June 25, 2015

To: Leslie Bednar
From: Liz Bishoff and Nancy Bolt
Re: IHLS Member Library Survey Report

This report is a companion to the report of the IHLS Staff Survey Report and the IHLS Focus Group Report. It includes a summary of the responses to all of the questions in the member survey. In this report we have not drawn any conclusions or recommendations nor any suggestions about prioritization. We will be preparing a final report that will combine the recommendations of both surveys and the focus groups along with recommended goals, objectives, and prioritized action for consideration by the IHLS Board.

Introduction

In March-April 2015, the Illinois Heartland Library System conducted a survey of member libraries to evaluate member library satisfaction with current services and identify future needs as part of the IHLS strategic planning initiative. More than 220 responses to the survey were received from across the IHLS region and across the type of libraries.

The survey report includes data on the survey respondents’ level of satisfaction with IHLS services and their future needs. The report includes comments by survey respondents which illustrate the views of the members, as well as detail the future needs of the member libraries and will be useful for planning.

Survey demographics

A total of 222 institutions responded to the survey. Of the 222 respondents, 216 indicated their type of library. The top response types were Public Libraries (122 or 56.5%), School Libraries (66 or 30.5%), and Academic and Special Libraries (14 or 65%) each.

IHLS currently has three service hubs, Champaign, Du Quoin and Edwardsville. The majority of the survey respondents are served by the Champaign hub (43.2% or 92), followed by Edwardsville (29.6% or 63 respondents) and Du Quoin (24.9% or 53 respondents.) Five respondents (2.3%) did not know their service hub.
The primary role of most survey respondents was Library Director (150 or 69.4%), followed by Media Center Director/Library Information Specialist (55 or 25.5%), Manager (9 or 4.1%) and Assistant Director (2 or 1%).

There were a range of additional titles, including Library Aide (4), Media Center Specialist—non-certified, Paid school librarian, Head of Circulation, District Librarian-managing 4 libraries, Retired Media Specialist and Board President, and Technical library assistant—full time paid position.

**Level of Satisfaction with IHLS services**

Respondents were asked to indicate their institution’s level of satisfaction with a number of IHLS services. The level of awareness of the IHLS is very high. Only the Talking books program (4.95% or 11 respondents) and the Library Job List (6.85% or 15 respondents) have a double digit number of respondents who weren’t familiar with the programs. Satisfaction with the IHLS service was generally high, as all but one topic received a majority of “very satisfied” or “satisfied” ratings. It should be noted that six of services are not used by at 15% of the respondents, with as high as 44% not using the service.

- Delivery received the highest percentage of “very satisfied” rating at 40.6%, with 39% of the respondents indicating they were “satisfied” with the service.
• Interlibrary loan receives a similarly high level of “very satisfied” (41%) and “satisfied” (44%) rating from respondents.

• 15.4% of respondents indicated that they “did not use” SHARE PAC, of those that did use SHARE PAC, 43% were “satisfied”, and 23% were “very satisfied”. We also asked about SHARE Training. 16.5% indicated that they “did not use” the SHARE Training. Of those who did, 43.6% were “satisfied”, while 9.5% were “very satisfied”, 20% were “neutral” and 6.5% were “dissatisfied”. The level of neutral is high for the topic of training.

The charts below provide further details of the responses.
Comments:

General:

• “Happy with the services.”
• “We appreciate all that IHLS staff do to facilitate our work.”
• “In my small school setting, there is just not much need to use these services, though I should look into the vendor discounts more closely.”
• “The system is starting to hire people who are qualified for a position instead of filling positions with people who were already there with the merger but were not very good or knowledgeable about the job they were supposed to do. This was very aggravating for library staff who had to deal with system staff that didn't always know what they were talking about. Considering the salaries these people were making it was and still is at times very frustrating but it is improving.”
• “I am not online, but I am very thankful for the small part of the bigger libraries I can be apart of.”
• “I am satisfied but since I am the only paid employee and time is a premium, I am not always sure which consultant I should talk to about certain issues.”
• “There are not really any extra services (besides ILDS and interlibrary loan) that are available to special libraries. The vendors contacted only benefit publics and academics, but I don't feel like much outreach has been done for those services that might benefit other types of libraries.”
• “Would like more trainings offered on a variety of topics as we had in the past with Lincoln Trails.”
Cataloging:
- “The head catalogers (especially Edie and Cheri) have been exceptionally helpful with the transitions. They work hard to meet the needs libraries of different sizes and types. Thanks to Kathy in delivery as well!”
- “Current cataloging expenses do not encourage us to purchase new and different material. We cannot justify spending $10 to have a $3.99 paperback catalogued. Some books are donated, but we end up spending too much to keep them.”
- “I wish cataloging were cheaper than $10 a book, without subscribing to OCLC.”
- “We rarely send items to the cataloging center. The times we have, the service and billing were extremely slow! The turnaround time for one item was over two months.”
- “I have been dissatisfied with both the Cataloging center and cataloging in general. We used to have accurate and complete MARC records for each item including ISBN, which is the best way to match. I’ve been told to match by title/author, yet I see LP records added to regular print and many other discrepancies. The Cataloging Center returns books that do not have complete MARC records in the system based on title/author alone.”

