Symphony Infrastructure Migration Task Force Recommendation

The LALINC Board is pleased to announce its approval of the following recommendation from the Symphony Infrastructure Migration Task Force.

April 30, 2015

In January, 2015, the LALINC Executive Board directed that a task force be created to evaluate options to improve the technology infrastructure used to support the Symphony customers via LOUIS. The Symphony Infrastructure Migration Task Force (SIMTF) was created and since then has met weekly via teleconference to evaluate the options defined in the task force charge, such as whether to migrate the Symphony software to servers running a different operating and database system, and whether to migrate from a locally hosted environment to a comprehensive hosted service with SirsiDynix. They arranged face-to-face meetings and conference calls with SirsiDynix, discussed survey responses collected from SirsiDynix SaaS customers, organized testing by LALINC members in a SaaS test environment configured by SirsiDynix, and assigned additional tasks to be done as part of the evaluation process.

The evaluation process has concluded and the task force recommends that the LOUIS consortium migrate to the SirsiDynix Software as a Service (SaaS) comprehensive hosting service running a different operating system and database system based on the following factors:

1. In the current Symphony configuration, each LOUIS site has four instances: Production, Training, Beta, and HotSite. HotSite will no longer be needed, because SaaS support includes disaster recovery. Likewise, Beta will not be needed. If it’s necessary to have a Beta site, an instance can be created “on the fly” by the SaaS team. No longer supporting the two environments (HotSite and Beta) will save 20% of LOUIS staff time.
2. The SaaS servers will use an Oracle database management system with Unicode encoding, running on Red Hat Enterprise Linux. The current locally hosted servers use ISAM database structures which cannot support Unicode, running on IBM AIX. Unicode is a universal encoding scheme adopted by the hardware and software manufacturers to support the worldwide interchange, processing, and display of diverse languages. It will allow staff to import, catalog, search and display catalog and authority records containing non-Latin characters.
3. Network and hardware reliability for SaaS environment is proven and impressive with 99.9% uptime.
4. The LALINC membership testing done in the SaaS environment revealed that speed and response time were faster, or at least the same, when compared to the current Production environment. This included both Workflows and e-Library.
5. Communication and timely updates to customers, as well as network downtime analysis by SirsiDynix SaaS team, is exceptional.
6. Survey results and discussions with other SirsiDynix SaaS customers, including academic libraries and large consortia, reveals a high degree of satisfaction with the service.
7. SirsiDynix is committed to providing customer confidentiality and integrity. Their security is built upon the standards of the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).
8. Future development of SirsiDynix software will be available to our environment sooner. This includes the BLUEcloud Suite of products, including BLUEcloud Analytics, BLUEcloud Cataloging, and BLUEcloud PAC, among others.
9. Costs to move to SaaS are minimal and absorbed by the LOUIS budget, and circumvent future capital outlay for purchase of hardware that would be hosted at LSU.
10. LOUIS sites will enjoy greater flexibility with regards to the scheduling of upgrades in SaaS.
11. By moving to SaaS, we are able to take advantage of the economies of scale available to the larger server farms. It saves time, money and the environment by using less energy and space.
12. The LOUIS Staff will continue to have server side access that they currently have in the locally hosted Symphony environment, and therefore, will be able to support LOUIS sites in the same capacity as they do now.

Task Force Members:

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