative ILS, many added LINK+ costs could be avoided. If PACL decides to purchase a competitor's ILS, a subsequent LINK+ implementation for that system would be necessary.

Additional libraries are added regularly to the LINK+ membership. University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and Sacramento Public are two III libraries that were recently approved for membership. PACL and Pepperdine University, both non-III libraries, are currently considering applying for membership. As the membership grows, participating libraries will benefit from a larger collection of available items.

Estimated Impact for PACL

Implementation & Timeline

The timeline for implementation, as recommended by III, is 5-6 months from the date of approval by the LINK+ board for inclusion to the membership. A period of 90 days
is needed after this approval for the hardware and software order to be placed, filled, configured, staged, delivered and installed. Horizon libraries in Michigan who joined a state-wide INNREACH program, called MeLCaT (Michigan eLibrary Catalog), needed about one month of writing and refining a load profile and then testing and performing data loading after the hardware and software was installed. Therefore, 1-2 months for data loading is suggested. Staff training and transaction testing would take approximately 1 month.

**Collections**

LINK+ participants offer their book collections for borrowing among members. The LINK+ database lists about 8,000,000 titles, not all of which are books or available. Individual libraries can provide or restrict access to collections based on their own criteria. Some libraries, for example, may choose not to make their new book collections available through LINK+, so that their local users have better browsing collections on the shelves.

Libraries participating in an INNREACH system, whether it is the local LINK+ system or the MeLCaT system, report approximately 1% of their circulation can be attributed to the INNREACH system. Mountain View Library and other INNREACH libraries interviewed report no change to their local collection development policies as a result of joining the system. Members have reported that their purchasing patterns and budgets for collections do not change as a result of membership.

PACL endeavors to meet public demand for materials by purchasing items that meet the collection selection criteria. If an item is not owned locally, customers can opt to place a purchase request or initiate an Interlibrary loan (ILL). Because of the proximity of many local public libraries, many customers choose to visit and borrow items from other libraries as cardholders at those libraries. Library cards at most of the public libraries in California are free to any California resident.

**Purchase Requests**

PACL currently purchases about 400 books a year based on customer "suggestion for purchase" forms. With the availability of Link+, some customers may opt to borrow their books through this service in lieu of suggesting that PACL purchase them. Currently, PACL chooses not to purchase about 10% of the suggested titles per year, as they are too obscure or academic for the collection. With the academic library collections available through LINK+, most of these customers could have improved access to the requested titles.

**Interlibrary Loan Service (ILL)**

PACL customers currently pay $7.50 per ILL. Over the last 18 months, approximately 69% of ILL's were not owned by other local libraries, including LINK+ libraries. The remaining 31% of ILL's were filled by libraries which are LINK+ members. Because LINK+ does not offer access to libraries nation-wide, nor to microfilm and periodicals, LINK+ may reduce ILL traffic but will not eliminate it. However, if approximately one-third of the ILL traffic would be reduced, the corresponding staff costs could be reallocated to the LINK+ operation.

**Staffing Workload**

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As stated above, an increase in circulation by 1% is anticipated with membership in LINK+. This increase as well as the workload associated with filling requests from other Link+ libraries will require staff support. Books that are received into PACL by other LINK+ libraries and books that PACL will ship out to LINK+ libraries require special handling. Included in this handling are the pulling of books requested by other libraries, the processing of the items in the Link+ software, the manual tagging of items as they are routed through the system, and the special packaging and labeling required by the courier service.

Over the most recent twelve months, Mountain View Library averaged 839 books borrowed per month for their customers and 945 books loaned to other libraries. Support staff who perform these functions spend approximately 5 hours a day on these operations. The workload to process items loaned from PACL will be greater than it is for other Link+ libraries, as, in order to maintain inventory control of PACL books, these items must be processed through both the Horizon and the Link+ databases.

In addition, staff time is needed to oversee the LINK+ operation, including the handling of customer complaints, running reports to clear up discrepancies, compiling statistics, attending LINK+ meetings and training staff.

As a non-III library, PACL will also require that staff time is allocated for database administrator tasks for the DCB server, including involvement in data loading and profiling, as well as managing daily uploads from the PACL ILS and being the technical liaison between PACL and III.
Part II: Customer Experience with LINK+

Customers who are familiar with using LINK+ as cardholders with participating libraries enjoy easy-to-use searching, requesting and managing of their account online. As a non-ILL library, PACL cardholders experience will be less straightforward. These issues could create some confusion for PACL users but are not insurmountable.

Circulation loan policies are uniform across the LINK+ system. The following policies and procedures would be in effect for customers using LINK+ as PACL cardholders.

- **Materials:** Books only (selection may be limited at the discretion of the lending library).

