

Gonzaga University Foley Library Technology Proposal

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Executive Summary

We are looking to implement FOLIO, an open-source library platform, to replace our current integrated library system (ILS). The purpose of this transition is to provide our library with a more streamlined ILS that makes collaboration simpler and resource management easier. Resource management at Foley currently requires our librarians to use multiple systems such as Alma and ILLiad, which results in more time spent learning how to work within two different user interfaces and to provide simpler access for students. A review of current literature demonstrates that increasing numbers of libraries are successfully implementing FOLIO in order to unify and simplify resource management. FOLIO has already been adopted by Cornell University and a college consortium, as well as Spokane Public Library, which demonstrates its applicability for both university libraries and public libraries (Colt & Howell, 2021; Mulvaney & Berry, 2021; O'Malley, 2021). Unlike other open-source projects for ILS software, FOLIO is unique because it was designed by librarians for librarians and because of its modularity which yields an incredibly flexible platform that is capable of hosting library services rather than just an ILS (Liu, 2021; Taylor, 2021). As an open-source project, the FOLIO software itself comes at no cost to the university, and existing infrastructure will be able to handle much of the necessary hardware for this project. Rather than paying for an ILS, Foley will only need to pay for hosting, which is offered by EBSCO as well as other vendors. To evaluate how well FOLIO serves as a replacement for our current ILS, qualitative data will be collected from both librarians and users through surveys designed to assess ease of use and quality of performance in addition to quantitative data such as time spent managing resources.

Library Mission and Background

The Foley Center Library is an integral partner in the transformative educational experiences emerging from Gonzaga's Jesuit, Catholic, humanistic mission.

We provide and curate scholarly information resources that spark imaginations and facilitate engagement with knowledge, wisdom, and cultural heritage.

We create physical and virtual learning environments for collaboration, study, discovery, and reflection. We prepare students for lives of leadership and service for the common good by cultivating their abilities to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and create information in digital and physical formats and partner with our faculty and staff in their teaching, creative and scholarly pursuits.

Foley Library is located on Gonzaga University's campus in Spokane, Washington and as an academic library serves Gonzaga's students, faculty, and members of the public. As of Fall 2021, Foley Library serves 4,852 undergraduate students, 1,735 master's students, in addition to a few hundred doctoral students, law students, and non-credit students. Gonzaga serves a primarily White (70.6%) student population, along with Hispanic (10.8%), Multi-Ethnic (6.8%), Asian (5.8%), and Black (1.2%) student populations (Figure 1). Gonzaga has a strong community atmosphere, supported by the fact that all students live on campus for their first two years, with most living off campus but very close for their last two, and small class sizes of about 23.

As Foley moves to implement the FOLIO Integrated Library Management System, it can contribute to the advancement of independent, open-source Library Management Software and empower students to more easily find and access resources and engage in transformative educational experiences in alignment with the library's mission.

Statement of Team Members

As a solo project, I was responsible for all aspects of this paper including the research, literature review, library mission and background, budget estimates, and more. I am passionate about open-source software, especially with regards towards improving libraries and taking on the project as a whole provided me a better opportunity to familiarize myself with each aspect of implementing it in a technology plan.

Problem Statement

Foley's librarians and staff spend a great amount of time working with the library's ILS, ILLiad, and Gonzaga University's existing websites to create a singular functional interface for students that provides streamlined access to the library's resources. Integrating these with collaborative open access projects takes further time and effort. For students their online library experience can be confusing as it seems there are different sections rather than a single cohesive place to visit. The result is that students underutilize available resources and fall into a pattern of only relying on one of the library's resources. At the same time, librarians and staff spend more time working on disjointed resources and subsequently have less time to devote to other library projects.

Statement of Expected Outcomes

Adopting FOLIO as Foley's integrated library system will simplify library operations and grant more flexibility to our librarians when managing resources, while opening up more of our existing resources to students. Transitioning to an open-source library services platform will also allow Gonzaga University to contribute to a project that will benefit other libraries in the future.

Requirements for the Project

To successfully implement FOLIO, there are several necessary components. While the software itself is free and open-source, hosting and customization are needed before it can be deployed. FOLIO is partnered with several vendors who offer hosting, most notably EBSCO. As part of its hosting package, EBSCO offers hosting, security, customizations, and training. The cost associated with hosting FOLIO will be less than that of an ILS since the work performed by the vendor is reduced due to the freely available source code. In addition to hosting, training for faculty and staff will require time and preparation. Training will be organized by Foley's librarians before being administered to university faculty and students. While there is no dollar cost associated with this, it may require temporary reductions in time spent on other projects within the library. In the future if the need arises for a special module or feature, there is also a potential cost associated with its development and will need to be evaluated at that time.