Delivery: Delivery received the highest level of satisfaction of all services, however there are many constructive suggestions for improving delivery services and policies. Respondents are particularly concerned about care of the items, frequency of delivery and delivery stops.

- “It seems to take longer for my library's patrons to receive materials they have requested than when we were part of a different delivery hub.
- “Delivery to my facility is excellent, and the people involved are wonderful to work with.”
- “Our main complaint is speed of service - response time is on the slower side. delivery is not as fast as when the systems were separate.”
- “I am unhappy that we are moving from having delivery at three site in our district to one site. That is going to increase the work load and delay delivery time in a district that is already severely understaffed.”
- “I feel it is terrible that we are moving to one drop off location. I have 4 branches. This is causing hardship in our ordering, receiving books in a timely manner, and now we have to figure out how our branches are going to get the materials ordered. Drivers drive right by every branch daily.”
- “The delivery service had been good, but lately it is not. Twice our deliveries went to another school instead of our usual school (which has been the same for about 8 years). Then the last delivery of books was placed on my desk instead of at the usual delivery place (where the tub is located) so that an item was not picked up. This caused the lending library to call us to find out where the item was because they were waiting for it to be returned.”
- “There are still many items being damaged in delivery. The main problem is with items getting wet. I do appreciate how responsive the head of delivery is to concerns and problems.”
- “I was told that you are wanting to cut out delivery to my building and have one delivery for our district. I am in another town that does not have a library, this is VERY inconvenient!”

ILL: The comments in this section are rather poignant, with respondents demonstrating both the importance of ILL to their users and frustrations with current policies and practices, as well as level of sharing across the cooperative.

- “Our students can’t wait over a week or more for research materials when they have deadlines and due dates on their projects and papers.”
• “We were very satisfied with ILL thru IHLS until the state changed its policy two years ago. We are a small library and ordered books thru ILL several times a week. Because of the changes, we can no longer borrow items. This has made our circulation statistics decrease. Because of a lack of funds, we will never be able to afford to switch to Polaris, so this situation will not be remedied unless the state again changes its policy. It is extremely disappointing and frustrating that in the attempt to reach out to certain libraries, you have excluded others who were already using your services, and it seems like "SHARE" to be a very poor choice for its name.”
• “I was torn about how to score the question about ILL. While I love the service and love what the System does to support it, it is deeply frustrating that there are so few libraries that are willing to share. I wish that local holds did not exist or only existed for a uniform length of time/material/etc.”
• “I am very dissatisfied with the amount of ILL items we are sending out. Some days we have only one or two on our list. In the past we have sent out 15-20+ items, I understand we are a smaller library and only get delivery 3X's a week but we DO have items that I know have holds on them and could easily be going out to area libraries. I have brought this topic up many times and nothing has ever happened. We would be very happy to send our items out, unlike some of the larger libraries that every time a request is placed for their library you get the "pop-up" they will not send the item out. Our number of patron requests are many times greater than what we are sending out.....I would like the numbers to be a little more equal!”
• “We have better luck now that we have joined Illinois Heartland, though not a full member yet. I did not like using the OCLC for borrowing.”

L2:
• “L2 is not accurate in tracking cataloging hours L2 is easy to use.”
• “L2--would LOVE for library list to be taken off (or better yet repeated) on tab of home page.”
• “Most live offerings in L2 require too long of a drive to make it worth our time to attend meetings and other opportunities that are offered. Effingham is not convenient or close for many of us. It is not worth it to spend four hours on the road for a two hour training session.”

e-Read Illinois:
• “We do not like that 3m holds do not stay on accounts for allotted time. Also, do not like the work ticket system, would like to discuss a different solution to getting questions, and or problems taken care of.”
• “We are having a problem with our e-Read Illinois program because it does not seem as if we can adequately block out inappropriate items in our collection for our K-5 population.”

SHARE PAC: For additional comments regarding SHARE PAC please see Appendix A.
• “Very pleased with quantity of books and other items now available, that were not before, to our students at Arthur Grade School!! I'm getting so many more request now than before!!! It's A Good thing!!!”
• “We need to fix inconsistencies in whether members borrow items they won't share.”
• “I wish in the PAC it would show the book covers of more than just the new to the system books, maybe new to your library books or Illinois award lists (this was talked about several times, but never created.”

SHARE training:
• “We have not been contacted for any SHARE training this year yet??”
• “There is not enough local training for what we need to know for our 15hrs each year.”
• “I'm very disappointed in training. It's not scheduled at good times for schools. Some times there is no notification so we can get subs, etc. I still don't know how half of Polaris works. I can't take off a half day to drive hours away. Have 2 sessions one in am & one in pm same day!”
• “SHARE Training is competent but not all areas of the IHLS service area are covered equally. SHARE PAC can be customized more than we are currently being offered. I have seen other Polaris PACs that are more attractive than the out of the box website that we currently have.”
• “For SHARE training please keep classes open for those of us in the southern part of the state.”
• “SHARE training - The SHARE is responsive to requests for training. I think the online training modules are helpful, though a little in need of updating.”
• “SHARE Training has just been too few and far between to be greatly useful; and too often focused on Edwardsville (with a system this large, training needs to be very mobile; staff have been willing to travel, and that is appreciated.”

