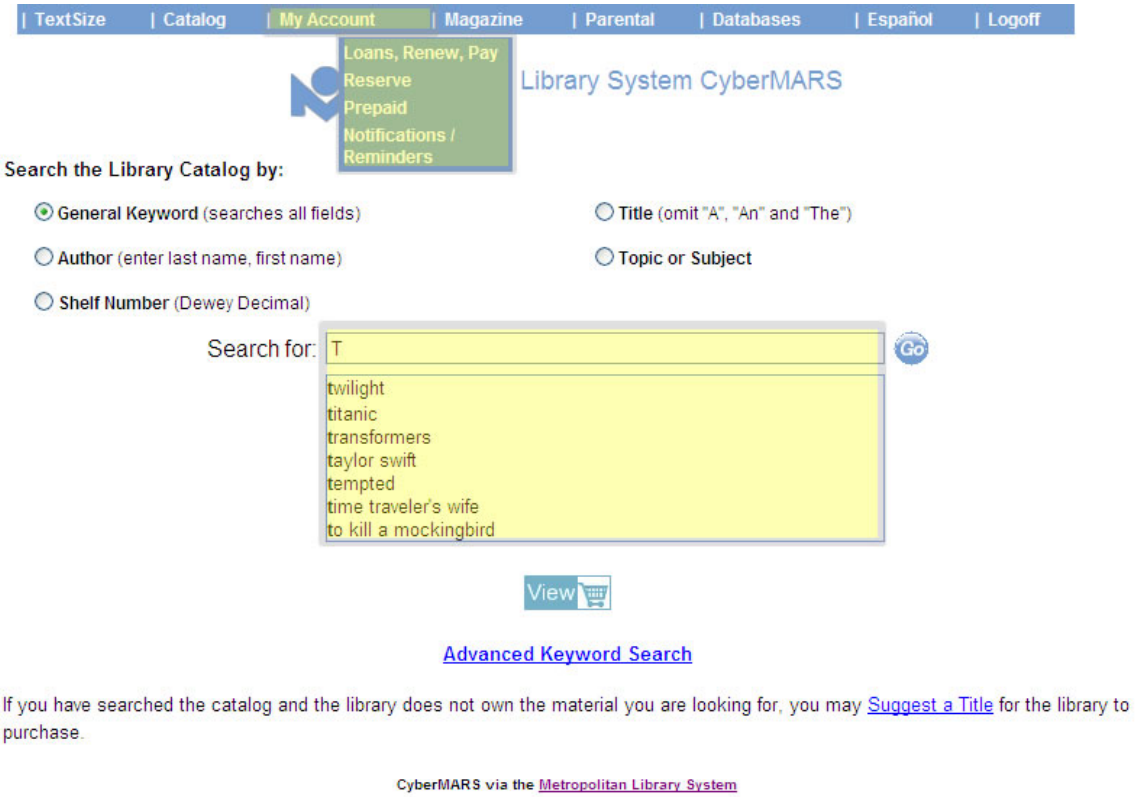
Tech Support Minutes
Tuesday, October 27, 2009
9:15 am
Downtown Library, Lee B. Brawner Conference Room

Attendance: Kay Bauman, Kellie Bradford, Janet Brooks, Anne Fischer, Teresa Goggins, Jack Kinzie, Josh Lewis, Donna Morris, Katrina Prince, Pauline Rodriguez-Atkins, Jimmy Welch
Guest: Charla Aucone

