

New eLibrary Platform Update

Background

The library's new eLibrary platform is built with products from BiblioCommons. It provides interfaces for customers and staff over the back end Integrated Library System (Sierra from Innovative Interfaces, Inc. (III)).

Funded as a capital improvement project approved by the Council, the new platform is the culmination of five years of effort which included user interviews, surveys, community conversations, vendor analysis, consultant advice and finally, implementation. Driving ideas behind choosing this particular platform for the eLibrary came from the themes that emerged from the conversations the library had with the community and the surveys conducted: customers' longing to know their neighbors better, and to have ways to come together around shared interests, their love of books, films, music and ideas.

Sierra continues being the tool for staff to manage library operations, such as tracking check in and out activities, facilitating customer requests and maintaining accuracy of access points in the catalog. It is funded with the City's general fund. Encore, the discovery tool used before the new eLibrary platform, was purchased as a part of the Sierra system. Upon consultation with the City Purchasing, I have investigated credit for Encore costs, but III is not willing to change the contract at this point, since it was bundled as part of the required modules. Staff has begun discussions on a few options to continue using Encore for backend activities.

The new platform has the following functional components:

- Catalog
- Events and Programming Calendar
- Web Content Management System
- Marketing Platform
- Fine Payment Management

Soft and Hard Launches

Soft-launch of the platform started on November 23, 2017.

Goals for the soft-launch included:

- Generate awareness and buzz
- Solicit feedback from staff and customers to guide improvements
- identify bugs
- allow customers to register their accounts with BiblioCommons early to soften hard launch impacts on staff

All goals were met during the soft launch period. There were 1,173 registrations, or 15% of the library's 'Active in Last 30 Days' customers. This figure is considered a success, as the

BiblioCommons' benchmark for similarly-sized libraries implementing its products is about 2/3 of our library's number. 77 suggestion forms were also submitted. Two former members of LAC, who initially brought up the need for an integrated library discovery platform, provided input and encouragement during the soft-launch.

Hard-launch started on January 23rd, 2018. In the first week of hard launch, registrations surged to around 3,300 customers, or 22% of our 'Active in Last 30 Days' customers. On the first day, 58 calls were made to the eLibrary Helpline. By the end of week one, 162 calls were logged. The majority of these calls were focused on accounts setups. In the first week of hard launch, 52 suggestion forms were also submitted.

An analysis of the first days' feedback broke down as follows:

- 25% Postive reactions
- 22% Negative reactions
- 38% Inquiries for assistance

Some notable comments are:

"The home page now has all the key things I typically need from events, kids content, e-content, new books and many other categories. All of these just an easy scroll from my phone .. awesome! Thanks for making it so easy."

"Thank you for the extended eLibrary service. I am very excited to explore and use the sharing capabilities to connect with other library users both locally and globally."

"Much simpler to check things out all at once. The previous site seemed clunky to use."

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"When I open up the new platform I see a collection of recent additions and to get past that, I need to take extra steps to check what I have on hold and how long I have before I must return or renew."

Between November 21, when the platform was soft launched, and February 8, when this report was filed, there has been a significant number of activities, particularly in the area of social engagement with user-generated content. The highlighted features in the table below represent some of those unavailable to customer until now:

Type	Count
Registered Users	6332
Rating	7415
Comments	996
Summaries	3
Quotes	618
Tags	2493
Private Notes	8
I Own This	0
Notices	15
Age Suitability	20
Similar Titles	58
Messages Sent	36
Messages Received	32
List Bibs	6687
User Lists	398
Videos	665
My Shelves	18759

- Summaries of library items that augment the description provided by the library.
- Quotes from the work that customers want to highlight
- Private Notes which a customer can add to organize their own thoughts about a work
- Notices to alert other customers about language, violence or sexuality in a work
- Age suitability commentary to help advise other customers
- Videos related to a work which can be embedded in a work's record

Next Steps

Last summer, we began an impact study to measure changes to service and collection use that might result from launching the new eLibrary platform. The first set of data was collected in summer 2017 as a basis to measure changes post-launch. This March and again in summer 2018, we will collect post-launch data on services and collections to measure any changes.

Other BiblioCommons libraries report that after implementing BiblioCommons, many of their services and collections saw increased use. Another status report about our own implementation will be provided after summer.