MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM
WORKFLOW ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHUD) has been an Innovative partner since 2001. This workflow analysis was conducted with the Technology Operations staff of the Mid-Hudson Library System at system headquarters in Poughkeepsie, NY as part of the recently purchased Sierra Success Bundle and a Training Subscription. The analysis was planned to examine both present system usage and to preview new features and products that were part of their Success Bundle.

The Technology Operations staff participating in the analysis included: Laurie Shedrick – Technology Operations Manager; Thomas O'Connell – ILP Operations' Supervisor; Nina Acosta – ILP Operations' Assistant & Supervisor; Gerry Formby – IT/Support Manager (not official title) and staff members from Cataloging and Inter-Library Loans. This staff supports the 66 member libraries in operations of the Innovative system in the areas of Acquisitions, Cataloging, Circulation, Serials (print and electronic) and Encore.

Their Sierra Success Bundle includes several new features and products. These include: Inter-Library Loan (ILL), SMS Alerts, Materials Booking, SkyRiver, Electronic Resources Management (ERM), MyLibrary!, Encore Harvesting, iTiva, Load Scheduler, Program Registration, Decision Center, Media Management, Internal Patron Images, API Success Services, Express Lane, Volume-level Holds and SIP2. The system will implement some of these products at later date to be determined.

Staff have completed training on SkyRiver. This training was provided by Nazee Depp, Senior Library Training Consultant. Nazee will also deliver online training on Materials Booking, Inter Library Loan (ILL), Volume-Level Holds, Encore Harvesting, MyLibrary!, Decision Center, and Load Scheduler, at dates to be determined. Additional consultation will be provided for the API Success Services.

The areas covered during this workflow analysis are summarized below and discussed individually within the report.

- Technical Services – Acquisitions, Cataloging and Serials
    - Overview of current Technical Services processes from the team; explanation of data structures and dependencies
    - Database Maintenance – bibliographic, item and order records
        - At the system-level
        - At member libraries
    - Ordering and receiving
        - Members using Acquisitions functions
        - Members not using Acquisitions functions
    - Serials management – holdings (checkin) records and checkin cards
        - Overview of print Serials management
            - Creating and maintaining checkin records
            - Creating and maintaining checkin cards and checking in issues at member libraries
            - General discussion about the implementation and use of these records across the 60+ member libraries
- ILL
    - General discussion about implementation worksheets and considerations for implementation
    - Review of present workflow
    - Demo of ILL module on III training server
- General System review, with focus on consortia-related needs

- ERM and other functionality
    - SMS Alerts
    - Volume-level Holds workflow
    - Floating Collection
    - Program Registration
    - Media Management Implementation Plan
- Issues and/or enhancements
    - Unstable connectivity issues around system
    - Receipt printing from SierraWeb
    - Auto renewals by CHECKOUT LOC
    - Mobile Worklists and paging
    - Extension of system storage of circulation transactions

The implementation and impact of new products and/or features from the Sierra Success Bundle and/or modifications to existing workflows were considered throughout discussions. For example, Decision Center will have consequences for what can or should be done in terms of code clean-up; use of Serial functions for checking in print issues will require checkin records and cards to be created and ILL implementation would require completely new workflow.

ACQUISITIONS

Time from the consultancy was spent on acquisitions related topics and this module's use throughout the Mid-Hudson libraries. Mid-Hudson has 3 accounting units, but only one library – the Poughkeepsie Public Library District(PPLD) fully uses this modules functionality.

Staff described the workflow in the majority libraries and focus was on their role in support of this usage. A brief observation of the workflow at the Adriance Public Library during a tour of that library, which is adjacent to the headquarters building, was included as part of a member library tour.