Update on Action Items

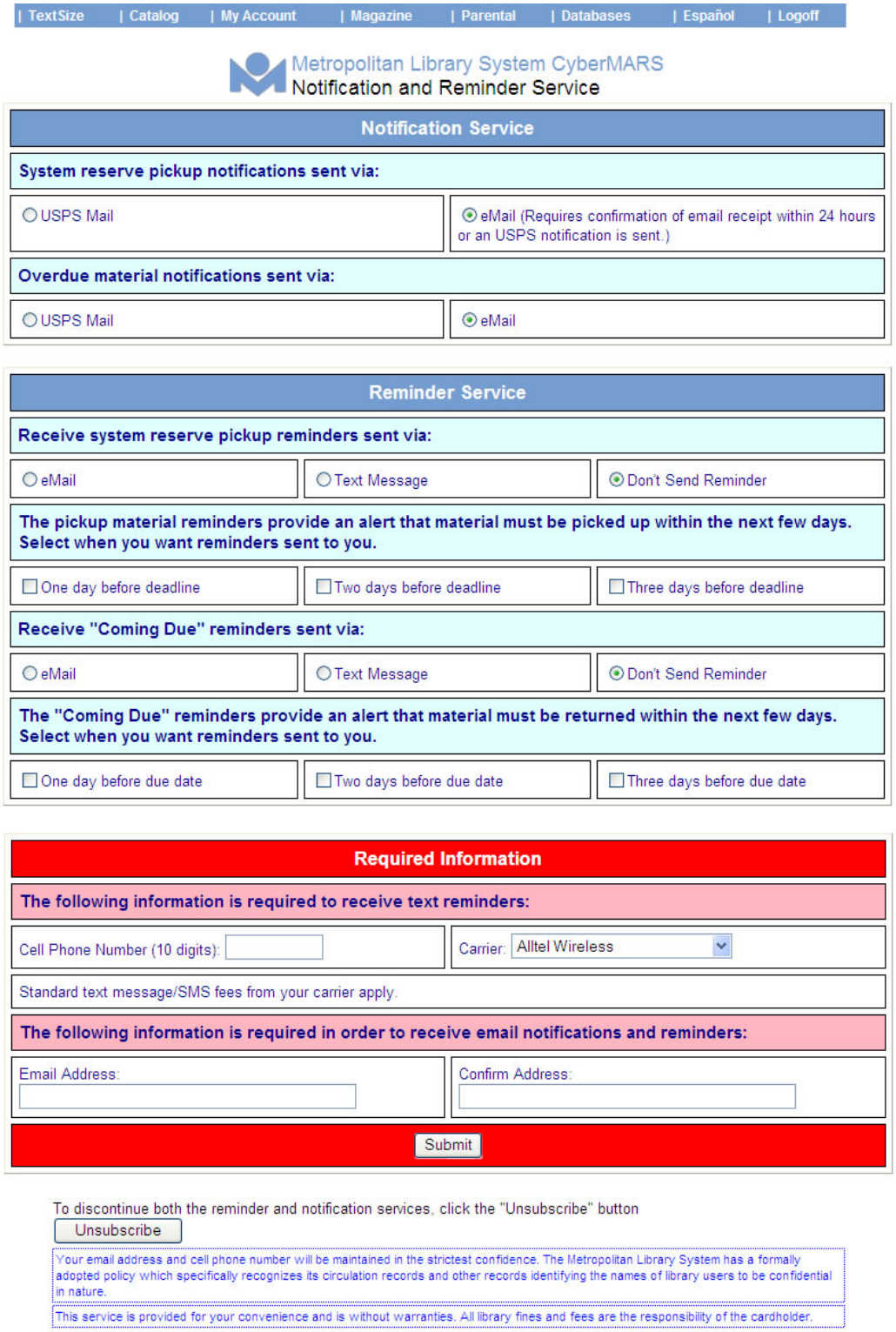
1. The Hearing impaired resource bookmarks are in the final stages.
2. The shelf management lists are now in order by author.
3. Kellie and Teresa are still working on adding an advanced search feature to the internet.
4. The damage letter form is now available on the intranet.
5. Pauline has created a report on creating records for paperback books (full report attached). Since creating brief catalog records is not recommended, Pauline, Karen, and Jimmy will continue to explore other options for accessing purchased browse materials. This will combine efforts from TP, MSL, and public service staff. Katrina suggested a way to type in a title when you put the barcode on the book just for inventory purposes.
6. A complete list of MLS recycling efforts has been added to the intranet. http://morris/gotinfo/general/recycling/mls_green_report.pdf
7. Kay is still in the process of finding a more effective way to save and search important memos.
8. Cataloging search tips will be added to Training Times next year.
9. Temporary program changes have been made so the number of reserve items is not showing Northwest materials.
10. New signage has been created for the CyberMARS computers.
11. Janet and Jimmy are still discussing automatic reserve placement.
12. Anne needs to talk to Kay one more time before the pilot program for selling headphones goes live.
13. The Library Thing for Libraries is now available on the staff catalog.

14. The “borrower tab” has been changed to the “my account” tab in CyberMARS. This has been available to staff since October 6th. It will go live to the public on November 2nd. An auto complete feature will also go live at this time.



15. “My Account” is also available on the library homepage.

16. The Reminders/Notifications page has been available to staff since October 6th. It will go live to the public on November 2nd. It allows customers to edit USPS, e-mail and text, notifications.