School libraries:
• “I feel like school libraries are ignored. I cannot get records for books that are not in the system like I used to. I do not have the time or need to do full marc records or anything else complicated, but I often have to sit on books for months as there is no record for me to tag on to. Meetings where school reps are sought are held in the middle of the day, where we have to take an entire day off to participate and few of us have that many professional days off. I really wish tweaking would take into account school needs instead of public, but the school needs are not known as we can't get to the meetings!”
• “Schools use the Axis 360 ebook system and it is very hard to get people to use create accounts, download and set up three to four different apps. I have used the 3M through my public library and love it. It is one app and so easy to use. Why can't the schools have this app too?”

Vendor discounts:
• “I need to know more about these discounts. Are they listed on the website?”
• “The largest lib system in the world should get better deals, esp. lower minimums for free shipping and discounts for smaller libraries.”
• “Vendor discounts were from Baker and Taylor for paperback books were reduced to 25% at one point, and some libraries from other legacy systems have posted about having bigger discounts. It seems like with the larger organization, possibly we could all get larger discounts. Also database prices, for instance from Gale, are much WORSE through IHLS than I can do on my own. Is there a way to leverage the buying power of the group?”
• “For the majority of products, I am able to negotiate better prices individually, so we don't take part in the IHLS vendor discounts.”
• “All the vendor discounts listed on the IHLS website have either expired or are due to expire. DEMCO still honors the IHLS contract, which results in savings to my library.”

Usefulness of IHLS services
Following on the level of satisfaction question, the survey asked IHLS members how useful they believed the same IHLS services were for their Library. In general the survey respondents rated the level of usefulness “very useful” or “useful” for all services that they used. As noted in the satisfaction question, several of the services “are not used” by a significant percentage of the members, including Cataloging Centers (31.6%), e-Read Illinois (38.5%), Library Job List (26.6%), etc.
• Delivery received the highest rating of “very useful” (80.5% or 177 respondents) and 9.5% or 21 respondents “useful”.
• Like delivery, interlibrary loan received high ratings of ‘very useful’ (69.9% or 153 respondents) and 18.8% or 41 respondents “useful”.
• SHARE PAC which supports resource sharing, received “very useful” ratings from 48.9% or 105 respondents and “useful” rating from 21.4% or 46 respondents. Nearly 16% of the respondents (34) “do not use” SHARE PAC.
• e-Read Illinois was identified as “very useful” by 36.2% of the respondents (79) and “useful” by 16%, (35), as noted above this is one of the services that a high percentage of IHLS member libraries do not use.

The charts below illustrate the level of usefulness for the IHLS services.
Comments: Member libraries provided specific comments on the usefulness of many of the above services.

General: Some respondents grouped all their comments together.

- “The usefulness of various services is dependent upon need. We like and use the LLSAP, or we would migrate to iShare. But it is occasionally difficult to be a non-public library in this system.”
- “Delivery has greatly improved with the arrival of Susan, the IT department continues to improve along with the cataloging center and system receptionists but the response to helpdesk tickets is still an issue.”
- “We need all of these services in our library system.”
- “Our library finds very little use for the Library System beyond the ebook service, Polaris and the delivery.”
- “For my library, delivery and the PAC are the most important resources supplied by IHLs. I do my interlibrary loans through OCLC exclusively.”
- “SHARE and delivery/ILL are the services we would absolutely not want to give up. CMC is needed but not at the top of our priority list. Our patrons love 3M. L2 would be great if there were more local offerings. We have used the job list and are glad it exists. Talking Books is definitely needed though it is not a service with direct impact on this library, we do acknowledge that it is needed and that many people can benefit from Talking Books. We do tell patrons about it when it seems appropriate. SHARE training is important--especially for catalogers. Vendor discounts are nice and appreciated.”
- “I put both Cataloging Centers and Delivery as "Very useful" regardless of issues since we need both.”

ILL:

- “Interlibrary loan is difficult because we do not get delivery services.”
L2:
• “L2 is very useful, unfortunately many times meetings are either not on L2 or misinformation about the meeting is posted.”

SHARE PAC and SHARE training: For additional recommendations regarding SHARE/Polaris, see Appendix A for additional recommendations
• “The SHARE PAC would be more useful if the owning library's materials would surface to the top, not just be bolded which is difficult to notice. There are many useful features of the SHARE PAC that are underutilized.”
• “I was very happy with I Share. Since Mid March I have been using Leap & Pac. I am frustrated. I have to move back and forth between the two programs. It takes me much longer to find the items I am wanting to order from other libraries. I cannot see the full record in Leap.”
• “The SHARE PAC is not user friendly -- for patrons or staff. This seems to be the primary complaint since transitioning to SHARE. Searches are almost impossible. Also, there should not be an additional cost to catalog books. If SHARE is going to employ catalogers anyway, this service should be provided.”
• “Since the switch it isn't as easy to locate and get books through Share and OCLC. Share is showing thing as available but they are not.”
• “SHARE training quality and consistency could be improved.”