ORDERING AND RECEIVING

Across the Mid-Hudson system, printed monographic material and individual e-books are ordered from a variety of vendors, Including Brodart, MidWest, Baker & Taylor and Ingram. There are load profiles in use to download brief bibliographic and order records. The order record templates are assigning order status 'o'. The bibliographic records entered during ordering are enhanced daily by Cataloging staff, this is staff's only real involvement in the Acquisitions process at member libraries and is discussed in the Cataloging section of this report. Order records are removed from the system after one year after the order status has been changed.

Overall, the three account units and the acquisitions functionality of Sierra are underutilized. Full functional use of this module would be beneficial to central operation staff and the libraries in reports, statistics and materials tracking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Change the incoming order record template's STATUS field from 'o' to 'a'. This will eliminate the need to change this field after the orders have been manually received and simplify the annual deletion of order records.
- Have those member libraries consider a workflow consultation of the Acquisitions module. Innovative can provide this service in a 2-days consultation. It may be possible for the interested libraries to share the consultation. Your account manager can discuss the options and provide a quotation, if desired.

- Consider using some hours from your training subscription for customized training on best practices training for those libraries.
- Implement the Acquisitions API which is included as a feature in Sierra as soon as feasible for the member libraries using Acquisitions. This will shift the workflow from placing the orders in the library system to working on the vendors' websites. This is a very efficient workflow removing the need to search for bibliographic information as a separate process, the bib and order records are both created in real time in Sierra and information about the Sierra order record number is automatically transferred back to the vendor database for inclusion on invoices. Careful considerations are necessary to truly streamline the workflow, so staff don't need to go back and edit the order records after they have been automatically created. This is something the library and the vendor(s) would need to work on together. Only a handful of vendors offer this functionality today, but APIs are generally believed to be the future because of the enhanced functionality compared to various EDI solutions.

CATALOGING

We spent a morning reviewing the Cataloging workflow, both in terms of how it relates to libraries using Sierra Acquisitions who use online vendor products such as B&T TS360 for ordering and the ongoing bibliographic control in place in Technical Service.

Cataloging Staff create a list daily of new bibliographic records added to the system and divide them among the staff. The divided titles are enhanced by Cataloging staff using SkyRiver, OCLC, locally defined servers via z39.50 and other sources of bibliographic records to overlay or replace these rec "briefs". This practice generates a lot of paper but is otherwise quite efficient.

The system has multiple profiles for local record loading for other vendors and records. These profiles are presently meeting the system needs and this workflow too seems quite efficient for system staff and member libraries. Nina Acosta has completed Load Profile Training and is quite proficient in their maintenance and creation. I am confident that future system needs in this area are in capable hands.

In addition to load profile maintenance, this staff maintains records templates, is responsible for authority control. This department utilizes many of Sierra's reporting tools. Additionally, staff here has written Python scripts expanding the reporting capabilities of the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All effort should be made to keep this unit in tack. They work hard and keep the Mid-Hudson database in good shape. They have a standard routine that addresses their area of responsibility while meeting the needs of the member libraries.

SERIALS – PRINT MANAGEMENT

Your system has not implemented the Serials module of Sierra but will have an opportunity to put in place a more streamlined and less work intensive workflow during this upgrade. This would involve introducing and using a new record type, the checkin/holdings record, to member libraries. A demonstration and discussion of this workflow was done during the visit. I've summarized the present workflow, as I understood it and compared it with the new workflow that would replace it, should the system decide to move in that direction.

Presently member libraries are using items records to represent periodicals received in their libraries. Some members will circulate past issues and patrons can place holds on some issues. To support the present model, there are two bibliographic records for each periodical title held in member libraries. One displays in Encore where the call number of the item record is used to record the holdings of those libraries. The other record is suppressed, labelled for “linking items and placing holds” and used by staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