New Business

1. The 2010 Tech support meeting dates will be as follows:
    - January 26th
    - April 27th
    - July 27th
    - October 26th

2. Teresa presented the list of changes to the internet/intranet
   Intranet - Teresa highlighted the new additions to the intranet including this year's FOCUS! page, The United Way pages were revised for this year, as well as the OSA online submission. The nominee list is coming soon.

   Internet - the Metrolibrary YouTube page has been expanded with additional videos. The Big Read has been added which includes an online scavenger hunt. We are using Google Analytics to understand through statistics how people use our website. It will tell us where customers are coming from, where they are going, what browsers they are using, etc.

ILS Issues:

1. A suggestion was made to change the date of birth field in V-Circ into three separate fields so you can use the tab button to move between month, day, and year.

   If you use the arrow keys instead of the tab key, you can do the same thing with the current format. Also, there is a calendar function which would not be available if the date was put into three fields. The field will remain the same.

2. A circulation clerk sent in a suggestion to eliminate the 30-day overdue pop-up notice on paperback books since it looks like the 60-day freeze notice and can cause confusion.

   Normally, the 30-day notice is an audio alert, however, if the speak function is turned off, a pop-up will appear.

   Anne will talk to the Village for further information regarding this question.

3. A suggestion was made to delay the reserve ready e-mail notification to customers by an hour or two to give libraries enough time to process and shelve reserves.

   There would be better customer service if we delayed the notification by 15 minutes, but to delay it by an hour for one location would be too significant. Many locations put the books in order by customer before they check them in, which allows them to find the books if a customer comes in before their book is ready.

   Notifications will have a 15 minute delay starting on Monday, November 2nd.

4. A customer asked to have the Highway Gothic font installed on the public computers.

   Fonts are time consuming to add as each font has to be registered; it cannot just be copied to the computer. At this time, we do not feel that we can add fonts based on

individual customer requests. If it is determined that a particular font is needed for staff or public use, IT will add that font to all library computers including public computers.

5. A customer asked if a group of computers could be set aside for students, which would require a student ID to use them.

   MLS philosophy of use is based on a valid card and first come first served. We do not intend on adding in other criteria for use. The customer has been contacted and provided with other options.

6. A customer asked to have email notices about due dates.

   This is now available through the "my account" option in CyberMARS.

7. A librarian asked if there would be a way to have a uniform font choice on the computers at the DN library.

   The computers that have more choices have publisher installed. The extra fonts come with publisher so they cannot be added to other computers without breaking the license. However, a group of fonts can be added to the computers to give more choice for program flyers, etc. Charla and Kellie will work on a list of 50 or less free fonts to add to these computers.

Action Items

1. Kellie and Teresa will provide Jimmy with the scopes and mnemonics needed to make the advanced search feature available.
2. Pauline, Karen, and Jimmy will continue to explore other options for accessing purchased browse materials.
3. Kellie will search for a more effective way to save and search important memos.
4. Cataloging search tips will be added to Training Times next year.
5. Janet and Jimmy will continue discussing automatic reserve placement.
6. Anne will talk to Kay before starting the headphone sales.
7. Pauline and Dana will add cataloging search tips to the next Training Times.
8. Anne will talk to the Village about the 30-day pop-up notice
9. Email notifications will have a 15 minute delay starting November 2nd.
10. Kellie and Charla will create a font list for the librarian computers Downtown.

The next Tech Support meeting is scheduled for:
Tuesday, January 26, 2010
9:15 am
Downtown Library
Lee B. Brawner Executive Conference Room

Report to the Tech Support Group re Brief Catalog Records

At the April 2009 meeting of the Tech Support Group, I was asked to look into the possibility of creating brief catalog records for materials designated for the browsing collection. Karen Marriott and Jimmy Welch worked with me in exploring this idea.

This idea has merit. The materials in question are primarily mass-market paperbacks and board books, but materials in other formats are sometimes included. Owning libraries attach pre-printed barcodes to these materials; there is no record of the title to which the barcode is attached. At this time, there is no way to determine what titles are owned, nor at which library or libraries they are held. Customers periodically request this information, especially as some fiction series are not published in any other format, and thus are not available through normal means.

However, creating even brief catalog records for these materials would impact a number of other library functions. These impacts must be taken into consideration when evaluating the possibility of implementing this idea.