Budget

As far as budget specifics, EBSCO does not list a standard pricing model for FOLIO hosting. Like the vast majority of software solutions for libraries, EBSCO's hosting is dependent on many factors including number of users, amount of data stored, speed thresholds, and customization. This makes it difficult to predict costs. However, given the nature of FOLIO's development its overall cost should still be lower than that of a dedicated ILS.

Literature Review

As libraries have grown to rely more heavily on electronic resources their budgets have increased and so has the pressure to become organizations that add value to information rather than curating collections. Integrated library systems have grown concurrently as the primary tool for libraries to manage their growing electronic resources and provide high quality access for

patrons. Many libraries have found themselves constrained by legacy systems that are difficult or expensive to customize and that do not really meet the library's needs.

Comparison of Open-Source and Propriety Library Software

An analysis of the advantages and limitations of open-source software (OSS) in library management software identified the key differences between OSS and proprietary software that libraries should consider (Upasani, 2016). The most immediate drawback to OSS is that it requires hosting, customization, and maintenance. So, while the software is free, there is a cost to make it accessible and usable for a library. A related limitation is that OSS does not have the dedicated support for problems or software updates that is usually included in packages from software vendors. The majority of OSS is deployed with thin clients, which means that any IT problems require external support on the backend. This takes away the library's ability to troubleshoot many issues internally. In short, the quality of hosting and dedicated support is highly important to a successful deployment of OSS within the library.

In contrast to the drawbacks listed above, OSS gives libraries many advantages over propriety ILS's. First, OSS is very easily accessed and is not dependent on the type of library or specific needs. Second, the base cost of developing the software is free, which means an overall lower deployment cost compared to a vendor's ILS. In the same way that the thin client nature of OSS is a drawback, it is also an advantage since it reduces the amount of server and software maintenance that the library IT department needs to handle. In the same vein, support can come from other libraries and forums that utilize the software rather than only from the vendor. OSS also gives the library more leverage with vendors for hosting and deployment since the software is not reliant on a specific vendor's code base. One of OSS greatest advantages is its ability to interact with virtually any other application and to share new features between many different

libraries. The consortia approach of OSS supports each library's development of a high quality, customized solution without the high cost usually associated with highly specific software.

What Makes FOLIO Unique?

FOLIO, which is an acronym for The Future of Libraries is Open, is the result of a collaboration between libraries, vendors, and developers to build an open-source library services platform (LSP) (FOLIO, 2022). An LSP is broader than an ILS and supports a platform for more library services than the traditional print and electronic resources services found in most ILS. Although FOLIO is not the first OSS project for library software, it is different because it incorporates librarians in the development process with the goal of creating an LSP that meets the needs and expectations of its target audience (Liu, 2021). FOLIO's modular structure has also made it stand out since different libraries can develop and then share modules with each other making the software extremely versatile and more prone to longevity than the traditional ILS (Taylor, 2021).

Success Stories

Many academic libraries still use vendors for their integrated library systems, so it is understandable to have some apprehensions about switching to an OSS such as FOLIO. However, there a growing number of recent success stories about libraries that have successfully made the transition. Cornell University's library recently moved from Voyager to FOLIO. Cornell has been deeply involved in FOLIO's development and has now been able to demonstrate FOLIO's capabilities as an LSP for a prestigious academic library (Colt & Howell, 2021). Both Cornell and Gonzaga are private colleges with a large focus on undergraduate students, which means FOLIO should be applicable here at Gonzaga. FOLIO was also successfully adopted by a five-college consortium in Massachusetts, who reported that they were

able to make the switch without disrupting students access to materials and reported greater control over their electronic resources as a result of their adoption of FOLIO (Mulvaney & Berry, 2021). Finally, Spokane Public Library recently switched to FOLIO, which provides an excellent opportunity for Foley to collaborate with librarians from the community and draw upon their experience (O'Malley, 2021).

