The June 8th Model Defining and Refining Conference was facilitated by Jeff and Linda Russell of Russell Consulting, Inc.

Overview of the Objectives for the Day

Jeff and Linda Russell indicated to the group that, contrary to the initial intention to decide upon one possible library service model at today’s conference, they suggested that the best way to proceed would be to try to settle upon two possible models. They arrived at this suggestion based upon a deeper reflection upon the great degree of diversity of thought/perspective on possible models in the broader library community and among the Steering Committee and CRCs. They had consulted with chairperson John Thompson and he had concurred with their suggestion.

In response to the Russell’s suggestion, the group gave its consent to proceed with the goal of deciding upon two possible models rather than just one at today’s conference.

Review of a Newly Proposed Model W

Jeff and Linda Russell invited Sherry Machones, a CRC participant in both the May 18th and June 8th conference to present an overview of her proposed model: Model W. Copies of her model description were distributed to the group.

Sherry’s Model W description followed a similar format to that used in developing Models X, Y, and Z which were discussed in depth at the May 18th Steering Committee/CRC Model Review Conference.

In addition, Steven Ohs shared his thoughts on “low hanging fruit” improvements that could be made to any of the models under consideration by the Steering Committee and the CRCs. He offered these to challenge the group to not let broader disagreements about models become a barrier to making common-sense improvements reflected in the workgroup recommendations.

The Russells asked the Steering Committee and the CRCs to take 20 minutes to review Model W and to complete a Personal Reflections Worksheet – the same worksheet that they used to evaluate Models X, Y, and Z at the May 18th conference.

After 20 minutes, the Russells convened the group as a whole and facilitated a large group discussion of their findings.

See the detailed notes that summarize the results from the committee of the whole discussion of Model W: Model W Review Summary Document.
Sharing the Results from the Straw Polls

The Russell’s shared the results from the straw polls taken on May 18th for Modes X, Y, and Z and the results from today’s poll on Model W. These were displayed on a PowerPoint slide:

**Model X: Current Regional System Structure – Enhanced**
- Vote distribution: 0, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 6, 7, 7, 8
- Total points: 68
- Average: 3.58

**Model Y: 6-8 Regional Library Systems under a Statewide Services Umbrella**
- Vote distribution: 6, 6, 7, 7, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 9, 9, 9, 10, 10, 10
- Total points: 155
- Average: 8.16

**Model Z: One Statewide Library System**
- Vote distribution: -1, 0, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 6, 6, 8, 8, 8
- Total points: 70
- Average: 3.68

**Model W: FORWARD Wisconsin – Enhanced Current Library System Model**
- Vote distribution: 1 2 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8 8 8 9 9 10 10 10
- Total points: 124
- Average: 6.53

**Comments/Reactions from the Group:**
- Surprise at number of low votes for W, as well as disparity with X which was pretty similar.
- Model Y range was interesting in there being no low scores
- Seems that Model Y had lots of cohesion
- The Russell’s asked: is it clear which two models will be considered going forward?
- No disagreement from the group: We’ll focus on Models W and Y.

**Deeper Dive into Models W and Y**

The two service models under deeper consideration at the Conference were individually reviewed by two Model Defining/Refining Groups. The large group of Steering Committee members and the CRCs were randomly divided into two groups. Each group was facilitated by a designated Steering Committee member and each discussed, defined, and reviewed their assigned model. They were asked to follow a set of questions developed by the facilitators to (1) suggest changes to the model, (2) assess the effectiveness of the model at reflecting the design principles, (3) identify possible perceived winners and losers, and (4) identify additional information that might be helpful in making a more informed judgment about the model.
While both models had previously been reviewed by the group (Model Y at the May 18th conference and Model W at today’s conference), the Russell’s indicated that this next review was intended to define and refine each of the two remaining models to the next level.