For purposes of this report, materials designated for browsing collections will be referred to as "browse"; materials which are part of the "regular" (cataloged) collections will be referred to as "regular".

Costs in terms of productivity

Creating a catalog record requires an average of 10 minutes of staff time. Creating a brief record might require somewhat less time, but would probably take at least 7 minutes.
If the records were created by Catalogers, each brief record created would equal at least 1 record for a regular collection material not created. Catalogers currently spend at least 80% of their working time creating catalog records, with a turnaround time of no more than 48 hours from receipt of a title in cataloging to the printing of barcode labels. The turnaround time would double, at the minimum, if browse materials were added to the workload.
If the records were created by Cataloging Technicians, at the least each brief record would equal barcode labels for 3 titles not printed, catalog records for 2 in system titles not verified. Cataloging Technicians spend at least 75% of their working time on these tasks, in addition to replacing missing/damaged barcode labels, correcting problems with item records, prioritizing materials so that those with reserves are handled first, and numerous other duties. Turnaround time would probably more than double if creating catalog records were added to the Technicians' workload.
Although the Cataloging Department will add staff after the move to the Service Center, the number of new materials purchased will also increase. Creating brief catalog records for browse materials will inevitably reduce the amount of time available to be spent on regular materials. This will increase the amount of time required to get materials to libraries after receipt.

Formats

As stated, most browse materials are mass-market paperbacks or board books. Materials in these formats are by nature less durable than many other formats, such as hardbacks or trade paperbacks. Because browse materials are less durable, they tend to have a shorter "shelf life" than regular materials.

Given that creating catalog records for browse materials would have significant costs in staff time, the cost-effectiveness of spending time on these records rather than on those for more durable materials is questionable.

System Reserves

Currently, browse materials may not be used to fill system reserves, as reserves cannot be placed without a catalog record. If catalog records are created for these materials, will the materials be available for reserve?

When a title has a waiting list that exceeds the number of available copies, the holdings list in the catalog usually shows all copies as "loaned". Customers who are on the waiting list expect that all copies will be on loan, and that if copies are available for checkout, to be moved up on the list. If the title is also part of the browsing collection, it is possible for a customer to come across a copy and check it out without waiting.

If browse materials are not available for system reserves, the holdings list in the catalog will presumably show the status of some copies as "on shelf". If so, customers who view the holdings may be displeased at not being able to acquire a copy of the title when the catalog indicates that copies are available.

If browse copies are available to fill system reserves, library staff will need to locate, pull, route, receive, return, and reshelve even more items than they currently do. Locating and pulling copies may take longer, because browsing copies will likely be shelved in a different location. These factors will place an additional drain on library staff, possibly reduce the amount of time that staff are available to serve customers, and possibly increase the amount of time that it takes to get reserved materials to customers.

A related issue is that although many browse materials are available only in formats such as mass-market paperbacks, some are copies of popular titles which are also part of the regular library collections. These browse copies may be of titles that are out of print in more durable formats, although some durable copies are still owned; currently popular titles of which all cataloged copies are consistently checked out; titles which are regularly assigned as reading by local schools, etc. This raises the question as to whether separate catalog records will be created for browse copies of titles also held in regular collections.

If holdings for browse copies are added to catalog records for regular copies, the holdings will likely be intermingled in the catalog display. If browse materials are not used to fill system reserves, the holdings display will not reflect the true number of copies available to waiting customers.

If separate records are created for browse copies, customers may well try to place reserves on the browse record. If browse copies are not available for reserve, customers may be unhappy at not being able to reserve a copy of a title. Anecdotal evidence shows that customers tend to look at only one catalog record for a title, so it is likely that the customer would not attempt to place a reserve on the "correct" record. This would result in the customer's not acquiring the desired material.

On the other hand, if browse copies are available for reserve, the ratio of reserves to available copies on each record could easily become unequal. Materials Selection staff already spends a great deal of time dealing with this problem, trying to get copies to all customers as quickly as possible. This situation would increase the burden on that department.

Access

All MLS catalog records currently include a call number, consisting of a classification and a "Cutter". The call number helps to define the shelf location of the material. For fiction materials, the call number consists of a generalized classification describing a type of fiction (MYSTERY, SCIENCE FICTION, WESTERN, SHORT STORY, and FICTION), and the first three characters of the main entry (either the author's last name or the title of the work). For nonfiction materials, the call number consists of a classification built according to the Dewey Decimal Classification, and a Cutter built according to the Cutter-Sanborn Four-Figure Table. Call numbers for fiction titles may be duplicated; those for nonfiction titles may not.

