OWLSnet and SkyRiver

Taco Tuesday Presentation

Who Are We?

- OWLSnet is a library consortium consisting of 29 libraries from the Outagamie Waupaca Library System and the Nicolet Federated Library system
- 1 full-time cataloger and 1 part-time cataloging assistant work for OWLS on system-wide cataloging
- 2 full-time catalogers work for Appleton Public Library (OWLS contracts with them to do some system work)
- Before SkyRiver, 9 libraries plus OWLS had access to OCLC Connexion
- We moved to SkyRiver in July 2014

Why Did We Move?

$$$$

SkyRiver costs less than half what we were paying for OCLC Connexion and more libraries could access it

There were also some developments promised…

SkyRiver at OWLSnet Today

- All member libraries can access SkyRiver through Sierra using a Z39.50 connection
    - Library staff can only bring in records, they cannot overlay
    - Library staff cannot edit bibs in Sierra
    - Limited editing in the Z39.50 version of SkyRiver
- OWLS and APL staff use a SkyRiver client
    - 2 versions of the client: editing capability and non-editing capability
    - Allows for original record creation
    - Ports directly into Sierra

Pros-Libraries

- All libraries (29 libraries, 49 locations) have access to the bib utility tool
  - Materials can get out to the shelf faster
  - Fuller records are in the database right away
- Libraries may understand the importance of cataloging more
  - OWLS provides training on what records are "good" records to bring in
  - They see the records they bring in right away
  - Records usually have titles, authors, series, subject headings, and summary fields so patrons can find items in the OPAC immediately
- Libraries appreciate the independence to bring in these records on their own
- Libraries brought in 12,734 bib records without OWLS' help in 2018

Pros-System Staff/Catalogers (Client)

- Easy to bring in and overlay records
- Ports directly into Sierra
- Can save local bibliographic records created in SkyRiver
- More can be done with the client than the Z39.50, so permissions can be controlled
- When SkyRiver goes down it is usually up and running again within an hour

Cons-Libraries (Z39.50)

- The interface looks just like Sierra so libraries get confused sometimes
- It's difficult (or confusing) for libraries to view more than the first result
- Libraries frequently pick the first result even if another one would be better
- Frequent incomplete records, so libraries will still ask us to update a record

Cons-System Staff/Catalogers

- Lack of quality control
  - Innovative says the cooperative nature is the control
- Multiple records for the same item that vary in quality
  - Many local fields, additional ISBNs and improper encoding
- More staff intervention is required
  - Authority work is now a manual process in Sierra
  - No efficient way to identify and overlay updated bibs
- Sometimes "Update Master Record" doesn't "stick"
  - Each participating institution picks its own encoding level, so if they choose full level then no one else's changes apply

Other Concerns-Dreams Unrealized

- Never quite lived up to expectations
  - We were under the impression that Innovative was developing features for SkyRiver that would automate processes (similar to OCLC's processes)
  - "Better Records" emails were sent on a weekly basis of records that had been "updated" but ours were frequently better than the updated versions
  - SkySearch feature has been underwhelming to say the least
  - Original SkyRiver staff have left Innovative and no one there now seems to understand it

Other Concerns-A Future in Question

Since its inception there have been questions about how long SkyRiver would last and how much Innovative is committed to the product.

- One person seems to be assigned to SkyRiver and that is not her only assignment
- At IUG 2019 it was announced that SkyRiver is a "legacy" product, but was later recanted
- Several features that were promised have been abandoned or III staff weren't aware of them

Contact Me

Amanda Lee

Outagamie Waupaca Library System

OWLSnet Manager

alee@owlsweb.org