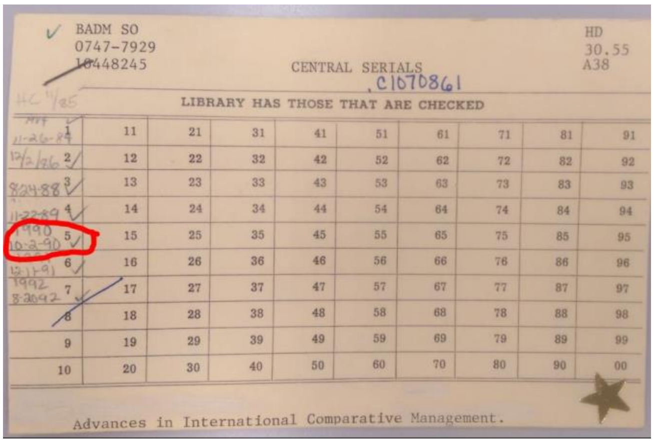
- My recommendation for the current practice is two part and would both present uniform display in Encore and minimize staff time in checking issues in and creating items:
  - Have all libraries use item status ‘a’ (ASK STAFF) in item records containing their holdings for print subscriptions. Present display for titles includes status of CHECKED IN for some items. This consistency can be acheived through the item record template used when creating the items. Templates reviewed for libraries with a periodical template were not consistent. None of the templates reviewed for Adriance, Brewster, Chatham or Patterson had the status predefined. The values also varied between nothing defined and CHECKED IN. The holdings for these libraries display the ASK STAFF status in Encore. This suggests that staff are manually changing this value each time an issue is checked in. The need for staff to have to do this can be removed by having this status defined in their periodical/magazine item record template.
  - A generic template for periodicals/magazines should be defined for use by other members to use when checking issues in with a pre-set status of ASK STAFF. This template should prompt for location Those presently displaying with the CHECKED IN status appear to be from the same libraries and suggests that staff are accepting the default status defined in whatever template selected.

Consideration should be given to implementing the complete Serials module in Sierra. Information on this module is available in the Sierra WebHelp beginning here.

A serials Holdings record is attached to a Bibliographic record. It is possible to attach more than one Holdings record to a Bibliographic record for different locations.

A serials Checkin card is associated with a serials Holdings record (one card per Holdings record). The card specifies the frequency and chronology of the periodical. It also specifies the enumeration (or numbering) of the periodical issues. It is also used to facilitate the claiming function for associated periodical issues.

- This implementation would introduce these elements to the Mid-Hudson member libraries. The Checkin card with boxes is presented in the format of Kardex cards used by libraries in the past for tracking receipt of serial issues. The item records created would be attached to these issue boxes.



This holdings record would contain the libraries holdings statements (Current 12 Months; June 2018-Current; 1 Year + Current Year; July 2009-Current Issue), it would need to be created for each member holding a title and the item records created would be attached to the member library's holdings issue box.

In the SDA, staff at their library would see a display like this from which they would select their location's holding record.

Location:epper Identity: STATUS:Current FREQUENCY:Biweekly BOXES:12
Location:ebper Identity: STATUS:Current FREQUENCY:Biweekly BOXES:2

The issue boxes, on which staff would track receipt of their issues and create item records would present like this:

Jul 8 2018 - Jul 22 20	Jul 22 2018 - Aug 5 2	Aug 5 2018 - Aug 19	Aug 19 2018 - Sep 2	Sep 2 2018 - Sep 16	Sep 16 2018 - Sep 30	Sep 30 2018 - Oct 14
Arrived	LATE	LATE	LATE	LATE	LATE	LATE
08-05-2019	08-05-2018	08-19-2018	09-02-2018	09-16-2018	09-30-2018	10-14-2018
no.952/953 1	no.954	no.955	no.956	no.957	no.958	no.959

Each library's holdings would appear in Encore like this.

