Library of Texas Resource Discovery Service:

Uplift Pilot Program

Information & Guidelines

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This report contains answers to questions about the Uplift Pilot Program.
Additional questions should be referred to:

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1. Uplift Pilot Program Funding

1.1. Which library automation systems are candidates for uplift funding?

The pilot program will first address equitable representation of public and academic libraries across the state. Eight library automation systems are installed in 80% of Texas academic and public libraries and there will an emphasis on working with libraries in this group who express an interest in participating in the uplift program. These systems are: Dynix, Dynix-Horizon, Endeavor-Voyager, Follett-Catalog Plus, Innovative Interfaces-Millenium, Sagebrush-Athena, Sagebrush-Winnebago Spectrum, Sirsi-Unicorn.

To the extent that funds are available and vendor's Z39.50 server products are compliant with the Bath Profile, Functional Area A, no library automation system will be excluded. While compliance to Bath Profile, Functional Area A varies among library automation products, the major library automation vendors are progressing towards compliance.

1.2. What costs associated with upgrading a library's Z39.50 server will uplift funding cover?

The focus of uplift funding is to bring selected Texas libraries' Z39.50 server software to a level of compliance with the standards and profiles required for the Library of Texas Resource Discovery Service (RDS), that is, to compliance with the Bath Profile, Functional Area A, specifications. Vendors will be asked to provide an itemized estimate of all costs involved to achieve this objective for each candidate library. Any installation, training, and services fees associated with the upgrade and itemized as line items on the invoice will also be covered.

1.3. Will ongoing maintenance costs be covered?

No, ongoing maintenance costs are not covered. These costs are the libraries' responsibility. With new product implementations, a one-year maintenance agreement is frequently included.

1.4. If upgrade costs are included in a library's maintenance contract, what else will uplift funds pay for?

Any installation, training, and services fees associated with the upgrade and itemized as line items on the invoice.

1.5. Can a library upgrade their Z39.50 server product without upgrading their library automation system (ILS)?

This is product dependent and vendor specific. Vendor estimates should include all items associated with upgrading each Z39.50 server.

1.6. Will uplift funds pay to upgrade Internet connections?

No. Libraries that are bandwidth constrained cannot use uplift funds for increased bandwidth. It may be possible in the future to identify other funding sources for this purpose. However, the North Texas Regional Library System (NTRLS) development manager has reported that funding sources are very scarce at this time. Options for funding include subsidies from local ISP's or telephone companies in exchange for credit on library websites.

2. Z39.50 Server Upgrades: Purchase and Installation

2.1. Can the Z39.50 server upgrades be completed by August 30th?

Vendors have been apprised of the need to complete the installations and provide invoices to the ZLOT project prior to August 30, 2003. This appears to be feasible in the majority of cases.

2.2. What is required from a library to complete the upgrade installation? Does the installation require library technical personnel involvement?

In many cases, vendors can perform the upgrades. The amount of technical involvement needed from the library will be determined with the vendor. Vendors are expected to coordinate installation and testing with local libraries.

2.3. How will uplift candidate libraries know their status in the upgrade process?

Each candidate library will be copied on communications between the ZLOT staff and their respective library automation vendor. Prior to issuance of a purchase order, the ZLOT staff will either fax or email the purchase details to each library. Libraries will need to send either an email message or a faxed message stating their concurrence to the terms of the purchase order. Subsequent to receipt of the purchase order, vendors will coordinate installation and testing activities directly with the library.

2.4. Some cities will not let the local library expose their servers outside a firewall. Can a library participate in the LOT RDS if its automation system and Z39.50 server are behind a firewall?

Each library identified in the RDS will have to ensure that their server is accessible from outside of their organizational firewall. Accomplishing this may require some information transfer between the library and the information technology (IT) department responsible for firewall security. Here are two solutions to securely open your Z39.50 server for RDS requests.

1. Open up only a Z39.50 server specific port. In most cases this port will be 210, however, the port number does vary among library automation vendors. Doing this is no less secure than opening up port 80 for HTTP connections to a web server inside a firewall.
2. If only search requests from the RDS Z39.50 client are desired, allow only traffic from the RDS IP address to access the Z39.50 server.

IT groups may not recognize the unique nature of library services, particularly in regard to information access and resource sharing. Communication of the library's needs is essential. The IT staff should be made aware that the use of the Z39.50 protocol does not jeopardize security of the automation system or other library computer systems. To help librarians explain technical issues to their IT organizations, a TSLAC staff member is available to communicate directly with the IT organization on behalf of a local library.

