

The MERLIN/MIRACL Circulation/Reserves Committee met Thursday, February 11, 1999 in Columbia. Elizabeth Ader chaired the meeting.

Present: Doris Beeson (SLU Pius), Carol Green (MU Ellis), Resa Kerns (MU Law), Scott Peterson (UMR), Mary Jo Barbush-Weiss (UMR), June DeWeese (MU Ellis), Mary Ann Samson (SLU Law), Jim Rhodes (UMSL), Barbara Hufker (UMSL), Larry Ruzich (UMKC), Mary Anderson (UMKC), Elizabeth Ader (UMKC), Mary Ann McFarland (SLU HSC), Janet Jackson (LSO), George Rickerson (LSO), Judy Fox (Washington University)

The meeting began with introductions. Elizabeth Ader, Chair, announced the order of the agenda would be changed to allow George Rickerson to give the committee updates on Mobius. He introduced Mark Wahrenbrock and Robin Kespohl as new Mobius staff.

MOBIUS STATUS REPORT.

George reported that the organization of the clusters is just about finalized. He hopes to have the contract with III signed next month. The first new library added to Mobius will be Lincoln University followed by William Woods and Westminster later in the summer. Columbia College and Stephens will also be in the same cluster but no date has been set for their implementations. There will probably be 2 more new cluster implementations by early 2000.

George said the contract includes an upgrade to III Millenium for both MERLIN and the Washington University systems. We will no longer need to buy records. Also, user licenses will no longer be needed for the Web OPAC. Licenses will only be needed for telnet and staff access. The switch to Millenium will require sophisticated work stations. For circulation, staff would be able to continue to use the character based interface and the Java interface simultaneously. For serials work, once a record has been updated in Millenium, it can no longer be updated in the character based interface. The MERLIN and Washington University systems won't be converted to Millenium for at least a year.

LSO and the Mobius Office will be moving to a new location in March. Meetings may continue to be held in the old offices until new furniture has been acquired.

George gave an update on the MERLIN transaction file problem. It resulted from a bad configuration for the replacement RAID cabinet. The problem has now been solved. He said III had a stellar response to the original RAID failure but the response to the transaction file problem was very poor. He has talked to III staff and they understand the mistakes which were made. George has told III that he wants a recommendation about hardware needs because the question of whether MERLIN needs a larger server has come up several times.

Two items of III development connected with Millenium are the ability to get statistics by call number when the call number is in the item record and the ability to print locally without regard to what is happening at other institutions in the same system.

MISCELLANEOUS PROBLEM REPORTS.

June DeWeese asked about the status of the reserve problem where reserve records are not appearing in the WebPac. She said this is a serious problem which has been going on for several weeks. Janet Jackson agreed to get a status from III on the call.

June showed an example of a Mobius paging slip which was not properly aligned. Judy Fox explained that this occurred with some printers. She said the paging slips are being printed to email and then realigned. She will remind Washington University staff to be sure and use the email option.

Several committee members asked about the problem with incorrect pick-up locations in MERLIN. They talked about good feedback from Gary, Janet, and Betty but wondered what III is doing about the problem. George agreed to check on the status and try to expedite the call.

MERLIN members agreed to look at the texts of notices and see if any changes are necessary, especially if a generic message would be better. Comments should be sent to Gary.

GROUPING DATA IN TABLES BY LIBRARY

Doris Beeson explained how she had regrouped the Rule Selection Table to put all of the SLU Pius rules together. Any campus that wishes to do this can.

PINS IN MOBIUS

Judy reported that Sandy Westall told her it was possible to use PINs in a local system but not in the Mobius central catalog. A consensus was reached that both MERLIN and Washington University would like to try this approach because it will allow staff to issue requests for patrons and re-issue requests if they accidentally get cancelled. Elizabeth will ask Gary to investigate this.