Library Holdings

Call No. ML1 .R65
Location Emeryville Public Periodicals
Holdings no.887 (Jan. 2002)-

Call No. ML1 .R65
Location Bay St Branch Periodicals
Latest received August 5, 2004 v.954
Holdings no.887 (Jan. 2002)-

Identity Print
Call No. ML1 .R65
Location Innovative University Periodicals
Latest received July 8, 2004 no.952-953

Call No. ML1 .R65
Location High School Periodicals
Holdings Library has current year plus 1

Call No. ML1 .R65
Location Sierra Public Main Library

Decisions would need to be made and a workflow established to create the holdings record for each library and members would need to receive training on implementing the new workflow at their library. It is recognized that the implementation of Serials would initially place an overhead on central staff and the member libraries; however, I believe the benefits to be gained from this implementation to be worth it and immediately recognized by both staff and patrons.

These benefits would include: maintenance of only one bibliographic record and a standardized display in Encore for patrons who would also be able to place their own holds for holdable items; minimizing any delays in claiming late issues and making that process easier for staff, since Sierra can produce listings of all late issues in one operation -- this would allow staff to claim late issues sooner; workflow associated with the deletion of holdings and related items when the title is no longer received in print format would also be streamlined.

Should the system decide to move forward with this recommendation hours from the system's training subscription could be used to assist central staff with planning and implementation, as well as for training member libraries on the final workflow.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN (ILL)

The Sierra Success Bundle includes the Sierra Interlibrary Loan module. This consultancy included an examination of the workflow presently for requesting, receiving and maintaining interlibrary loans for member libraries.

There are policies in place for Interlibrary loan requests that works for member libraries submitting patron requests for books and articles (not often used). These requests are submitted to the ILL department via a phone call, online or by email. Prior to submitting the request members should verify that the publication price exceeds $25.00, has a publication date greater than 6 months and not available from SEAL or any other source. These steps are repeated in the ILL department and if request is verified not available and within system policies it is then requested via OCLC ILL.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend, that while your present workflow is in good order and accommodates the volume of requests currently received for processing that you consider using the ILL module included with your Sierra Success Bundle. I thought it to too labor intensive for a system of your size and opaque to member libraries and patrons since the information resided within one department.

This recommendation does not require a policy revisit, nor would it greatly alter the workflow in place. Among the benefits it will bring to the Mid-Hudson system are: reorder the tasks currently being done by all staff involved with an ILL request – member libraries and ILL department; make available a central repository of request related information (the Sierra Desktop Application) for review by any authorized user; provide the opportunity for staff to correspond directly with patron about the request using email address in their patron record; eliminate repetitive keying; gather statistics on the ILL requests available in the SDA. Optionally, the entering of ILL requests and tracking of those requests could ultimately be offered to patrons from their account within Encore as an extension of your patron empowerment offerings.

Here's a brief overview of how present tasks would be performed within the Sierra environment. These tasks remain the same except they would be done with the Sierra Desktop Application (SDA).

1. Staff follow system policy and procedures for acquiring materials for patrons via ILL.
2. When completed with step 1, requesting staff enter the ILL request in Sierra. This request can include the requesting patron's information directly from their patron record.
3. Request is reviewed by ILL Department in the SDA - ILL New Request function where staff will continue to have oversight of the request – search SEAL and other sources, etc, the request's adherence to system policy and process the request as usual in OCLC.
4. Upon receipt of the requested material from an OCLC supplier, ILL staff receives material as now. Including assigning supplied due date and dates to be return returned to the lender, arranging delivery to the requesting member library via courier system. Sierra will designate that the material is available for the requester to pickup.
5. When patron picks the ILL material up, the requesting library checks the item out to the patron. Sierra assigns due date entered by ILL department.
6. Upon the return of the ILL materials, receiving library checks material in and are alerted that the item should be returned to the ILL department and treat the return the same as placing materials in transit to fill holds.
7. ILL department returns material to lending supplier.

The implementing of the ILL functions in Sierra would also require some setup. Those steps are summarized below:

- ILL module worksheets completed and submitted to III.
- III completes the ILL setup.
- ILL workflow assigned to authorized user accounts.

