

Resource Sharing Advisory Council

June 13, 2007

Present: Betty Albright, Rob Carle, Jean Marie Cole, Carolyn Fagan, Dawn Geurds, Debbie LaRose, Virginia Prew, Mary Trev Thomas, Joe Thornton, Kathleen Tyrrell

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting (April 4, 2007) were approved without discussion.

Policy for handling missing DVD's: In response to an email question earlier in the month about how the libraries handle DVD cases that are returned with no DVD inside, BETH replied with the following, which all agreed is the proper procedure:

Any item with missing parts or damage should not be checked in. It should remain on the responsible patron's record and be sent to the owning library so that they may pursue it in the way that they find to be appropriate. By checking in the item you would lose prior borrower information.

If the patron is available at the time the item is actually returned they should of course be told to look for the item and to hang on to the case so everything can be returned at the same time.

When a patron drops off an empty case for another library and tells us the disk was already returned we put a block on the patron's card indicating we forwarded the case to the owning library to protect the patron and then when the owning library gets everything together they check in the item and remove the block.

Deleting missing items – how, and how often?: This item was also prompted by an email question, and was also addressed by the Database Maintenance Advisory Council. The consensus is that:

1. missing items are being deleted in a timely manner
2. it's a local decision.
3. there's little impact on patrons
4. this is not much of an issue

Bstats: Recently we changed the patron registration screen to require only one Bstat instead of two. This was fine with everyone and, again, apparently no big deal.

Should we send email hold notices immediately when requested items are checked in? UHLS has found a way to do this, so requesters wouldn't have to wait till the following day to learn that their items were ready to be picked up. However, the circulation staffs need some time to handle these items after they've been checked in, so the unanimous, strong answer to this question was no!

Should we send text messages for hold and overdue notices? The biggest concern expressed by the group is that text messaging is not free, and that we wouldn't want to irritate our patrons by running up their phone bills with hold and overdue notices. Joe pointed out that they would have to subscribe to our service, the way they change their notification method now. Some of us feel that there should be a signed agreement from the patron, to protect us from charges of surprise charges. We'll revisit this topic at a future meeting.

Online registration

The previous topic led to a discussion of online registration. Joe reported on the NYPL method:

- register online
- receive a library card in the mail that allows you to use online resources
- use the same card to check out material at a branch, but you must bring proof of residence the first time you use it.

NYPL, and most other large libraries, keep no signed agreements from their patrons.

Because we have a lot of details to work out before discussing this seriously, we decided to wait until UHLS has something solid to present at a future meeting.

What do libraries do when their patron wants to pay for another library's lost material? Do they accept cash, etc.? All agreed that we should not (and do not) send cash through the courier. Some don't accept it from their patrons, but require a check or money order. Others accept cash but write their own checks to the owning libraries (which can cause delays). All libraries should complete the payment form and return it along with the check, instead of just sending unexplained checks. UHLS will look for that form and put it online, along with circulation policies.

Courier: Things seem to be getting a little worse, though still much better than a year ago. The biggest issue is timing – especially lateness – and everyone agreed that we need a new schedule. Also, grungy bins are making a comeback.

System Slowness: Joe asked if the system slows down significantly every day. The situation is still bad, but not every day. We talked about ways of notifying UHLS about slowness so we can try to pinpoint the cause. Because circ staffs are so busy, there's no easy way for them to phone, IM, or email UHLS every time there's a slowdown. Mary Trev suggested that we pick a week where everyone would commit to notifying UHLS of slowdowns. We'll pursue that idea.

Space / purging log files: Last night we had a problem where some libraries couldn't pay fines or fees. The error message was similar to the one we got a month ago when the "fine/fees payment" table ran out of space. At that time we decided to purge old log data (more than a year old) after saving it somewhere, but have not moved on that because SirsiDynix gave us some breathing room by allocating more disk space to Horizon. Although last night's problem was unrelated (we now know), it was a reminder that we will need to purge some old log data. BETH asked if we could keep two years of data. Joe said that he'll look at the tables and see if there's anything obviously useless that we could purge without backing up first, and without losing important borrower histories.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 19, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. at UHLS.