All catalog records also include subject headings (for nonfiction materials) or genre headings (for fiction materials). These headings are intended to help guide library customers to materials containing desired information, or to fiction of a specific genre. Records for many fiction titles also contain series information, which serves to identify materials featuring a particular character or characters, or which are intended to be read in sequence.

Browse materials have no call numbers nor classifications; libraries generally group these materials according to broad genres. These usually include the genres used for classification of cataloged fiction, with a few additions, such as "love stories"; nonfiction materials are usually grouped together, with "true crime" frequently used as a separate grouping. The groupings are not necessarily consistent among all MLS libraries. Since there are no catalog records, there is no subject, genre, or series access.

It is generally considered that each form of access increases the possibility that a customer will locate the material that s/he desires. However, providing call number, subject, genre, and series access for browse materials at the same level as regular materials would require that the catalog records be created by Catalogers. As described previously, this would substantially slow the process of getting materials to libraries.

Even without such specific access, any classification system used across MLS would require that all browse materials pass through Cataloging. For classifications to be applied consistently, they would need to be assigned by trained staff familiar with the broad classifications and with the guidelines for determining which classification is appropriate for a title. Records with less specific access could possibly be created by Cataloging Technicians. As described previously, this would again slow the process of getting materials to libraries.

If no classification system is used, the process of creating catalog records would be shorter, and possibly could involve staff outside Cataloging. However, records without providing some form of location designation would not be much more effective than having no records. Customers would be able to tell the status of copies of a title, and which libraries might own it. Even library staff might not be able to locate it, though, since they might easily have different ideas as to which area it "should" be shelved in.

Interlibrary Loan/WorldCat holdings

Cataloging staff downloads base records for most titles in the MLS catalog from the OCLC WorldCat database. When this is done, a "holding" is attached to the WorldCat record, showing that MLS owns the title. This allows other libraries to request to borrow the title through interlibrary loan (ILL).

If this procedure is followed for records for browse materials, the materials will be made available for ILL. This would have negative impacts in several areas.

Given that the number of materials requested from MLS by other libraries has doubled in the past two years, making more titles available for loan would increase the demand further.

Mass market paperbacks are among the formats most frequently requested through interlibrary loan. This would increase the workload on ILL staff, and increase the wait time to receive materials through ILL. It would also increase the workload on library staff in the same way as system reserves.

If records are downloaded from WorldCat, the usage agreement requires that MLS attach a holdings symbol to each record. Failure to do so could cause the system to lose access to the WorldCat database. It is possible to attach a code to the holdings symbol indicating that the material will not be loaned; however, this would increase the amount of time needed to create the record. In addition, if too many materials are coded as "not lendable", the library system could lose access to OCLC ILL services.

It is possible to create a catalog record without downloading from WorldCat, but the entire record must be manually input. This would increase the amount of time needed to create a record, even a brief record, and place a large workload on staff assigned to do the data entry.

Selection

Section AM 310, item D, of the MLS Policies and Procedures Directory states that "… the library maintains a large collection of mass market paperback books … Because of their relatively low cost and ephemeral nature, these paperbacks are not cataloged. … In response to public demand, the library purchases paperback titles, which have substantial, demonstrated popular appeal to library customer but may not be critically reviewed. Series and genres of fiction (e.g. mystery, romance, intrigue, inspirational, western, science fiction, etc.) for which there is established demand are emphasized. …"

This policy clearly states that some browse materials may not meet the critical review standards set out for materials in the regular collections. It allows Materials Selection staff to add browse materials without necessarily having spent the time needed to add regular materials. If records for browse materials are added to the catalog, the materials would be required to meet the same criteria as other cataloged materials. This would increase the amount of time required for Materials Selection staff to select the materials, and would reduce the amount of time available for selecting other materials. In turn, this would mean that fewer materials would be available to customers.

Barcodes

At this time, barcode labels for browse materials are purchased preprinted, and distributed to libraries in sheets by Information Technology (IT). When a library receives new browse materials, or wishes to circulate a material for which there is no catalog record, the library attaches a preprinted barcode label, and uses the VCirc system to add the barcode number to the library's inventory records. The inventory record indicates that the barcode number is attached to an "uncataloged" title owned by that library, with no other information. When a barcode label needs to be replaced, the library attaches a new preprinted label and repeats the process.

