Overlay Pilot Project Participation

What is the overlay project?

Since 2013, RAILS has been researching a potential project to provide library users with seamless access to the catalogs of RAILS consortia and standalone libraries that choose to participate. RAILS chose to call this an overlay project to emphasize that the goal is to expand resource sharing by connecting, not replacing, existing integrated library systems.

The RAILS resource sharing overlay project will enable

- Seamless discovery and delivery for patrons: click it, find it, get it
    - Fast and easy to use from anywhere
    - No need to re-enter searches
- Better interlibrary loan service, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness for libraries
    - Self-service for patrons reluctant to ask for interlibrary loan help
    - Reduction in staff time and effort
    - Lower-cost alternative to OCLC for libraries that want one
- Support for reciprocal borrowing service (This is a stretch goal that will require additional software development by the vendor.)

The project will begin with a small pilot project of 10–20 libraries from three consortia and expand from there. The pilot is expected to last no more than two years. After the pilot, participation will be open to any interested library.

What software will be used?

Following a thorough procurement process, the Overlay Software Search Working Group recommended beginning contract negotiations with Auto-Graphics for use of its SHAREit system. The RAILS Board approved this recommendation on October 27, 2017, and contract negotiations are currently underway.

On May 18, 2017, Auto-Graphics demonstrated SHAREit to RAILS members and staff as part of the software evaluation process. You can view the recorded demonstration at https://youtu.be/2olCmaWoPmM (4 hours, 26 minutes). Feel free to distribute the link to other library staff, but please don't post it on websites or other publicly accessible communication channels.

SHAREit is used by several states, including Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin, for large-scale implementations connecting many libraries and various integrated library systems. You can search these systems with the URLs below, though of course placing requests would require logins.

Indiana (SRCS: Statewide Remote Circulation Service)
https://srcs-agent.auto-graphics.com/MVC/

Massachusetts (Commonwealth Catalog)
https://commonwealthcatalog.org/MVC/

Kansas Library Catalog
https://ksuc-agent.auto-graphics.com/mvc/

Wisconsin (WISCAT)
https://www.wiscat.net/MVC/

Which libraries can participate in the pilot project?

CARLI, PrairieCat, and Rock River Library Consortium agreed to participate in the software procurement process. Libraries in those consortia are eligible to apply for participation in the pilot project. CARLI members should be RAILS member libraries participating in I-Share.

Ideally, the pilot project will include 2–5 I-Share libraries, 5–10 PrairieCat libraries, and 3–5 Rock River libraries. As of November 14, 2017, five PrairieCat libraries and three Rock River libraries have expressed interest in participating.

What are the benefits of participating in the pilot project?

Libraries in the pilot project will be in the forefront of expanding resource sharing in Illinois. They will be able to offer a new service to their patrons; feedback from large-scale projects in other states indicates that this service is popular with

patrons. Pilot participants will provide feedback from staff and patrons that will help shape the future direction of the project. Libraries may also see a reduction in the staff time necessary to process interlibrary loan requests, thus saving money and/or freeing staff to do other work.

SHAREit, the recommended software, also offers the possibility of using other catalogs as a source of MARC records and of searching electronic resources. These possibilities will be further explored during contract negotiations and possibly during the pilot project.

How much does it cost?

There will be no fee to libraries during the pilot project, as RAILS expects to pay all costs of the pilot. During the later post-pilot expansion, libraries will be expected to pay a fee for participation. This fee has not yet been determined, but RAILS will make every effort to keep it as affordable as possible.

What are the responsibilities of libraries in the pilot project?

Libraries in the pilot project will be expected to:

- Actively use the system to receive and process interlibrary loan requests at a similar priority level as other methods currently in use at their library
- Allow patrons to place interlibrary loan requests through the overlay software themselves
- Actively promote the new service to their patrons and community
- Designate a primary contact person for their library
- Provide information needed for implementation promptly when requested
- Send staff to training
- Be open to examining their current interlibrary loan workflow and modifying it to take maximum advantage of the software's capabilities
- Estimate the cost of filling an interlibrary loan (that's not done through their shared catalog consortium) before the pilot project begins, and repeat the estimate when asked during the pilot project
- Provide feedback to RAILS on the pilot project
- Each consortium with pilot participants will be asked to designate one representative to serve on the RAILS Overlay Project Working Group, which will serve as a steering committee during the pilot

Libraries in the pilot project will be encouraged, but not required, to continue participation after the pilot project ends.

When does the pilot project start?

The timeline will be worked out with the vendor during contract negotiations. It's likely that implementation will begin in early 2018.

After earlier discussions with CARLI staff, the pilot is expected to have two phases, with PrairieCat and Rock River libraries going live first and I-Share libraries going live in the second phase.

How does my library apply for the pilot project?

Email Jane Plass, RAILS Associate Executive Director, at jane.plass@railslibraries.info with a brief statement of interest. Include the number of interlibrary loans requested and supplied during your most recent fiscal year. Do *not* include loans through your shared catalog consortium. Do include loans processed through any other method (OCLC, fax, ALA ILL form, etc.).

I have more questions. How can I get more information?

Contact Jane Plass at jane.plass@railslibraries.info or 630.734.5129. Additional information about the overlay project is posted on the RAILS website at https://www.railslibraries.info/services/overlay-project.