Vendor discounts:
• “I didn't know we still had vendor discounts.”
• “It would be nice to receive notices about the vendor discounts. We used to receive these, but not for many years. Is there a readily available list of these vendor discounts?”

Effectiveness of IHLS communication tools
Based on input from the focus group sessions held in March, 2015, a series of questions were included regarding how IHLS communicated with ILHS member libraries. The first of these questions relates to the effectiveness of IHLS communication tools. Several tools were seen as “very effective” including the newsletters and the Exchange listserv, however like the services there are a number of communication tools that members “did not use”, including Connect with Leslie, Facebooks and the IHLS Member Forums. The comments below provide insight into why these are not utilized.

• IHLS newsletters were rated “very effective” by 34% (75 respondents) and “effective” by 44.3% (98 respondents).
• The Exchange listserv was rated “very effective” by 29.2% (64 respondents) and “effective” by 33.8% (74 respondents).
• The IHLS website are seen as “effective” by 51.6% (113 respondents) and “very effective” by 20.5% (45 respondents), while the SHARE website is seen as “effective” by 45.7% (101 respondents) and “very effective” by 19% (42 respondents).
• Connect with Leslie is “not used” by 42.3%, 94 of the 221 respondents.
• Facebook Page is “not used” by 46.6%, 103 of the 221 respondents.
• IHLS Member forums are “not used” by 25.7% 56 of the 218 respondents.
• IHLS Sponsored chats are “not used” by 37.7%, 83 of the 220 respondents.
Comments: The comments on communication tools provide important insight into the effectiveness and usefulness of a number of the tools. The time that members have available to review IHLS communication is a major issue, one respondent noted, “The ones I do not use are because I do not have the time available as a school librarian.” Several respondents commented that there are too many lists and emails and that information is repeated, 

- “Too many list serves and emails to read everything. Would be nice to have it all condensed. Busy with work and do not always have the time read everything.”
- “I would like to only get communications once. I generally get emails on the SHARE, directors and exchange listservs, all saying the same thing.”
- “It’s hard to tell what’s really important with all the other emails coming and going.”
- “There are too many places to look. And, with so many places to look, information is slipping through the cracks.”

Other’s comments on use of social media and listservs: A range of comments were provided on the different social media used by IHLS, with both constructive criticism and praise:

- One respondent noted that,” the usefulness of the various listservs has improved drastically in the last year or so, as the signal-to-noise ratio has improved and they are less frequently used as avenues for kvetching about problems in the system. There needs to be an outlet for this, but it needs to remain within the system, not broadcast on statewide lists.”
- “Social media sites are not available to a lot of libraries, so these options are not always available. I do like the listservs, but I wish that more people from IHLS would monitor them, even on a rotating basis, so that when questions are asked that are not easily answered by other librarians, there is someone of authority who can assist. Unfortunately, we’re usually just told ‘send a help desk ticket.’”
• “Connect with Leslie is not held at times which are conducive to school folks. I would suggest that the workday and workflow of school people be considered, specifically, in order to better communicate to those stakeholders in any fashion of communication used by IHLS.”
• “CHAT is awkward, have only taken advantage of IT chats. Forums were better when smaller and at LCLS Exchange is too junked up.”
• “I no longer attend Chat sessions because of too many sessions have been forgotten, cancelled, or not posted in a timely manner.”
• The respondents also comments about online behavior:
  o “There have been times in meetings when I’ve been belittled by an IHLS staffer after asking a question. It has happened on more than one occasion with the same staffer. I have no idea why she is antagonistic. But, her/his behavior makes me question whether just anyone is welcome at IHLS events.”

IHLS Websites--selected comments:
• “The important information is buried somewhere within awkward drop-downs.”
• “Both the IHLS and SHARE web site needs to be updated more consistently and timely.”
• “The IHLS and SHARE websites are confusing and not user friendly....”
• “The SHARE website is a never ending source of frustration for me. I just think it's not logically organized. Things are always so difficult to find. They're never were it makes sense to be.”
• “The IHLS & SHARE websites need a little more work to become more useful and user friendly.”

Level of agreement about IHLS communication
The survey asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement to the following statements related to IHLS communication:

• I can make decisions based on information provided by IHLS
• I can easily find information I am seeking on the IHLS website
• I can easily find information I am seeking on the SHARE website
• I can easily decide whether to go to the SHARE or the IHLS website
• The IHLS website provides accurate information
• The IHLS website provides up-to-date information
• IHLS documents are professional prepared and presented
• IHLS documents and information are complete and accurate
• I like the amount of information that IHLS provides me

For almost all of the statements more than 50% of the respondents “agreed” with all the statements. The exception was the statements, “I can easily find information I am seeking on the SHARE website,” and “I can easily decide whether to go to the SHARE or the IHLS website” where only 38% “agreed” that they could easily find information on the SHARE website, while 31.6% “agreed” that they could easily decide which site to go to. More telling is the number of respondents who are “neutral” on the statements. This level of neutrality, is the highest of any in the survey, may indicate that the information is neither useful nor not useful.
Comments: The comments associated with this question again addressed the amount of communication, they also addressed timeliness and timing. The different types of libraries have different issues and communication needs. One respondent suggested that Friday afternoon might not be the best time to send the IHLS newsletter as people are ready to go home.