As with the initial review of each model, this deeper review began with each individual in the two groups reviewing their assigned model on his or her own, completing a personal reflections worksheet. After about 15 minutes, each of the two groups were convened by the two facilitators (John Thompson for Model W and Steve Ohs for Model Y).

The two deeper review workgroups were given approximately 1 hour to complete their review.

See the two documents summarizing the work of the two groups:

- Model Y Deep Review Document Summary
- Model W Deep Review Document Summary

**Reporting Out Small Group Findings for Each Model**

Each of the two groups presented their findings to the large group. What follows are some of the key issues, questions, reactions, and suggestions identified by the large group following each model review presentation:

**Service Model W Deeper Review Discussion**

The issues, questions, reactions and suggestions identified by the large group regarding this model included:

**Elaborations or changes**

- Elaborate on Standards: what will they be; standards on funding, Is there more needed beyond 43.24. (Ask Ch 43 workgroup if other states have standards)
- Provide examples how changes within this model do bring equity/improve equity to allay fears that this is not change
- Demonstrate whether the standards can be integrated in admin code
- What to do with the ongoing funding for Discovery Layer; dashboard
- Some sort of flexibility in Service Boundaries: question is there an easier method for a county to transfer?
- Questions/comments:
  - there were many overlaps or same issues in the group Y

**Principles**

- 4 & 9 were universally supported in meeting the principles. There were splits in others. #5 failed one individual; otherwise split between partially and unclear
  - some of the splits were result of the way things were worded. Some principles are measurable; others are very subjective
**Possible Perceived Winners/Losers: stakeholder impact**

- All of the “winners” identified in the earlier session were re-affirmed
- “Those expecting substantial change” may be mitigated by further changes down the road
- Under-resourced libraries may be losers; unclear how very small systems fit in--how is that even defined
  - Not sure if patrons will notice or if they would be winners
  - DPI having more monitoring, that may be done by another body and not have impact on DPI
- Questions: Tracy how could library patrons have a voice? They need to be educated to realize how and why services get improved

**Questions for informed decision:**

Adapted from earlier questions developed in morning

- How does Milwaukee come into play?
- What specific legislation has to change? Timing? Likelihood?
- What happens if increase in funding isn’t available or is less than model proposes? May not have impact
- Is there a way to test this against current inequities: Bigger statewide projects could have an impact
- What are potential standards & accountability--what’s in other states?
- How nimble if funding source or changes occur? That applies to all models.
- Jon Mark: is there a risk or is there a plan B needed if legislation is opened up and turns out to be Pandora’s box?

**Service Model Y Deeper Review Discussion**

The issues, questions, reactions and suggestions identified by the large group regarding this model included:

**Suggested Changes:**

- Incorporate Equity Equalizer in funding
- Define relationship between state level and system level: identify
- Relationships between systems should also be defined. Conditions should be possible for another WPLC-type thing.
- Simplify system consolidation possibilities and processes
- Concept of geo-spatial logistics: getting services out to larger areas, where things would be hosted, housed
- 6-8 systems doesn’t have to be the Magic number
- What does this mean to local library? Impacts need to be assessed
- Marketing of library services (?) There needs to be some adaptability for future needs. Also how to market, demonstrate value
● Needs transition plan and strategy
  o attention paid to messaging and tone and how conveyed to community
  o Administration and legal structure for organizational reconciliation for mergers/changes
  o Discussion of who is affected. Risk reward might be better term than winners/losers
  o Boundary principles: geographic goals/balance/incentives
● Could systems take another service role for the state? A system with good services “spool up” for more systems
● Define legislative and regulatory strategy (preserve accountability). Both DPI & Systems and Systems & members
● Technology standards @ the library level
● What services will Resource Libraries provide? What role will they have?
Question asked as to what the technology standards referred to?