Mary Ann McFarland asked about missing PINS in some MERLIN patron records. This appears to be a problem with using records when a patron load is occurring. Any future problems should be reported to the LSO Help Desk.

MOBIUS DELIVERY TASK FORCE

George reported that a task force of the Mobius Executive Committee is looking at the delivery system assuming there will be a contract with a commercial company. The task force is still thinking about how the charges should be divided.

Elizabeth said she was planning to do a pilot test using a commercial service to assess the costs and effectiveness of such a service for patron initiated requests.

June asked if the MIRACL Board had requested a new turnaround time study for the Mobius requests. No one was aware of a formal mandate to do a study at this time although all libraries are keeping the book bands which could be analyzed at some future point.

There is an open call on the "phantom" paging slips. These were requests made by Washington University patrons which never appeared in the paging slip file for MERLIN campuses. Some of them appeared in the Paged Too Long report but not all. Jon Kerckhove of Washington University created a list of the problem titles and sent the information to the MERLIN libraries for resolution.

RESERVE STANDARDS

The draft reserve standards were discussed. Changes to the standards were made and Elizabeth agreed to issue a new draft document. A vote on the new standards will be done via email.

WORKFLOW AND DELIVERY ISSUES

Doris reported she created 2 new loan rules to block MERLIN patrons at \$120. There was some discussion about the feasibility of having a consistent loan policy among all the MERLIN libraries. This would be difficult to do. The UM campuses have always had different loan periods and this hasn't created any big problems.

All members agreed that the borrowing library is responsible for lost or damaged books. The individual libraries involved should work out payment arrangements on a case by case basis.

Within MERLIN, there are problems with messages about materials being on the HOLD SHELF and the materials can't be located. Sometimes, the material is on the HOLD SHELF for another library. UMC's newly processed requested books appear as being on the HOLD SHELF as soon as the processing has been completed and before they actually reach the Circulation Department. Future problems with missing books should be posted to the MCIRC list so other libraries can check their HOLD SHELF for problems.

Some problems are occurring when staff do not answer "YES" to the question about printing a paging slip in Merlin when they issue holds. If staff do not answer YES, no paging slip will be printed in the loaning library. Consensus was reached that Merlin should send this issue to III as an enhancement request. It would be best if the question did not appear at all since the answer should always be YES.

The MERLIN and Mobius book bands are sometimes covering the barcodes on books from UMSL because UMSL books have barcodes on the front cover. UMSL will try to put the book bands on the back cover if they interfere with the barcode.

June asked that all email requests to UM Ellis be sent to both June and John Meyer. This way, one of them will be sure to see the message.

Judy mentioned that some of the books received by Washington University had the wrong pickup location marked on the book band. Olin was marked even if a branch library was the pick-up location. Also, some Washington University patrons have received notification slips from the Merlin library loaning the material.

There is no consistency in the way libraries are handling the paging slips. Some libraries cut them in half and others don't. Some libraries are taping them under the book band. Agreement was reached that the notification portion of the slip needs to be easily accessible so it can be used to notify the patron. This portion should not be taped under the book band.

The problem of accidentally cancelling Mobius requests was also discussed. This occurs if a library checks in a Mobius request instead of checking it out to OFF-CAMPUS. This is easy to do because patron initiated requests in the local system need to be checked in to get them to appear on the HOLD SHELF. When this problem occurs, the library should send a message to the borrowing library asking them to have the patron re-issue the request.

Judy asked if the Merlin libraries had problems with patrons getting confused when they place holds on materials which are not due for several weeks. She wondered if the holds should be cancelled if the book isn't due for longer than a specified period of time. Members from the MERLIN libraries did not feel this was a big issue so the holds won't be cancelled.

Judy agreed to distribute a staff login to the Washington University system to assist in problem solving. She already has a staff login to MERLIN which has proven useful.

NEXT MEETING

The next meetings are tentatively set for April 22, June 17, and September 16.

Minutes Submitted by Judy Fox, Washington University