- “When information is emailed, there is usually no problem, though occasionally things are rushed or incomplete and do not address some aspects of a given situation. More problematic is when communication is left to the last minute and there isn’t time to review information before we need to discuss it.”
• “While I like the type of communication I am receiving from the System, I do not like the timeliness (or lack thereof.)”
• “A start would be to eliminate typos in your communication to the membership. IHLS is not transparent and the websites are badly organized.”
• “Accurate and up-to-date...but again, an overwhelming amount of information—and much of it not relevant to schools.”
• “Information is often redundant and overly wordy. As far as the website, it is not updating and there is information that is old and should be deleted since it is no longer applicable.”

Impact of IHLS on Member Library’s ability to delivery excellent services

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “Illinois Heartland Library System has a positive impact on my library’s ability to delivery excellent library services.” Of 220 respondents, 42.3% (93) strongly agreed, 44.1% (97) agreed, 10% (22) were neutral, 2.3% (5) disagreed, while 1.4% (3) disagreed.

Comments: The comments elaborate on the impact of IHLS services, focusing not unexpectedly on the resource sharing activities including delivery, interlibrary loan and SHARE. Several respondents commented on the how the development IHLS:
• “All things considered - how the System had to rebuild from dismantled system - it is working remarkably well & provides ENORMOUS assets to our library program.”
• “A few years ago I would have strongly agreed, but services have declined as the state of Illinois' financial mismanagement has come to light and cuts to budgets have been made.”

The greatest impact is on resource sharing:
• “Love the interlibrary loan! A small library like us could not meet users’ needs without it. Holds are arriving much faster, this year. New delivery schedule is good. Like the training webinars, for
cataloging and other topics—saves driving time, which is wasted time away from school. Love 
3M ebooks, though wish publishers would not limit the # of circs. What will happen when the 1 
year circ or the 26 circs expires on the 11000 books—will there be funds to keep it going?”

- “ILDS is one of the most valuable resources available through IHLS. Without delivery service, I’d 
have to pay for shipping more often, which would make me less likely to provide books loans to 
other libraries. The PAC is also a valuable tool my patrons like using from their desks (since it’s 
internet based) so that they can request items from our library. We also like having ILDS delivery 
because it permits me to request books that aren’t work-related for them. If I had to pay for 
delivery within Illinois, it would hinder my ability to provide a more well-rounded service since I 
could not justify the Agency paying to return items that have nothing to do with work.”

- “There are a lot of things going right with IHLS. Despite the many changes, the delivery services 
operate well. IHLS staff seem well-trained and knowledgeable about the operations of the 
Library system. Having a reliable delivery service and people from whom we can get reliable 
information is essential to providing front-line service to our patrons.”

At the same time views can change quickly and can be based on a single factors, as expressed by this 
respondent, “I would have strongly agreed up until the decision to deliver to only one of my branches. 
This was a POOR decision for IHLS. This puts a huge burden on libraries.”

IHLS serves a wide range of types and sizes of libraries. School libraries and affiliate libraries expressed 
feelings of disenfranchisement:

- “Our program, and our people, feel a large divide between what we do every day and what the 
system does for us as unique school organizations. We no longer have an advocate for us at the 
system level; therefore, our level of connection is almost nothing, leaving us feeling very 
DISENFRANCHED. One of my clearest examples of this is when Axis 360 came on board. This 
platform is obviously something that could make a tremendous positive effect on schools and 
help us provide excellent library services; however, no one involved with this project gave any 
consideration to the fact that school cannot engage students with something that openly 
provides erotica. That was either a serious oversight or a complete lack of regard for schools and 
their situations. In any event, when situations like this occur, it causes school organizations to 
feel like they are not valued and not important to the mission of IHLS.”

- “I’m not convinced we get our money’s worth. I could easily provide our students with the 
materials they need with the money it costs to be a member, but the decision to remain a 
member of IHLS has been made by the superintendent, not me.”

Others expressed concerns about cost of services:

- “SHARE and delivery are the only are more important than the System services as a whole. 
Other services such as the e-books, etc. are on a charge basis - $40 per contact; Cataloging for 
smaller libraries at $10 per book is exorbitant; etc.”

What 3 things could the system improve services to member libraries

More than 125 respondents made suggestions for improvements. Many of the recommendations were 
addressed in earlier questions, such as improvements to the IHLS website and improvements to 
communication, however many additional suggestions were also made in this section. The suggestions 
have been analyzed and categorized. The areas for improvement have all been identified earlier, 
including communication, consulting services and training, delivery, networking, SHARE-PAC (Polaris),
discounts, the cataloging center, and services to school libraries. Several respondents indicated that they were pleased with the services IHLS offered, while others indicated that they couldn’t identify any new services.

