

2016 was a busy year for WALIS. There were several major unexpected projects in addition to the regularly scheduled programming. We could maybe call 2016 “The Year of Migration.” Most of our important locally hosted resources—websites, local databases, webforms, and of course the ILS—were all moved to new servers. Not very glamorous, but vital for security and continued growth.

Highlights of 2016:

- ❖ **Restructured how we barcode items** to improve flexibility in how items can circulate, and to improve granularity of statistics reports. We now have ways of tracking the use of items even if that usage doesn’t necessarily qualify as State-approved circulation.
- ❖ **Established affordable method for libraries to accept credit cards at the desk** for more than just fines. We used LSTA grant funds to purchase the readers and new features available in our existing SirsiDynix software to process the transactions.
- ❖ **Conversion of libraries’ wireless routers to Cisco Meraki routers with remote management software.** This greatly simplifies and enhances Pete & Jody’s abilities to troubleshoot wireless problems without making road trips, and it allows for better usage tracking.
- ❖ **Security upgrades and improvements.** We contracted with Heartland to do some vulnerability testing of our network. This exposed several areas that needed to be addressed. Fixing those areas became priority projects.
- ❖ **Switched to a new public catalog.** The new catalog offers many new features and options. Moving from the old catalog was also necessary because it was the source of many of the detected vulnerabilities.
- ❖ **The year of SLP.** 2016 saw the widespread roll-out of the online signup form for Summer Library Programs for any/all libraries that were interested.
- ❖ **Start of Visibility.** While we technically linked and published all our library database records to be web searchable in 2016, I believe that 2017 will be the year that we start to see the fruits of our labor!

Looking ahead to 2017:

We spent a lot of 2016 preparing, organizing, modernizing....so, here's hoping that 2017 can focus on deepening our understanding of the changes put in place last year, and finding ways to improve our service to our patrons with the new and improved systems we have put in place.

So for example, here are some possible highlights for 2017—we'll see next year at this time whether any of them come to fruition....

Improved tracking of in-house use of materials. With the new Item category 4 codes libraries can now checkout materials to patrons even if the items don't leave the building. The use of the item is counted and who is responsible for the item is also recorded. This is important for expensive equipment like laptops.

More circulation of even weirder stuff. With the flexibility to assign almost any Item Type to materials in order to modify the circulation policies without skewing the statistics, libraries have more options on how they circulate various materials.

Fewer patrons owing enormous amounts of money. Between text & email notices reminding patrons that materials will soon be due, and multiple ways of paying off bills with a credit card, there are fewer reasons for patrons to accrue massive fines.

Better support for mobile devices. From the catalog to library websites to electronic resource pages and maybe even to newly developed apps—migrating our resources to newer hardware/software puts us in a better position to make our information more mobile-friendly.

More traffic to our library websites and library catalog. The conversion of our bibliographic records to linked data format will cause those records and their components to be returned as internet search results. Because of the nature of linked data, patrons will not only be guided to the catalog, but also the libraries' websites and Facebook pages.

More ways of analyzing the data generated by our ILS. We have mentioned the Analytics software before, and have had high hopes of extracting new and exciting information from our data. Quite frankly, 2016 was too busy with everything else to give much time to exploring and learning a new way of counting things. There have been major improvements to the software in 2016, and more SirsiDynix-supplied templates so that hopefully we'll be able to offer more report options to libraries in 2017.