Description of the Proposed Solution

In order to better serve our students, we propose the following: the purchase of 10 Kindle Paperwhite E-readers with protective cases loaded with all required textbooks and 15-20 eBooks for pleasure reading, a subscription to Amazon Prime for discounts on eBook purchases, and a subscription to Audible (to be renewed annually), which will provide two new audiobooks each month to be loaded onto the Kindles. Because this material is downloaded onto the Kindles, an internet connection is not required to access it, resulting in increased accessibility for students who do not have internet access at home (estimated at 30% of the student population). The digital format will also benefit deaf students and students with print-related disabilities and allow for more equitable access for all students at North Douglas High School. All students will benefit from this technology plan since multiple studies have shown that the use of digital material often increases engagement in educational material (Larson, 2015; Glackin, et al., 2014) and more interest in pleasure reading (Dawkins, et al., 2019). Turner et al. (2020) found a wide gap in the way students engage with reading at school versus at home; providing digital educational materials will decrease this gap and allow students to practice inquiry-based thinking and hone skills sets that are unique to engaging with electronic materials.

The Kindle devices will be checked out on a first-come, first-served basis for 4 weeks at a time. We propose beginning with 10 Kindles for the initial implementation. If demand greatly

exceeds the number available, we know that the program is successful, and we may be able to use data to apply for a grant or to ask stakeholders for money in order to purchase more.

Staff and Student Training

Training is useful for smoothing over the transition from Alma to FOLIO. The largest challenge will be training librarians how to migrate their existing workflows into a new user interface. To mitigate this, library staff training will be conducted early and often, and staff will outline what changes will be made to their workflow. Feedback will also be incorporated into the customization process to ensure that staff expectations align with the reality of the software. Next, library staff will develop user guides, videos, and documentation to effectively help users help themselves use the new software. Finally, the rollout will be conducted side by side with the existing ILS and accompanying software to give faculty and students a change to adjust without an immediate switch. FOLIO's user interface is very smooth and intuitive, so many students will only need minimal assistance.

Marketing

To encourage students and faculty to engage with and learn how to use FOLIO, the library will use outreach to generate interest and inform patrons. Foley's social media will launch a campaign to announce FOLIO several months in advance, highlighting how it will help students gain more from their library experience. There will also be signs and postings on library doors, along walls, and especially at the circulation desk to encourage students to ask questions or learn more about how their everyday library interactions might change and to make them aware of the transition well in advance.

Evaluation

To assess how well FOLIO is functioning, we will collect qualitative data from both students and library staff six months before and after the transition. The key metrics that will be evaluated are ease of use, retrieval speed, and cost. In addition to this, several studies will be conducted testing the quality and quantity of resources that are retrieved by searches to determine if there is an improvement in the overall management of resources. Finally, an annual review will analyze the library's expenses related to hosting and customizing FOLIO and compare it with the cost of other proprietary library software to measure the financial costs or benefits of using an open-source library management system. All these evaluations will be considered as a whole by the library director along with university's administration.

Conclusion

By adopting FOLIO, an open-source library management system, to replace our existing ILS, we aim to free up more funds in our budget for other library projects, while simultaneously providing a better system to manage print and digital collections that makes collaboration and customization easier. Finally, we hope to contribute to FOLIO's OSS and provide useful modules that other libraries will be able to adopt in the future. We hope that this project will help Foley better succeed in its mission to facilitate engagement with knowledge, wisdom, and cultural heritage.

References

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Appendix A. Request for Proposal

Note: Adapted from Knox (2011)

General Conditions

Gonzaga University's Foley Library is soliciting bids from qualified vendors for configuration and hosting of the open-source library services platform software FOLIO to replace Alma, the current software used for managing print and electronic resources.

The following request for proposal (RFP) is being provided for your consideration. To be considered, your company must meet the qualifications and satisfy the requirements set forth in this RFP.

Jeffrey Kersh
Electronic Resources Librarian
Foley Library, Gonzaga University
502 E. Boone Ave
Spokane, WA 99258
jkersh@g.emporium.edu

Final proposals must be received at the above address on or before June 6, 2022. The library reserves the right to evaluate all proposals objectively and subjectively and to accept or reject any or all proposals or portion thereof. The library also reserves the right to negotiate changes in the configuration of the software with the company determined to have submitted the proposal that is in the best interest of the library.

It is to be understood that this RFP constitutes specifications only for the purpose of receiving proposals for services and does not constitute an agreement for those services.