- “We have nothing in mind that is need of improvement at this time.”
- “I am pleased with the current services. My library is very unique and has been allowed to function that way. Thank you.”
- “They do an excellent job. I can’t think of anything.”

The following are samples of recommendations by category:

**General:**
- IHLS Relationship with Directors:
  - “Be clearer about line between what IHLS is responsible for and what member libraries are responsible for. – Require the directors’ attendance (at least virtually) for at least one meeting per year – Offer some kind of orientation for directors new to IHLS/SHARE.”
  - “It would be nice for IHLS person to be able to spend a short amount of time in each Library.”
  - “The Executive Director needs to be seen more; occasional chats are cool, but getting to the various regions of the system with Face to Face situations would be nice.”
- SHARE VS. NON-SHARE members: Several respondents noted that IHLS needs to be more inclusive of non-SHARE members, this might be best reflected by one respondent’s statement, “Since starting the SHARE database, libraries that do not use SHARE are basically ignored and not considered important.”
- IHLS Membership: Several respondents indicated a need to position services to meet all IHLS libraries, there were numerous comments from school libraries, but academic libraries also commented on the need for attention: “1.) remember that you serve more than just public and school libraries – don’t just be a less expensive option than iShare, but improve outreach to academics. 2.) Do more needs surveys. The system can’t always help, but there are ways you can help lots of us.”
- Innovation: “Executive staff needs to find innovative ways to make a difference. More interested in the inclusion of members...bring members together in a cohesive fashion.”
- Other: “It is important for library systems to realize that without libraries they don’t exist. They provide a valuable service, a very valuable service, but the legislature has set up the library system structure so that member libraries have no binding voice in system governance. I am extremely concerned that IHLS does not have its financial house in order. I believe at this point all accounting should be outsourced to a professional accounting firm.”

**Communication:** There were numerous comments that are included in the category of communication.

- “I only have one, not 3 and this survey will hopefully help you improve COMMUNICATION.”
- “Have one site send out information – too confusing when it comes from different people/services. Don’t always have time to read all the emails. One person that knows what’s going on instead of being passed off to another person. Yikes! My problem maybe minor to you, but it is very important to me.”
- IHLS staff responses to members: Several respondents suggested that IHLS staff need to consider how they respond to constructive criticism:
• “Listen and act on member concerns or give an honest explanation on why changes and improvements cannot be made.”
• “Please accept constructive criticism more graciously. Many times, when people make well-meaning comments, they are met with hostility and defensiveness by system staff, rather than with an attitude of consideration. You don’t necessarily need to do everything suggested, but people should still feel like they’re being heard.”

- Response time: Another issue that was raised was speed of response, while issue of timeliness is difficult to judge and varies from individual to individual, there was sufficient number of comments that the issue needs to be investigated.
  - “Timely response to member questions.”
  - “Provide better response and follow-up when contacted about issues and/or problems.”
  - “1. Faster response time, including answering phones – it is very rare that you can actually speak to a live person. 2 clear communication – a one stop shop, rather than hearing different bits and pieces in each form of communications.”

Suggestions about the website, email, newsletter and other communication have already been addressed in the earlier questions.

Consulting and training: Respondents suggested IHLS offer consulting services on a range of topics. They also had a number of suggestions for both new areas of training as well as improvements to existing training.

• Consulting:
  - “Consulting services (I know there is not any money for this but we could all strongly use the help in navigating in Library Land. More actual meetings to discuss issues – up-to-date communication regarding library laws.”
  - “Greatly miss the local support of a consult that has a vast knowledge of how everything from bar coding to cataloging works. Like being able to go to one person for all our needs.”
  - “Consulting on legal questions, consulting on SHARE circulation issues.”

• Training:
  - “Online training was something promised years ago when the systems merged, but I’ve not yet seen anything happen along those lines. I don’t have ability to drive to trainings. Please consider adding more online cataloging (CE) training for those of us who cannot travel to get them. The chats are fine, but a little redundant for those of us who have been cataloging awhile, so I would like to learn something new.”
  - “Produce professional training materials; hold trainings in locations with reliable equipment and internet service; schedule training/meetings in varied locations.”
  - “More beginner level catalog training.”
  - There were suggestions to offer more training in all regions of IHLS. This respondent reflects the situation of many members, “I have a hard time finding time to travel to places that are providing classes.”

Delivery: While there is a high level of satisfaction with delivery and it’s viewed as very useful by members, there were a number of suggestions regarding delivery.

