

Strategic Vision for Library Systems in the 21st century  
Recommendations of the COLAND Work Group  
**DRAFT 10-28-14**

The COLAND Work Group on 21st Century Library Systems presents the following recommendations to the Council on Library and Network Development regarding strategic vision and directions for library system services and administration in the 21st century.

**Leadership**

COLAND will lead the strategic vision and strategic directions for library systems. The Department of Public Instruction will lead implementation of the strategic vision and strategic directions endorsed by COLAND. Library Directors and Library System Directors will lead change at the local and regional level to maximize organizational resources and state funding to deliver the highest quality library services to Wisconsin residents for the tax dollars provided.

**Vision**

Wisconsin communities prosper in an economy driven by knowledge, creativity, information and technology when their residents have the opportunity for self-directed learning, high-speed network technology, collaboration for community and business start-ups, and continuing education for changing careers. Public libraries are transforming from a storehouse for books to centers of learning, creativity, and innovation in the digital age. Public libraries continue to serve as repositories of knowledge in the 21st century while methods of delivery have shifted to electronic. For most Wisconsin communities the public library is the primary place for access to digital resources, high-speed networks, gathering places and promotion of local cultural assets. Public libraries have become the engine of development within our communities, advancing the economy by enhancing lifelong learning. Public libraries are integral to education supplementing that of schools, technical colleges, and universities. Librarians serve as information technology coaches, job search coaches and learning coaches.

**Strategic Direction 1. Library Consulting: Leverage distributed expertise to provide specialized consulting, verified by DPI**

Create a distributed model of consulting expertise that is verified (and certified where applicable) by the Department of Public Instruction and delivered in the most appropriate method. Suggested consulting services include: building design; youth services; ADA compliance; staff development; human resource topics; strategic planning; administration; community relations; fund raising; legislative development; and library board development. The Department of Public Instruction will provide a pool of resources for these and other topics as needed. Expertise will reside in library systems staff or public library staff.

**Strategic Direction 2. Provide and Support Technology: Move to the Cloud**

Cloud-based services are both robust and cost effective, whether provided by private vendor contracts negotiated at the state level or via state or regional data centers. Moving to the Cloud will minimize maintenance and hosting of physical servers onsite at local libraries and library sys-

tems. Library system technical staff will be able to shift their focus from maintaining servers and data centers to assisting libraries with providing and administering their technology-based services. Possible computer applications for moving to the Cloud include: email, calendars, web hosting and other non-ILS technology commonly used in libraries and library systems.

### **Strategic Direction 3a. One State - One ILS**

Wisconsin public libraries will move toward a state-wide ILS so that all Wisconsin residents will have access to the collective resources of the state. Economy of scale is everything. By leveraging purchasing power to implement a state-wide ILS, Wisconsin residents will have a consistent user experience and access to the widest range of information resources at the lowest unit cost for taxpayers. State interlibrary loan for public libraries will be replaced by intra-state loan at a much lower cost. Increased use of statewide library collections significantly increases the value proposition for print collections.

### **Strategic Direction 3b. Resource Libraries: Change the value proposition**

The Wisconsin Statutes that describe and define resource libraries were written when print materials dominated public library collections. In today's environment of e-books, BadgerLink, and Google the value proposition of Resource Libraries needs to be redefined. Resource libraries have specialized collections and staff expertise that can benefit Wisconsin residents who live in smaller communities. The 20<sup>th</sup> century value proposition for resource libraries was based primarily on a print environment; the digital world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a different value proposition.

### **Strategic Direction 3c. Delivery Service: Change the Logistics**

Transition to a multiple-hub statewide delivery network to improve efficiency (faster delivery) reduce cost of physical delivery of library materials, and modify local delivery system (last mile) will be based on new statewide delivery model. The focus for this change is on improving the library user experience and getting the most value from Wisconsin's investment in library materials.

### **Strategic Direction 4. Coordinate Electronic Resources: Maximize purchasing power**

The transition from print resources to electronic resources will support online learning and information access for all Wisconsin residents. Statewide license agreements and library system consortia purchasing will increase value and reduce costs for taxpayers. Certain statutory language should be revised to allow for more flexible arrangements to meet local community needs. Resource libraries that have more specialized resources could link back-up reference service to those specialized resources that would not be cost-effective in a statewide consortia.

### **Strategic Direction 5. Continuing Education: Maximize impact of continuing education funding**

Continuing education funding will be placed under the supervision of the Division for Libraries and Technology. The Division will use the funds to support webinars and face-to-face training and development for library staff and trustees in order to address current practices and lead change toward our desired future while taking advantage of technology developments. The Division will allocate funds through a grant process that encourages collaboration and regional impact.

**Additional Recommendation: Eliminate statutory language requiring DPI to request 13% for library system aid**

The current statutory requirement that DPI submit 13% library system aid in its biennial budget is not helpful to libraries or to DPI. The current funding level is just under 7%. Eliminating this mandate and allowing for smaller increases provides DPI the flexibility to make more realistic requests.

**Guiding Principles Adopted by COLAND 9/12/14**

- 1) Transformation is key to success in the 21st century. Transformation involves disruptive change. Transformation involves letting go of the status quo to meet the evolving information, learning and technology needs of Wisconsin residents.
- 2) The status quo of 17 library systems requires significant overhead costs to maintain. Reducing the number of library systems will free up overhead dollars that can be reinvested into resources and services.
- 3) Consolidation must be accompanied by service redesign through increasing the use of technology, reducing duplication, utilizing LEAN production principles to streamline operations, and increasing the sharing of services among library systems
- 4) Reducing the number of library systems and redesigning services will change the role of resource libraries. This is an opportunity to rethink the concept of resource libraries.
- 5) Libraries are transforming to an active learning environment and changing from a place for individuals to a collaborative space, and a shift to outreach —beyond the library walls. How can library systems provide resources and services to assist libraries with this transformation?
- 6) Focus on the next big thing - create a bold vision for the future, delivering new services in new ways.

Members of the COLAND Work Group: Kathy Pletcher (Chair) Josh Cowles, Laurie Freund, Doug Lay, Bryan McCormick, Joan Robb, Jim Trojanowski. Nita Burke, Chair of COLAND, attended all meetings.