- **Loan Period:** 21 days (as opposed to 28 days for PACL loans)

- **Overdue Fines:** $1.00 per day per item (as opposed to $0.25 cents for PACL loans)

- **Replacement Cost:** $115.00 per item (as opposed to the cost of the item plus a $7.00 processing fee for PACL loans)

- **Cost to request and borrow a LINK+ item:** Free

- **Searching:** Customers searching for items in the PACL catalog (http://webcat.cityofpaloalto.org) will need to repeat their searches in the LINK+ catalog (http://205.227.91.239). Other LINK+ participants who run the Millennium ILS are able to offer a one-click search into LINK+ from their native ILS due to the proprietary nature of the INNREACH software.

- **Requests:** Requests can only be made on books that are in. The Link+ system does not impose a limit on the number of requests per customer although a limit can be set at the discretion of a member library.

- **Pickups:** Available at the circulation desk. It is recommended that PACL allow pickups and returns at Main Library only, to expedite delivery of items and centralize LINK+ management.

- **Delivery of Items:** Requests are typically filled and shipped to the requestor's library within 4 days.

- **Notices:** Customers will receive overdue, hold and billing notices. There may be an additional cost to provide these notices via email. There are no pre-overdue (or courtesy) notices for LINK+ items.

- **Checkouts & Returns:** Checkouts must be handled at a staff workstation running the INNREACH software and cannot be done at the self-check stations. Returns must also be handled at the front desk, and it is not recommended that items be returned to bookdrops.

- **Renewals:** Renewals can be requested through the customer's record on LINK+, but not within the PACL web catalog interface. Renewals can be requested from 3 days before the due date to 3 days after the due date. Renewals may not be immediate and could take up to 24 hours to be approved or declined by the lending library.
• **Managing Customer Accounts Online:** Customers will have an additional account on the LINK+ web interface, which will be used to place requests, request renewals, check due dates and pending requests, and review the status of the account. The customer record in the PACL web catalog will not reflect any LINK+ activity, as the LINK+ data cannot be automatically written to that account. This will necessitate the management for the customer of two different accounts online, one for LINK+ activity and one for regular PACL activity.
Part III: Cost Estimate for LINK+

LINK+ Cost Estimate

Most figures are based on a quote from III dated May 1, 2007. Mountain View Public Library’s collection and circulation size are similar to PACL’s, so their figures for staffing and delivery were used. The numbers included in this report are based on the DCB server hosted at III, resulting in reduced database administration staffing costs. As a non-III library, additional costs will be incurred for the DCB server hardware, software and technical support, as well as the duplication of circulation tasks in two systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Costs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record profiling and initial load</td>
<td>$ 4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-day on-site training</td>
<td>$ 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSL certificate (Secure Socket Layer) for DCB server</td>
<td>$ 1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging supplies (delivery bags, labels, etc.)</td>
<td>$ 2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINK+ Membership Fee</td>
<td>$ 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual subscription fee for access and use</td>
<td>$ 20,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCB Hardware Support and Software License</td>
<td>$ 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 staff user licenses and 1 pickup location)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 additional staff user licenses</td>
<td>$ 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated delivery fees</td>
<td>$ 16,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NOTE: DCB server is also included below, as it is a yearly cost**

| Total First Year Costs | $ 77,600 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing Annual Costs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LINK+ Membership Fee</td>
<td>$ 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual subscription fee for access and use</td>
<td>$ 20,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCB Hardware Support and Software License paid annually</td>
<td>$ 25,000</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ongoing supplies</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Ongoing Annual Costs** | $ 67,100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing Annual Staffing Costs (@ 2007-08 salaries)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical support (2 hrs/week clerk for database administrator task – backfilled at hourly Library Clerk rate)</td>
<td>$ 2,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising operations, staff and issues, running reports (5 hours/week for Library Specialist time, backfilled at hourly clerk rate)</td>
<td>$ 5,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation, shipping and receiving of materials (2.75 hours/day Library Clerk plus 3 hours/day Library Aide)</td>
<td>$ 33,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time saved in anticipated reduction of traditional ILL requests (4.3 hours/week at hourly Library Clerk rate)</td>
<td>($ 4,990)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Ongoing Staffing Costs** | $36,590

**Staffing Costs**

Efficiencies that III libraries experience when using LINK+ will not translate to the Horizon ILS system in use at PACL. Each item will need to be processed in the two separate database systems (Horizon & LINK+) in order for each system to have up-to-date inventory
information. Although the National Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP) could mitigate some of these inefficiencies, it has yet to be fully and successfully implemented by an INNREACH system with a Horizon database participant.

LINK+ items require special handling which will add to the circulation cost. The self-checks cannot be used to checkout these materials, and the staff may need to enter barcodes by hand due to the different barcode symbologies of other libraries' materials. LINK+ materials must be returned at the desk, rather than to a book-drop, since they have such a high replacement cost. In addition, the high cost and varied security systems on these items (RFID tags, EM tags, Tattle tape) mandate that these materials be shelved for pickup behind the staff desk, again increasing staff time. Staff will have to explain the special overdue fees, lost fees, checkout and renewal policies as well as the need for special handling upon return by the customer.

