

SYSTEM MERGERS IN ILLINOIS: WHAT HAPPENED, WHY, AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED (WE THINK)

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A short history of Illinois systems



- 1965 - Illinois Library Systems Act signed into law
- 21 systems suggested
- 1991 mergers began; mergers in 1993, 1994, 2003, 2004 and 2010
- 2 systems currently: Reaching Across Illinois Library System, Illinois Heartland System

Resource sharing in Illinois



- ❑ Strong tradition of resource sharing among all types of libraries
- ❑ Leadership of the State Library and the Illinois Library Association
- ❑ Local funding of libraries sometimes conflicts with tradition of resource sharing

Impacts of the 2010 mergers



- Loss of services and jobs
- Ongoing fiscal uncertainties
- Economies of scale achieved

ILA statewide planning project



- 2009 summit brought together 75 library leaders from across the state
- Future of library cooperation in Illinois
- Task forces formed to look at three areas
 - ▣ Structure
 - ▣ Funding
 - ▣ Services

Delivery study



- ILA project in 2010
- Funded by the State Library
- Recommended best practices for delivery
 - ▣ Routes
 - ▣ Outsourcing
 - ▣ Labeling and packaging
 - ▣ Pilot projects

LLSAPs



- Local Library System Automation Program
- Merger project in IHLS
- LLSAPs, independent consortia and standalone libraries in RAILS
- Overlay project and other ideas

Other technology related services



- ❑ Statewide or system purchases of electronic content have been eliminated
- ❑ Innovation not easy or even possible in this fiscal environment
- ❑ Gap between haves and have-nots has increased without system services
- ❑ Continuing education, training and consulting services also eliminated

Current system services



- Support for the LLSAPs
- Delivery
- Talking Book Services
- Administration and support

Some good news



- Possible statewide ebook project
- Some training is being brought back – Small Public Library Management Institute (SPLMI)
- Delivery pilots are being discussed
- LLSAPs are engaged in discussing some future joint projects (discovery overlay)

Funding



- ❑ Decreased and unpredictable
- ❑ Use of LSTA to supplement
- ❑ Delayed payments

Awareness and advocacy



- Illinois Library Association has taken on this role

Legal issues



- Strong push for standardization
- Possible discussion of the funding formula
- Illinois Interlibrary Loan Code is going to be looked at this year

How could reorganization have gone better?



- Earlier acknowledgement by system leadership; take charge of the process instead of fall victim to it
- Regular, ongoing collaborative planning by systems, members and the state library

Warning signs



- ❑ Ongoing funding decreases
- ❑ Lack of political support
- ❑ Competition among systems



Q and A

What else can we tell you?