Principles Review:
● 2 through 10 (if all factors were answered), then fully met
● 1 and 3 had “partial” votes; 1 and 6 had “unclear” votes

Potential Supporters:
● Large systems would be impacted minimally, therefore supporters
● Library directors likely would be supporters if objectives met
● Funding decision makers would also support if there is a pro-active effort by community and emphasizing improved services and efficiency of tax $$
● Under Resourced systems, libraries and counties likely also would support
Question: how would larger systems likely be supporters? Jeff Gilderson-Duwe said that the larger systems better fit the strength to meet that model’s structure.

Stakeholders potentially resistant:
● Those impacted by the transition
● Change averse: those who don’t like things to be different
● Well-funded systems might be resistant
● Smaller systems asked to merge with another may have power dynamic
● System staff: may have concerns - high risk/ low reward
● Small libraries may perceive loss of local control

Reactions: JM: local control understandable. He thinks small libraries already receiving good services should be agreeable. Small libraries that would receive greater control. Tracy said it is more that they’d be concerned that they would have a smaller voice. Sherry pointed out the power/structure relationships (weighted votes versus one library, one vote)
What is needed? What info?

- funding: how would it work?
- Importance of looking at risk/reward computation?
- Local control dynamic? What factors are there?
- Legislation Strategy; much needed
- Transition Plan: essential
- Pros & Cons for local libraries

Final Straw Polls of Model W and Model Y

Following the discussions of each of the two models, the Russells again distributed ballots and asked people to consider each model under consideration assuming that all of the suggested changes/improvements to each model recommended by the deeper dive small group were fully integrated into each model and then rate each model on the 10-point effectiveness scale. The Russells collected the ballots and reported the findings:

**Model Y: 6-8 Regional Library Systems under a Statewide Services Umbrella**

Vote distribution: 1 5 6 7 7 7 8 8 8 8 9 9 9 9 9 10 10
Total points: 136
Average: 7.56

**Model W: FORWARD Wisconsin – Enhanced Current Library System Model**

Vote distribution: 3 3 4 4 5 7 8 8 8 8 8.5 9 9 9 9 9 10 10
Total points: 130.5
Average: 7.25

Reactions:

- The group was impressed at how close the votes were for the two models under consideration.
- Several individuals noted that the models ended up being quite similar in that they seemed both quite effective at meeting the needs of the public library community.
- Jon Mark wondered who voted 1 for Y, since there had previously been only middle-to high votes. He indicated that he wasn’t asking that person to reveal themselves, only that it was an interesting shift in this person’s voting.
- Jeff Russell noted that he had heard members from the Model Y group discuss that Model W might represent the beginning of a movement toward a more effective approach to supporting public libraries with Model Y possibly being a longer-term destination for service improvement, efficiencies, etc.

Final Thoughts/Reactions from the Group

Jeff Russell said that WiLS would collect public comment during comment period from June 13th through July 25th.
Steve Ohs said that timeline had June 11 as the comment period. Now it is June 13, because it is necessary to first document today’s work and prepare it for distribution to the public library community of stakeholders.

Jeff Gilderson-Duwe asked what will happen at the July 30-31 conference, how will it be structured. He indicated that staff would like to prepare for this meeting. Jeff Russell said they don’t know yet—they really need to reflect upon the work done today, comments from the public library stakeholder community, and the workgroup recommendations and create a process and structure that brings these pieces together in a meaningful way.

There was a discussion of moving away from the names Model W and Model Y to something more descriptive. The Russells indicated that the naming of the two models will be resolved prior to July 30-31.

Bridgette Christianson asked whether minutes and notes from today will be available on 6/13. The Russells indicated, yes the notes and all related documents developed today will be shared with the Steering Committee, CRCs, and the public library community.

Joe Davies wanted to make sure that the two options had equal development/weight when they are made available to the Summit group. The Russells indicated that they will ensure that the two models are described with similar detail and length to ensure a fair and objective comparison prior to the July 30-31 Summit.

Next Events

- June 28: a virtual Steering Committee meeting will be held.
- PLSR Model Development Summit: July 30 and 31st – Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Stevens Point

Public Comment Period

John Thompson opened the meeting up for public comments, with comments limited to 3 minutes per person.