2.5. If a library's Z39.50 server is not turned on but is at 'uplift' level, does turning it on enable the library's catalog to participate as a resource target in the operational LOT Resource Discovery Service?

Yes. The initial phase of the LOT Resource Discovery Service will include libraries whose catalogs were made accessible via uplift funding as well as libraries whose Z39.50 servers are already at uplift level (i.e., Bath Profile, Functional Area A, compliant).

2.6. How can a library know if its Z39.50 server is Bath Profile, Functional Area A, compliant?

Because library automation system vendors routinely update their products, it is best to ask them for this information. The ZLOT Project compiled Bath-compliant information for six of the eight automation systems comprising 80% of the installed base in Texas libraries in February 2002. This report (*ILS Configurations*) is available at: http://www.unt.edu/zlot/project_docs

2.7. Is there a specific vendor contact for the Uplift Pilot Program with whom libraries should work?

In some cases, specific vendor contacts have been designated to the ZLOT Project staff for the Uplift Pilot Program. The ZLOT Project staff member who is processing upgrade requests on behalf of a library can serve as a primary point of contact for the library. Vendors will also be contacting libraries directly as the program is implemented.

3. LOT RDS: Impact on Libraries

3.1 What will be the impact of participating in the RDS on the library staff?

No significant increase in staff responsibilities is expected. The RDS will routinely check the availability of Z39.50 servers and alert the appropriate person at the local library if a server is non-responsive. It would be good practice for libraries to incorporate a policy to routinely verify their Z39.50 server status. This will ensure that catalogs are accessible through the RDS.

3.2. How can a library track the impact of having their catalog accessible via the RDS? Is it possible to track the differential impact of local and remote user access?

This type of impact tracking is best done via log files on the local library's Z39.50 server. If both local and remote patrons will access the RDS through an IP proxy server at the library, then establishing separate proxies for each type of access should allow differential tracking of the impact of local and remote use.

3.3. Will the RDS increase the amount of ILL requests a library receives?

Participation in the RDS will make library catalogs visible in a way they previously were not and this might precipitate an increased amount of ILL requests at the local library level. Libraries will apply their local policies regarding fulfillment of requests.

3.4. What impact will the RDS have on the use of TexShare Cards?

The RDS may cause an increase in the number of borrowing requests using TexShare Cards. If an efficient process to handle such requests is not in place, it might be good to implement one if and when volumes increase.

3.5. What are the performance implications due to increased server traffic?

Although no one can predict user behavior with certainty, it is likely that the number of interactions with a library's Z39.50 server will increase. If the current system is near capacity, additional RDS traffic will exacerbate the situation. In most cases, increased traffic from RDS participation should have a minimal effect. Also, while traffic will likely increase on the Z39.50 server, traffic might decrease on the library's web-accessible catalog server due to users selecting the RDS for their primary interface to the library's catalog.

Mitigating the impact on servers while optimizing the search experience for users will be accomplished through deliberate groupings of search targets in the RDS interface. This will promote channeled search requests to selected collections and discourage simultaneous

searches of all library catalogs in the RDS. These groupings will be fine-tuned over time to avoid overloading local library servers.

3.6. How many clients will be accessing local library Z39.50 servers? How many sessions will the RDS Z39.50 client open on a Z39.50 server when more than one user requests a search of the same library catalog?

Only the RDS client, not remote Z39.50 clients at other libraries, will be accessing a local library's Z39.50 server as part of the Library of Texas Resource Discovery Service. It may be possible to configure a Z39.50 server to only accept requests from the LOT RDS client.

The question regarding the number of sessions the RDS Z-client will open on a given Z-server has been referred to the RDS software vendor.

3.7. Is there any issue with participation in the RDS for a library whose server is on a Novell local area network?

No, there is no known issue.

3.8. Is it better to install the Z39.50 server on an existing server platform or on a separate platform?

Specific library automation system vendors can best answer this and any questions regarding configuration of the Z39.50 server for optimal performance.

3.9. How will the RDS accommodate libraries' maintenance windows?

In the future, the database supporting the RDS will contain specific information regarding accessibility of a library's catalog. This will hopefully allow the RDS to accommodate libraries' maintenance windows.