• Customer service: A number of respondents raised the issue of delivery driver customer service,
  - “I’ve had some issues with a previous delivery driver. If they haven’t already, perhaps a customer service workshop might be a good idea.”
“Update delivery schedules & not let drivers change without notice. Get printing straightened out.”
“Provide full-time staff for delivery instead of the constantly changing part timers. Far too many items are being mis-routed.”
“get the kinks out of the delivery services with the new delivery personnel. Don’t assume that everyone knows when changes are made i.e. delivery routes.”
“If I’m having trouble with delivery, don’t treat me like an idiot when I call the number the website says to call. I have to go after school to the public library & lug heavy bags to get my delivers so it would be nice if my material was there when I go even if it’s raining, sleeting, snowing, etc. and lug it back into the school.”
 Frequency: Frequency of delivery was an issue for many. If they had three-day delivery the wanted five. If they use to have delivery to their library and now they have to go to another library to pick up their books, they want the delivery at their library.

Schools: The survey respondents had a number of comments regarding system services to schools.

- Staff support for schools: “Commit to a consistent form of networking for school librarians (that includes a PD component which is certified by ISBE). 2. Employee at least one designated person to support schools, given that they are the majority of your membership. 3. Make strides in EVERYTHING YOU DO to consider the unique qualities/needs of schools, academics, specials alike.”
- “Think of schools and their impact in your decision making…we can’t even make it to your board meetings.”
- “Create professional learning opportunity for schools (outside of SHARE/Polaris training.)”

SHARE/Polaris: While the majority of the suggestions related to functionality, one respondent noted, “I wish it didn’t seem like IHLS is trying to push all libraries into becoming full SHARE members. We have a great small library but we cannot afford to become SHARE members and it seems like each year we will be penalized more and more for maintaining our independence from SHARE.”

There are specific comments about the functionality of SHARE, which we are putting in Appendix A, rather than incorporating in the report. The following are more general comments:

Survey respondents made the following recommendations regarding SHARE/Polaris:

- “Polaris was not very user friendly, Polaris needs to improve in areas to make it more user friendly”
- “Consistency in loan times”
- “Universal patron library cards”
- “Provide more than just the out of the box PAC configuration”
- “Provide a more organized website”
- “Revamp Polaris software to meet the needs of our libraries, by simplifying the standard circulation actions and getting rid of unusable, distracting and bulky functions.”

Meeting with other IHLS librarians

Providing the opportunity to meet with other librarians in IHLS was another topic that emerged from the focus group sessions, so several questions were included in the survey. IHLS currently offers a variety of online opportunities for IHLS librarians to interact including the IHLS Chats and the Member forums. The survey asked respondents to indicate not only how they might like to meet—online, face to face or
no preference, but also asked whom they might like to engage with—librarians from the same type of library, librarians in their geographic area, librarians of the same size of library, and/or IHLS staff who can share information about a topic. Across all types of gatherings the preferred approach was face to face meeting, followed by no preference. Face to face meetings were preferred 56.6% or 120 respondents when considering meeting with same type of library and 62.6% or 134 respondents when considering meeting with librarians in same geographic region. Face to face was of slightly lesser importance when considering meeting with same size of library, 45% (94 respondents) and 34.3% (72 respondents). Interestingly 12% (25 respondents) indicated that they had no interest in meeting by size, which was the largest number of respondents in the no interest category. The comments indicate that there’s a recognition that online meeting is needed, due to travel limitation and staffing constraints. Librarians, including school libraries with limited staff are not easily able to leave for face to face meetings.

In the focus group sessions conducted as part of the planning process, IHLS members expressed a desire to meet more often with their library colleagues. Please share with us your preference for whom you'd like to meet with and how you'd like to meet.

Answered: 216 Skipped: 6
Comments: The comments below, reflect the different perspectives of individual local environments. School librarians are limited in their ability to attend meetings of any type. Meeting their needs offers unique challenges. Similarly small geographically distant libraries have similar challenges.

- “Face to face meetings are preferred and supplementing with online would be great!”
- “Networking is extremely valuable. It helps you keep track of trends, gives you a support base from which to draw when you need help and promotes mentoring among libraries.”
- “I have problems getting away from a school setting for these meetings, so even on-line would be a problem.”
- “I don’t really have the time to spend meeting with other librarians though I know there is value in it. We have two part-time librarians so there is only time to do what we have to to run the library. Can only meet once or twice a year.”
- “Most IHLS meetings are not compatible with the school schedule and school limits. We cannot leave libraries unmanned, we cannot take entire days off to attend late morning meetings.”

Frequency of meeting
The follow-on survey question asked respondents to indicate the frequency of meeting by type of meeting. While respondents showed a preference for quarterly meetings, regardless of type of meeting, the percentage of respondents preferring quarterly vs. semi-annual or quarterly or monthly in most categories was relatively small, except in the face to face categories where there was a clear preference for quarterly meetings over monthly or annual meetings. In no category was there a preference for just an annual meeting.
What role should IHLS play in helping members meeting?