Brittney Larson, Muskego/Bridges

Requests that her comments are heard. Thanks for time and efforts. You’ve delved in a lot. she’s had 10 years in academic libraries and 6 months in public libraries, so she had a fresh eye. Her concerns are that they need to make changes proportionate to what needs to be changed. She thinks very little indicates from stakeholders that much or other needs to be changed. Take revolutionary/ transformational out of the discussion. She truly thinks that if Model W were to be implemented, it would not be a waste of time. One of the best things we do is collecting information, collating it, and reporting it out. Trust what we have learned. If we end up with 16 systems, it would be okay.

Funding: it’s hard for her to react to a funding model that doesn’t have concrete numbers. Don’t base just on theory. Just to maintain trust—the survey showed a high level of trust in public library systems. If their feelings/data isn’t taken into account, another governance layer imposed doesn’t suggest that her concerns will be met.
**Amy Birtell:** Monarch:

The Monarch System came into existence January 2017. First merger in history. Concerns that came up/issues to be aware of for Model Y. She didn’t hear much about counties being stakeholders. When counties are discussed locally, they have perception that they provide money. Counties re-assigning libraries to a system--there are a considerable number of agreements to present to the supervisors and explained. It is very time-consuming and takes a lot of commitment. System agreements need to be re-drafted and created. Those have to be “sold” locally, at county, and at system. She likes the idea of simplifying the process required, but good luck—that will take legislative language to achieve, even if it is only for one or two-county systems. You can’t leave libraries hanging during all that process. I have never heard the concept and term “local control” more than since she moved to WI. It is repeatedly brought up at the system, among the member libraries, even at the county level. You have to have patience and diligence to protect libraries’ autonomy. (Time up) Is there really cost savings? Is there really savings at the system level? They had heard repeatedly that there would be additional funding available. She wants to see the money that is saved, is not convinced. She wants to see where it would come from.

**Kathleen Klager, Pauline Haas**

Assuming economies of scale can’t be assumed. They had thought that when they investigated consolidation at the county and it would not be found. Don’t put a model out to the community that doesn’t fulfill the goals, especially equity. Model Y did not, apparently, included equity, since that was added today. A better communication piece—you have tried hard, but librarians are overwhelmed by the volume. Those emails are not being read. They likely don’t know that there are models presented, and also those hard to find on the website. Please put the models more prominent on the website. Whatever you come up with, it has to have the backing of the library community. When you’re served spinach stew, and that’s not what you ordered or expected, you’re disappointed. System directors don’t know or assume that it is their role or job to be the distributors of the information.

**Connie Meyer**

Thank you for your work and to all those who came. She has a group in her system who care passionately about the work they do. She was on the LEAN group and spent the summer talking about the issues and possibilities. State money distributed regionally to address problems at that level. It allowed some system to flourish but not others. So that’s where we are. The survey of satisfaction shows that there is a high level of happiness with what there is. She was a director for more than 20 years in a system in which the directors were unhappy (now defunct). So, she’s happy that change could be made. She is co-chair of LD&L— not speaking on their behalf but wanted to convey the process. If there is a future for this, there needs to be a legislative component that needs to be considered and developed. Shannon is smiling because we worked on the “return of library materials” bill, just one small part. We don’t want to advocate
for change unless we’re certain of what that change would be and that it will be supported. Then it goes to WLA board, then lobbyist who begins his works. We have had many one-on-one meetings with legislators who ask what is meaning, what does it do to my libraries, and what may be unintended consequences? They have tried very hard to ensure success and past successes. Heard lots of transformational changed, consider that the WPLC is transformational change that happened and still happens.

**Alli Chase, Eagle, Bridges**

Has followed a long time, lots of phone calls, will be on Summit. She likes this one (Model W?) because it has potential and funding included. Workgroup work can be matched up with it. We are in good standing with legislators and are in good place to achieve additional funding and support.