**Additional Costs for System Administration**

An estimate of a .33 FTE (13 hrs/wk) database administrator was given by Innovative based on the experiences of other libraries using INNREACH and running a DCB server on site. III has offered to host the DCB server and manage it, which would significantly reduce the database administrator duties to .05 FTE (2 hrs/wk) for the tasks of database profiling, loading and checking on automatic script generation.

**Comparison to ILL Staffing Costs**

Currently, PACL staff spends 13 hours per week on Interlibrary Loan (ILL). This translates into a staffing cost of approximately $20,000. LINK+ would cost approximately $36,590 in staffing costs, once the time savings resulting from anticipated reduced interlibrary loan requests is considered.

**Partial Cost Recovery of Providing Link+**

PACL items loaned through the Link+ system to other California libraries would qualify for the Interlibrary Loan component of the Transaction Based reimbursement Program (TBR) of the California Library Services Act. This program reimburses libraries that loan their materials to other libraries. While the approved ILL reimbursement rate is $5.29 per eligible transaction, the budget for the TBR program is usually insufficient to fund reimbursing all participants at the approved rates. However, it should be anticipated that, at a minimum, this program would provide sufficient revenue to offset the cost of delivery and associated supplies.
October 1, 2007

Ms Diane Jennings
Library Director
City of Palo Alto

Dear Diane:

I am pleased to inform you that at its July, 2007 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Palo Alto Libraries (FOPAL) unanimously approved a motion to commit funds, to be equally matched by the City, to enable a two year pilot project with Link+. The first year’s funding from FOPAL may not exceed $58,000.00. The second year’s funding from FOPAL may not exceed $52,000.

FOPAL is pleased to be able to support your response to the number one priority expressed by respondents to the 2006 survey regarding satisfaction with our libraries -- strengthen the collections.

My understanding is that you plan to seek the city’s share through the budget amendment process for FY 07/08. Please contact me when you have that done to arrange disbursement of the FOPAL funds. This letter replaces an earlier one to you from FOPAL dated September 11 signed by Martha Schmidt.

Sincerely,

Betsy Allyn
President
Price Quotation
LINK+ Membership Dues and Management Fees
for
Palo Alto Public Library

February 2008

Innovative Interfaces, Inc. has been contracted as the fiscal agent for the LINK+ organization and to provide management services for the LINK+ community. These services provide the organizational support to run the organization as well as the LINK+ systems administrations. The services are provided on an annual fee-based service and are in addition to the library's subscription to LINK+.

FEES:
Annual Membership Dues and Management Fee: $4,000/annual
PRICE QUOTATION

INN-Reach License
For
Palo Alto City Library

February 11, 2008

LINK+ system participation, with its extensive INN-Reach functionality, is offered as a fee-based service.

SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDES:
- Union Catalog of records from all members
- Un-mediated, patron-initiated borrowing
- Extensive statistics
  - Database size and overlap
  - Patron requests and fulfillments
- LINK+ central system hosted by Innovative Interfaces

SERVICE FEES:
- a. Annual subscription fee for access and use: $20,400/annual
- b. Record profiling and initial load: $4,500/one time
- c. 1 Day On-site training: $2,000/day

INN-Reach subscription is for the exclusive use of Palo Alto Public Library. Any additional libraries that may share same system are not included.
Subscription fees include all software maintenance of programs.
Prices do not include California State tax and, if applicable, is the responsibility of the library.
Delivery: to be mutually agreed upon between Innovative, LINK+ and Palo Alto Public Library

Minimum Participation period: 12 months

This information is confidential between Palo Alto Public Library and Innovative Interfaces, Inc.
Prices quoted valid for 90 days.

Lynne Branche Brown
Innovative Interfaces, Inc.
PRICE QUOTATION

Hosted DCB License
For
Palo Alto City Library
-  
February 11, 2008

Hosted DCB, including:

1. DCB software license and hardware support
   Includes 2 staff user licenses, 1 pickup location
   and Load Scheduler software
   $25,000 per year

2. 3 additional staff user licenses, 4 additional pickup locations
   $2,000 per year

3. NCIP Software License (optional)
   $2,300 per year

4. On-site Training (1st day)
   $2,000

DCB Client server is to be hosted and managed at Innovative headquarters in Emeryville.

NOTES:

- Additional pickup locations and staff user licenses available at additional cost.
- Service fees include all software maintenance of programs.
- The library is required to put their records to an FTP server where the files can be retrieved by Innovative programs and loaded into the DCB.
- Prices do not include any applicable sales tax, which is the responsibility of the library.
- Delivery: to be mutually agreed upon between Innovative, Link+, and the library.

Minimum Participation period: 12 months

This information is confidential between Palo Alto City Library and Innovative Interfaces, Inc.
Prices quoted valid for 30 days.

[Signature]

Lynne Branche Brown
Innovative Interfaces, Inc.