The survey asked respondents what role IHLS should play in organizing member meetings. The majority of the respondents indicated that IHLS should help us organize the meetings and visit from time to time to share information 53.4% (110 respondents). The remainder of the respondents indicated that IHLS should help organize and plan the meeting as well as attend, 18.5% (38 respondents), followed by help organize and attend all of the meetings, 8.2% (17 respondents) and nearly an equal number indicated that the members indicating that they could plan their own meetings, but IHLS should help organize the meeting 7.7% (16 respondents). Only 12.1% (25 respondents) indicated that they could organize the meeting on their own.
Comments:

- “It is helpful to have system staff at meetings on occasion, especially if there are big changes happening. However, the few times that we have had IHLS/SHARE staff at these types of meetings, I feel the system staff took up too much time. Visiting staff should be respectful of the structure of the meeting and find out how much time they should take up beforehand and respect that time limit.”
- “I would also like to check #1 and #2. It is good to have a central location from where the meetings are planned, such as booking Effingham and possibly certain speakers would need to be booked at the system level, but committees could be formed to help with planning and implementing.”
- “Organizing may not actually be the role that IHLS needs to play. If IHLS can facilitate publicizing the meetings, that would be more helpful. We can get them organized on our own. However it would be valuable if IHLS would make some staff available to attend meetings, when there are topics that need to be publicized or when directors feel they need to have face to face with IHLS staff.”
- “Groups within IHLS need support beyond just delivery coordination and Polaris/technical assistance. School libraries, for example, struggle to hold meetings in our self-organized groups, for lack of support and understanding among our administrators, and for lack of awareness and consistency among our members. Our jobs change, our roles are eliminated, and without a consistent contact from IHLS staff to act as a liaison among our school librarians we can easily lose touch. We would greatly benefit from IHLS supporting our meetings or larger gatherings twice a year and with more unity would come more feedback from our subgroup to give IHLS a better idea of what this very large component of the system needs/wants/prefers in our library services.”
- “Probably wouldn’t attend due to travel involved.”

IHLS and Member Libraries
Additional comments that will inform development of the strategic plan

Twenty individuals provided additional comments, these are a selection of the comments.

- “We are stronger working together. It was nice that you asked.”
- “Thank you for taking the time to consider peoples' comments and suggestions. This is a great way to feel heard. I recommend doing this regularly, even if not tied in with the strategic plan.”
- “Please ensure that all strategic planning represents the interests of ALL library types who belong to the system: public, school, academic, special.”
- “I am fairly new to the position (just finished a year) and the staff has been EXTREMELY helpful and supportive.”
- “I believe the Library System faces tremendous challenges in servicing such a vast geographical area, comprised of diverse libraries with a tremendous variety of needs and expectations. Kudos on the efforts made on behalf of all of those libraries. Please continue to look at each of those diversities, needs and expectations as the System moves forward.”
- “The delivery system is super valuable to my library. Being able to call consultants and ask question is super valuable. I like you are listing grant applications on your website.”
- “Overall, IHLS services are appreciated and necessary. The core services of automation and delivery are two that we would not be able to sustain without system help. Patrons appreciate it as well. Keep Talking Books! We primarily deal with staff in Du Quoin but all staff are helpful. Some are not very good about responding to email and voice mail messages. This should be a requirement for all staff to keep up with correspondence. Thank you for all you do!”
- “It is important for library systems to realize that without libraries they don’t exist. They provide a valuable service, a very valuable service, but the legislature has set up the library system structure so that member libraries have no binding voice in system governance. I am extremely concerned that IHLS does not have its financial house in order. I believe at this point all accounting should be outsourced to a professional accounting firm.”
- “There needs to be a more hands on approach with any and all technical problems, and questions.”
• “Continue to improve delivery, automation, member meetings, cataloging, and especially the helpdesk.”
Appendix A: Polaris Comments

• “I would love it if a book search could be classified by the grade or age of a person. Example: I do not need ALL tornado books, just those suited for 8 year olds.”
• “Give us important information in a condensed, historical comparison checklist in order to interpret new changes to policy that affect our decision-making as voters. Allow libraries the freedom to use interlibrary loan materials in compliance with their own policies. Revamp Polaris software to meet the needs of our libraries, by simplifying the standard circulation actions and getting rid of unusable, distracting, bulky functions.”
• “I have had some help desk tickets ignored. Millenium would turn long overdue items into bills and we could print them and fax them. Now we never see our items at other libraries when printing overdues.”
• “1. Open its lending/borrowing policies back up to include those libraries that were excluded after the policies were changed two years ago. 2. Offer classes once again at training sites, such as Olney Public Library”
• “1) Polaris should have a perimeter where we can begin a search for material in our home library. It's too time consuming to go through the steps of narrowing down the libraries to just ours. 2) Can there be a tracking system indicating when an item will arrive at our library. 3) We want to continue being able to renew interlibrary loan materials without having to get permission from the loaning library to do so. We order multiple copies of items for teachers”
• “STANDARD PLACEMENT OF BARCODES ON MATERIALS UNIVERSAL LOAN PERIOD UNIVERSAL FINE”
• “Put Overdrive books in the catalog”
• “A note for a change in Polaris: when putting an item on hold for a patron, I often put it under my account and check it out the to correct patron when the item arrives. It would be wonderful to leave a note (e.g. For John Smith in 2-G) on that hold record like we could in Dynix.”