



Information about Northern Waters Library Network Vote on the NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) Project.

Following conversations with NWLS staff, WVLS staff have identified aspects that may have contributed to NWLN's vote against a merged ILS with V-Cat.

Holds Fulfillment Recommendation

The NICE Holds Fulfillment Recommendation allows patron requests and access to materials to be handled in very different ways. NWLN member libraries expressed concerns that it may be challenging to explain to patrons the way holds are filled, and how/when items would become available.

Both NWLN and V-Cat libraries grant preferential access to local patrons with a focus on providing access for all library patrons to most materials. However, each consortium practices preferential access for local patrons differently.

NWLN libraries prioritize hold fulfillment for local patrons first on all materials. When not needed by a local patron, most materials are accessible for all patrons. V-Cat libraries restrict access to local patrons first on new, popular, and special materials via limited holds and browsing collections, then access is expanded so most materials are accessible for all patrons. Generally, access is expanded when new and popular items are four months old and/or when hold queues for materials are reduced.

NWLN Budget and Financial Savings

Northern Waters Libraries did not see sufficient financial savings within the proposed NWLN budget with NICE shared costs. In addition, NWLN would like to prioritize development of reserve funds to fund future ILS migration efforts.

Complexity of Collaboration

Compromise led to complex NICE recommendations. NICE Recommendations were more complex than NWLN member libraries expected, and substantial effort was needed to clarify information. Misunderstanding and misinformation may have had an impact on the vote. NWLN member libraries were concerned about how much would change with an ILS merger.

Other Aspects Worth Noting

NWLN Timeline - The NWLN ILS contract ends in December 2024. It is financially advantageous for NWLN to move forward with a new ILS contract as soon as possible.

Satisfaction with NWLN and WISCAT - NWLN libraries expressed satisfaction with current resource sharing among NWLN and WISCAT, as well as services provided by NWLS staff and cataloging partners. A level of comfort exists among NWLN members with current practices, policies, and decision making.