By contrast, barcode labels for regular materials are printed in the Cataloging department, using specialized technology. When the barcode labels are printed, the barcode number is automatically added to each owning library's inventory records. The inventory record includes the title of the material and the call number, as well as information not printed on the label. Each barcode label is specific to one copy of the material, and can only be replaced by being reprinted in Cataloging. The specialized barcode labels are attached in Technical Processing.

There are many advantages to using specially printed barcode labels, rather than preprinted ones. The barcode labels include a large amount of valuable information, are highly durable and readable, and can be replaced without changing the item number. A disadvantage is that the labels must be printed and attached by trained staff, and cannot be handled at the library level. Cataloging Technicians print the labels, and Technical Processors attach them. If these staff members add labels for browse materials to their current workload, the time required to get materials to libraries will be increased substantially.

Another issue is that the labels and printers used to print barcodes are specially designed for that purpose. The labels and supplies are considerably more expensive than pre-printed barcode labels. If barcode labels were printed in Cataloging, the library system would need to be prepared to absorb the additional cost. This money might be better spent in other areas, such as purchasing additional library materials.

Using pre-printed barcode labels with catalog records would require a significant amount of programming by IT. Any programming done by that department means that another programming project is not done.

Gifts

When a library receives donated materials (called "gifts") suitable for adding to the browsing collection, the materials may simply be added at the library, following the process outlined previously.

Gifts to be added to the regular collection must meet the criteria set out in the Materials Selection Policy. If a catalog record exists for the title, the title has been approved; the material must be sent to Cataloging so that a barcode label can be printed, then to Technical Processing to have the label attached. If no catalog record exists, the material is sent to Materials Selection; if it is approved, it is sent to Cataloging, where a catalog record is created; then the barcode label is printed and the material sent to Technical Processing. Either process takes more time than simply adding a browse material, and keeps the material unavailable to library customers for a longer period.

If catalog records are added for browse materials, all gift materials would be required to go through this process. Staff in the affected departments would spent additional time working with them. Gift materials are considered to be a lower priority than purchased materials, so the delay in getting the materials back to the library could be quite lengthy. This could especially be a problem with browse materials that relate to current events.

Maintaining records in the catalog

Catalog records for regular materials are maintained in the MLS catalog for eighteen months after the last copy has been withdrawn or otherwise made unavailable (not returned, missing, etc.). This allows Cataloging to reuse the record in the event that the material is returned or replaced. Unfortunately, customers are frequently upset by the fact that the catalog continues to include records for materials that are no longer available.

Since browse materials are considered to have a shorter "shelf life" and are less likely to be replaced than regular materials, there would be more records for unavailable materials in the catalog. The waiting period for deleting records might be shortened, but this is dependent on IT.

Recommendation

It appears that adding any form of catalog records for materials in the browsing collections would have a substantial negative impact on customer service. Therefore, creating brief catalog records is not recommended.

Recommendation is for Pauline, Karen, and Jimmy to continue to explore other options for accessing purchased browse materials. Other staff will be involved in the process as needed.

Date: 7/29/2009 10:17 AM
From: Edmond Library
To: Technical Suggestions <techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org>
Copy: Karen Bays <kbays@metrolibrary.org>
Subject: DOB ON CARD APPLICATION

Dear Tech Suggestions:

Would it be possible to change date of birth field to **3** field. This will help saving time and will help everyone from lifting arms to use the fingures to get to DOB in one field. This way we only can use tab to move to month, day, and year.

Sincerely of yours: Ahad

Date: 8/18/2009 8:58 PM
From: Village Library
To: Technical Suggestions <techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org>
Subject: circ check out notice

To whom it may Concern;

When a customer has paperback books that are 30 days overdue a notice pops up on the screen that looks like the notice for the 60 day freeze on customer accounts. It has caused a problem for me when a customer put their book on the scanner before I was able to read the notice and thought they had a hold on their account. The customer was very angry with me even though I explained what happened and apologized to them. My suggestion is to eliminate the 30 day notice on paperback books.

Thank you,

Deborah S. Austin-Munden
Village Library

Date: 9/3/2009 5:50 PM
From: Karen Bays
To: Technical Suggestions <techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org>
Copy: Edmond Pages <edpages@metrolibrary.org>,Edmond Library <edmond@mls.lib.ok.us>, Ann Aliotta <aaliotta@mls.lib.ok.us>,Jean Johnson <jjohnson@mls.lib.ok.us>
Subject: delay of e-mail notification

Hi Tech Support Group members,

Edmond Library's Tonda Kelley (and several people in previous years) have this suggestion:

Would it be possible to delay e-mail notification to customers that reserves are ready to pick up? Even a few hours would help us get everything processed and shelved. If a few hours is not possible, we would actually be thrilled with a one-hour delay.