  - ILL tab activated in Circulation Desk function
  - Permission # 64 added to authorized user accounts.
  - Permissions #64 & 65 added to ILL department accounts.
- ILL Staff receive training and assistance from Innovative on setup of module for use in the Mid-Hudson Library System. This would include a frontline version of the ILL functions to be offered member libraries and assistance with any patron-facing options the system chooses to activate.

- Review the use of location codes and adjust obsolete location code labels as soon as you can, but don't delete any location codes until you have fully implemented Decision Center. This is because codes from long gone records may still pop up in DC statistics. See references in the Decision Center section below. Once you are ready to delete location codes, follow the outlined procedure:

GENERAL SYSTEM REVIEW

Some general topics were discussed during each session and I've listed some common areas that should not be overlooked as the system moves forward with new products and present workflows.

While presently in good order and accommodating the workflows in place, location codes and the need to keep them up to date and accurate. You can use system tools such as Statistics and Create Lists to review the current use of locations in bibliographic, item, order and patron (home library) records. Look for things like patrons with home libraries that are item locations.

As you move forward with Decision Center seeding, remember that any obsolete codes should be retained in the Branches table for now. Consider adding a note in the label (e.g. "zzz Main Lib ZZZ collection *(unused)*"), to avoid the risk of out of date codes being used inadvertently when creating records and for more meaningful statistics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review the use of location codes and adjust obsolete location code labels as soon as you can, but don't delete any location codes until you have fully implemented Decision Center. This is because codes from long gone records may still pop up in DC statistics. See references in the Decision Center section below. Once you are ready to delete location codes, follow the outlined procedure:
  - Deleting Location Codes: https://csdirect.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.php#sgil/sgil_loc_delete.html
- Locations Served: you should review and complete this table so that all location codes are covered, even if they are not used in circulation. This will be necessary to avoid chaos in Decision Center. You should also remove location codes that no longer exist from Locations Served.
  - It is quite possible that other location dependent system tables need reviewing, for example the mapping table used for Link Maintenance. The Deleting Location Codes resource might be helpful to pinpoint other tables you need to look at. See also corresponding resource Adding Location Codes: https://csdirect.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.php#sgil/sgil_loc_add.html
- Avoid creating templates and records with bad or blank codes, I recommend that if you have not already, you should set the Preferences (Editor Colors tab) for all logins so that the background color for **Invalid text** be something other than white. RGB value 255/204/204 (pink) usually works well for this purpose.
- Consider adding more templates for member libraries to make their preferred template to minimize incorrect code selection by well-intended operators.

DECISION CENTER

Decision Center was not discussed as a separate topic, since your installation of this product is being completed and your data seeded. But I thought it might be helpful to summarise information that is of importance when you consider making code changes or clean-up. You may also want to study the Decision Center Guide which is located at https://csdirect.iii.com/manual_dc/Default.php. Some references are included below.

- Obsolete codes may pop up in Decision Center reports and for that reason it is recommended you keep old codes until you have a chance to evaluate what the DC reports look like. From Frequently Asked Questions in the DC guide (https://csdirect.iii.com/manual_dc/Default.php#zReference/dcr_app_faq.html – "What happens when I delete codes that are no longer in use?"):
    - *Decision Center does not delete codes from its database because it must keep track of historical records from times when those codes were in use. For all codes except location codes, your deleted codes continue to appear in the reports and filters to which they apply. Deleted location codes continue to appear in reports, but do not appear in the report filters.*
      Note that deleted codes are retained, but the corresponding descriptions are not. Reports that include deleted codes display the code and not the code description.
- Decision Center relies heavily on the Locations Served table and the Statistical Group Maintenance table for locations. That is why I have recommended that all locations are included in Locations Served, and that you should be cautious when adding and editing the statistical groups table (save off old table before making changes).
    - This page outlines how DC identifies different types of locations: https://csdirect.iii.com/manual_dc/Default.php#zReference/dcr_app_locations.html
    - Notice that in the end it almost always ends up in Locations Served and uses the label of the *first* location code in the Locations Served entry where the location code is found. It is therefore very important that the top codes in all Locations Served entries have unique descriptions. At present I think all entries are OK.
    - The Statistical Group Maintenance table is used to determine "transaction location". Note that it still goes back to Locations Served to find which code label to display.
    - Also note that transaction location is one of the fields that remain constant. See the question "What happens when I change a data code?" in the FAQ (same link as above).