3.10. Will exposing a library catalog to a broader community be done at the expense of the local constituency?

The RDS should promote resource discovery and sharing among Texas libraries but not at the expense of local library constituencies. Making resource discovery easier should bring more users to local libraries. In particular, a single search interface to the TexShare databases, local library collections, and other libraries' collections should add value to a local library's ability to address the information needs of a wide array of individuals and business in their communities.

4. LOT RDS: Design and Implementation

4.1. Will there be a pilot test of the RDS before it becomes operational?

No. The RDS will have a progressive and quiet rollout over several months. At initial launch, there will not be "ribbon-cutting" ceremony or widespread marketing of the service. Incremental installation and testing of the features will characterize the initial phase.

4.2. Who will supply libraries with RDS procedures and guidelines?

The TSLAC will produce guidelines to include, among other topics:

- What is the LOT Resource Discovery Service?
- How is it accessed?
- What usernames and passwords do libraries and patrons require?
- How are cookies used to simplify authentication?
- How is IP authentication used?

- How can Z39.50 servers behind firewalls be made accessible without jeopardizing security?

RDS Guidelines will likely come in two flavors:

- Printed Quick Start Guide
- Detailed Guidelines Online

Libraries should obtain specific Z39.50 product information from their library automation vendors.

4.3. Is there a mechanism for communications among participating libraries?

The TSLAC will consider establishing a mailing list service for LOT RDS participants. The Texas Center for Digital Knowledge (TXCDK), which is working under contract for the TSLAC on the ZLOT Project, is establishing a “Virtual Library Information Exchange” web site to promote communications among states pursuing similar projects.

4.4. How will patrons be authenticated?

Local library patrons will use their library's unique username and password to take advantage of most of the features of the RDS. The username and password for each library is their TexShare username and password. To promote use of the RDS, libraries can publish their username and password in newsletters mailed to library patrons and hand out cards with their username and password at the Circulation desk. TSLAC will provide a supply of such cards.

4.5. How will the RDS describe a collection and its strengths?

The database supporting the RDS will contain information regarding the strength of each collection in terms of the subject groupings in the RDS interface. Collection strength will be evaluated using the six levels specified in CONSPECTUS system.

4.6. How is TSLAC planning to gather statistical data on the RDS usage?

Statistics for the RDS will be gathered centrally by the TSLAC. Together with statistics currently collected by the TSLAC from other services, for example, interlibrary loan services, RDS usage data will enable the impact of the RDS to be measured. There is no requirement for local libraries to track RDS usage statistics.

4.7. Will item-level availability information be returned in RDS search results?

If possible from the information available in the search targets, the RDS will provide holdings and shelf status information in search results. There is a lot of variance among vendors' automation systems in the manner in which such information is stored. Additionally, shelf status is dynamic, requiring calls to the circulation system. It is possible that an item might be available at the time the RDS posts a search result but not available when the patron arrives at the library to obtain the item. Likewise, in the case of multiple campus libraries or dispersed members of a consortium that share a common automation system, providing library-specific availability will be impossible if the holdings information does not identify specific library locations.

4.8. Will it be possible to include value-added information to retrieved records, for example, cover art, book reviews, and synopses?

This may be possible in the future but initially users will have to get this type of information through their library's interface. OCLC is making strides in this direction and may provide some future options. Licensing is a major obstacle in this regard; local libraries may license this type of information but there is no statewide license at this time.

4.9. Can a local library use the RDS for access to their unique collections and licensed resources?

It is possible for a library to implement the open source software driving the RDS and separately contract with the RDS software vendor to customize the service to meet their unique needs. In the future, the TSLAC may add RDS access to the TexSelect database resources and other sets of resources.

4.10. Who is the RDS vendor?

TSLAC has contracted with Index Data to develop the RDS software.

4.11. Will search results be presented as received by the RDS Z39.50 client or will the client wait until results are received from all Z39.50 servers prior to presenting results?

The RDS Z39.50 client will present results as received and will also have a status display for all search targets, which will indicate which servers are non-responsive. Additionally, a time threshold for non-responsiveness will be established. When a server reaches the threshold, the RDS client will abort the search request to non-responsive servers.

4.12. Will an RDS user be able to easily terminate a search, for example, via a "STOP" button?

Perhaps. This design decision has not yet been made.

4.13. Is the LOT Resource Discovery Service a step toward statewide resource sharing among libraries?

The RDS is a beginning step toward a statewide resource sharing service. However, there will not be a statewide library card issued for the RDS and local library resource sharing policies will continue to apply to local collections. Hopefully the RDS will demonstrate the value to local communities of sharing resources among libraries.