The problem this would fix is mainly a PR problem, as quite a few customers see the notice on their e-mail that a reserve is ready. They drop everything else they are doing in their busy lives, as the library is of primary importance to them. :o} When they come to the library (or maybe just walk over to the circ desk from the computers), we often don't have their reserve shelved yet, as we receive giant stacks of reserves in order to be more efficient. The customer often has a reaction ranging from mild disappointment to outrage that they made the trip and either: (a) they have to wait for 5 minutes while we dig through stacks and stacks of reserves looking for their item; or (b) we are sometimes unable to locate the reserve after digging–it usually emerges later after we are through processing.

The secondary problem that this would fix is that stopping often to dig through stacks of reserves for a customer, who just received their e-mail notice and demands that we produce the reserve now, impairs our overall efficiency, so that everyone's reserves are progressively delayed later to accommodate searches for individual items not yet shelved.

Thank you very much for your consideration!

Karen Bays

Date: 9/14/2009 1:33 PM
From: Julie Ballou
To: Technical Suggestions <techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org>
Subject: Customer Request

A customer has requested that we have an additional font available on the public use computers. Specifically, he would like us to have the font Highway Gothic which is used on highway road signs.
Thanks,
Julie

Julie Ballou
Manager of Library Operations
Downtown Library
300 Park Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
405.606.3851

Date: 9/16/2009 1:09 PM
From: Anne Fischer <afischer@metrolibrary.org>
To: Technical Suggestions <techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org>
Copy:
Subject: Customer suggestion/request regarding public computers

We had a customer call and want us to set aside a group of computers for only student use where students had to show an ID to use them. This person is participating in an "online only" bachelor's program through OU and even the readings are online. She does not own a computer. I told her that I would pass her suggestion/request along.

Anne Fischer

Date: 9/29/2009 2:07 PM
From: Cheryl Pernell
To: Techsuggestions@mls.lib.ok.us
Copy: Cheryl Pernell <cpernell@metrolibrary.org>, jballou@mls.lib.ok.us,teresagog@yahoo.com
Subject: Meeting Room Visual on the MLS website

To: Tech Suggestions
From: Cheryl Pernell; Downtown Library

I have a suggestion regarding the meeting rooms that are loaned out to our customer's with a charge at the Downtown Library, and possibly other large branches with meeting rooms. Is there any way that the meeting rooms could be viewed on our MLS website for customers to virtual see what our meeting rooms looks like in case Candance; DN or anyone else at other branches aren't available to show them? That way they can get an idea of what our rooms looks like before they decide to either rent them or not. I know within our meeting room management database for the staff, we are able to view our rooms for the downtown location.

Thanks,

Cheryl Pernell
Associate Librarian
Downtown Library
300 Park Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
(405)231-8650 or (405)606-3872
cpernell@metrolibrary.org

Date: 9/29/2009 8:23 PM
From: Village Library
To: Technical Suggestions <techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org>
Subject: customer suggestion

A customer who came from another state suggested this: it would be great if you sent out email notices a few days before a book is due. Thanks.

Date: 10/7/2009 10:18 AM
From: Charla Aucone
To: techsuggestions@metrolibrary.org
Subject: shared computers and fonts
Attachments: caucone@mls.lib.ok.us.vcf

Good morning,

I was wondering if there is anyway to have a uniform font selection on the staff computers at the Downtown library? It is very frustrating to be creating a flyer at one location, move to another location and have the fonts not be available and we are not able to download the font we need. Essentially you have to start over on your flyer design and/or wait until you can get that same computer you started at and many times another staff person is already on it, therefore you are still unable to complete a project.

I realize there are safe fonts, like Arial or Times New Roman for example, but it would be beneficial to have some of the more exciting fonts to create flyers with on all our computers since we share computers.

Thank you for your consideration,

Charla R. Aucone, Librarian
Ronald J. Norick Library Downtown Library
Metropolitan Library System
300 Park Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
405.231.8650 x3
caucone@metrolibrary.org
"If you're rich you can buy books. If you're poor you need a library" ~John Kenneth Calbraith