It is impossible to foresee all problems that may be caused by bad or old data. But being aware of some important pitfalls will limit the consequences and make it easier to deal with remaining problems.

ERM AND OTHER FUNCTIONALITY

The Sierra Bundle Upgrade includes several new products, some like ILL were discussed in detail elsewhere in this report, others are in varying states of being implemented and others will be implemented later.

ERM will be implemented in later in the system's project plan. Planning for when and how this product is to be implemented has already begun. When the system is ready to implement this product as part of the ERM implementation MHUD will have access to the Sierra Knowledge Base for their coverage information. Once this has been configured for the subscriptions held at the member libraries, coverage data can be loaded into Sierra manually or as a scheduled job.

- For reference, see the Knowledge Base Staff Guide at https://csdirect.iii.com/kbhelp/Default.php#coverage_export.htm

Training is Included with this product and will be scheduled when the system is ready to move forward. We did not spend much time discussing this product's implementation, but system staff did receive an overview of the record types associated with that module and a more detailed overview can be scheduled. The ERM record structure chart we looked at is attached to this report for reference and will be part of the ERM implementation.

Some general topics were discussed during each session and I've listed some common areas that should not be overlooked as the system moves forward with new products and present workflows.

- **SMS Alerts** – this product is being setup. The system needs to add a dedicated field tagged, variable-length field to the patron's records for use by this product. Laurie initiated this step during the visit.
- **Volume-level Holds** workflow – a demonstration on the III sierratrain training server was done for staff during this visit. Focus was on how it is used in the Sierra environment and workflow changes to both staff and patrons. Staff must create volume record and associated items with each volume; holds placement dialogue changes for staff and patrons, Title Paging lists include specific volume and item information. Additional training to be arranged with Nazee Depp as system reviews how, if at all this may fit in present workflow.
- **Floating Collection** – discussed the functionality and how it might be used in a consortia environment. Consensus of group seemed to be that presently this was not a via option. The system can review this option later.
- **Program Registration** – staff await enhancements to this product and would like to expand its use among member libraries. Training may be made available to fulfil present needs.
- **Media Management** – plans were discussed on how to implement this product with Mid-Hudson system.

ENHANCEMENTS AND OTHER TOPICS

- Issues and/or enhancements discussed with staff
    - Unstable connectivity issues around system
    - Problematic Receipt printing from SierraWeb
    - Enhancements:
        - Auto renewals by CHECKOUT LOC
        - Mobile Worklists and paging
        - Extension of system storage of circulation transactions

CONCLUSIONS

It was a pleasure working with your knowledgeable and highly dedicated staff. All in all, the system is in good shape and should continue to serve you well in the future, especially after you have completed the changes we discussed and products from Sierra Bundle have been implemented.

As I final recommendation I suggest you create a training plan, to avoid ending up in the same situation as before this visit. It might include internal as well as Innovative supported training. Innovative offers many options for ongoing training, from annual subscriptions for onsite or online custom training to standard workshops and 2-hour webinars of various content that can be purchased as stand-alone sessions.

You are of course welcome to contact us with any questions you have. You can always email innou@iii.com or talk to your account manager.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Sierra documentation
  - Version on CSDirect, login required: https://csdirect.iii.com/sierrahelp/Default.php
  - On your Sierra server, from the Sierra Desktop: Help | Manual
- Innovative Developer Network (API information and more): https://developer.iii.com/