V-Cat Strategic Plan 2021-2023 (DRAFT)

The shared automation system, known as V-Cat, is a service of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS). As a service of WVLS, V-Cat is established, operated, and maintained under the legal authority of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service Board of Trustees.

V-Cat Council serves a consortium of libraries to provide a shared integrated library automation system to WVLS member public libraries, and such other area libraries as may participate, for the purposes of:

- facilitating resource sharing among system participants and
- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of participant library operations and services.

V-Cat Vision

These statements clarify core expectations, which together form a vision of a well-functioning V-Cat Council. They are complimented by the list of broad strategies employed to fulfill the vision.

- **FOCUS ON THE USER** V-Cat focuses on services and technologies that directly benefit member library staff and library users.
- **INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES** V-Cat embraces innovative technologies to empower patron access to information and resources, and increase efficiencies for member libraries.
- **FUNDING** V-Cat operates in the most cost-effective manner and shares the operational costs to provide sustainable and ongoing funding.
- **HEALTHY CONSORTIUM** V-Cat facilitates strong, collaborative relationships among consortium libraries.
- **EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE** V-Cat provides an effective governance structure that allows full participation by all consortium members.

Strategies to Accomplish the V-Cat Vision

Specific actions to accomplish these strategies are developed by the WVLS staff with input from V-Cat members and the WVLS Board of Trustees. Actions are carried out by WVLS staff and V-Cat member library staff.

FOCUS ON THE USER – and improve the user experience

- Expand library user access to the depth and richness of resources available
- Create a responsive environment through a combined suite of services and utilities
- Provide comprehensive discovery of physical materials, digital library resources, and online databases for library users and library staff
- Select and configure Integrated Library System / Library Service Platform and related products to meet library user and staff needs
- Provide responsive training for member libraries
- Provide marketing resources and tutorials for V-Cat members to share with library users
- Collaborate with libraries and their community partners to increase access to library resources
- Assess and evaluate V-Cat from the user's perspective to support continuous improvement

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES – manage products and provide support

- Investigate new and emerging products to serve V-Cat libraries
- Facilitate stakeholder-driven discussion and exploration of current technology, emerging services, and best practices
- Implement and configure systems and products that are scalable for V-Cat libraries
- Provide profile customization services upon request

- Support library staff in troubleshooting and resolving service issues
- Assess and evaluate V-Cat libraries' satisfaction with technologies in use

FUNDING – Monitor V-Cat funding and operations for stability and growth

- Build funding of V-Cat to improve services for library users
- Evaluate operational costs to ensure best possible value for consortium libraries' investment in V-Cat
- Explore opportunities to welcome new V-Cat members
- Maintain strong working relationships with legislators and state-level decision-makers
- Seek grant opportunities and other funding sources for V-Cat projects

HEALTHY CONSORTIUM – facilitate collaboration and participation

- Implement practices that address the diverse needs of V-Cat libraries
- Encourage cooperative V-Cat membership that adheres to V-Cat guidelines and procedures
- Advocate for the consortium and member libraries when interacting with library users
- Communicate proactively and responsively with V-Cat libraries, WVLS staff and stakeholders
- Facilitate active consortium membership that allows library staff to contribute to increasing service to library users and lowering costs for V-Cat members
- Assess and evaluate libraries' satisfaction with collaboration and participation among V-Cat members

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE – facilitate thoughtful and efficient decision-making processes

- Provide opportunities for all member libraries to participate in governance
- Engage in stakeholder-driven discussions
- Ensure that consortium members receive information to make informed decisions
- Investigate best practices for ILS consortia governance

2021-2023 Priority V-Cat Project Areas:

Collaborate with member libraries to streamline the database for ease of management, training, and consistency for library users.

- Database clean-up project to strive toward standardization of records and record fields.
- Work towards unification of loan rule facets, and support consortium members throughout transition processes.

Implement Aspen Discovery and work with member libraries to use the new interface to its full potential.

- Explore patron empowerment technologies for V-Cat libraries to increase patron access to library information and resources.

Explore other Integrated Library Systems (ILS) / Library Service Platforms (LSP) and their viability for V-Cat.

- Re-evaluate and re-negotiate current contract or negotiate a new service contract with another ILS / LSP and begin migration process, if applicable.

Refine current processes used to generate reports from Integrated Library System Data

- Public Library Annual Reports
- WVLS Statistics booklet
- WVLS Dashboard
- Automating report generation and data visualizations
- Routine reports that are run on a regular basis

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