The information contained herein is believed to be accurate, but it is not to be considered in any way as a warranty.

All questions, clarifications, and correspondence should be directed to Karen Knox at the address noted above or by email.

Withdrawal of Proposals

Proposals shall remain valid for a period of thirty (30) days after submission.

Modifications to proposals will not be accepted by the library, except as may be mutually agreed upon following the acceptance of the proposal.

Timetable

RFP Released	May 1, 2022
Mandatory Walk-Through	May 16, 2022, 10:00 AM
Deadline for Receipt of Bids	June 6, 2022
Recommendation to Library Board	June 20, 2022
Notification to All Vendors ASAP	June 20, 2022

Requirements

Bid specifications for the configuration and hosting of FOLIO must match specifications on the bid sheet or be of equal specifications to be accepted. Please include all cost factors and a specific delivery time frame.

Method of Evaluating Proposals

After the bids have been evaluated, cost and other considerations will be evaluated. Once all factors have been evaluated; the Vendor that is the lowest responsive, responsible bidder will be selected for recommendation to the Library Board.

Payment

Final Payment to the successful bidder will be paid upon successful configuration and implementation of the software in compliance with the terms listed below.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Rochester Hills Public Library does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, height, weight, marital status, or disability in its programs and

activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Jeffrey Kersh
Electronic Resources Librarian
Foley Library, Gonzaga University
502 E. Boone Ave
Spokane, WA 99258
jkersh@g.emporio.edu

Part 1: General

Description of Work: Base Bid

Provide adequate hosting for the new software (FOLIO) to provide the library with access at sufficient speed, with sufficient security, and with sufficient planning for contingencies to ensure uninterrupted access in the event of any hardware issues. The implementation of the software will also include modifications to improve the aesthetics of the user interface and provide customized color schemes to match Gonzaga University's current websites. In addition, the hosting and customization will include dedicated support in the event of any IT issues or future changes to the software.

Vendor Will Provide

- Scripting and migration of current data into FOLIO
- On-site training for users, in accordance with client work schedule
- Integration of third-party applications
- Local support 24/7
- High availability and performance servers for hosting
- A 'hardened' and stable version of the FOLIO software
- Software updates and backups

Client Will Provide

- All library data for migration
- A comprehensive list of all third-party integrations
- Examples of color palates and logos for user-interface

Part 2: Products**Hardware, Networking, and Secondary Software**

All hardware, networking, and supporting software are to be provided and implemented as required to meet their respective manufacturer's specifications and installation procedures.

All hardware, networking, and supporting software will be thoroughly tested and proven in actual field use. Vendor will demonstrate and verify that any new hardware, networking or supporting software are compatible with the existing system prior to their introduction.

Work shall be performed in accordance with the applicable international, federal, state, and local codes, or standards current at the commencement of installation. Where more than one code or regulation is applicable, the more stringent shall apply.

Accepted Providers

- Amazon Web Services
- Oracle Cloud Platform
- Google App Engine
- Microsoft Azure
- Red Hat OpenShift

Note: Other providers may be considered, provided the vendor can demonstrate their commitments to security and stability.

Part 3: Execution

Installation

Vendor will be responsible for installation of FOLIO and for providing baseline system parameters. Vendor will ensure that all data is encrypted and secured using TLS 1.3 and provide multi-factor authentication options to ensure the security of usernames and passwords. Vendor will utilize sufficient processing power to allow a speed index of four seconds and to be able to handle approximately ten thousand users. The vendor will provide a 'hardened' version of the FOLIO software that has been evaluated for security and stability along with the user side and a staff side to allow management and modifications to be made by library staff.

Customization and Configuration

The vendor will modify the existing open-source FOLIO software to ensure its functionality within the existing library and university software. The integration of an interlibrary loan module to replace the library's ILLiad along with the development of any necessary API's will undergo the same standards of stability and security as the base structure.

Training and Testing

- Vendor will be responsible for providing training to a group of key Library employees on the basic operation and maintenance of the system. The training shall be sufficient to allow Library staff to operate the system independent of outside assistance.
- Vendor will provide all users manuals and other training documents on the specifics of the system to accomplish training and operational requirements.
- Vendor will provide additional technical assistance as needed on the basic operation of the system for the entire term of the warranty at no additional charge to Library.

- Vendor will conduct and document a final performance test of all components to validate system operability.

Warranty Information

Vendor will cover all labor related expenses to warrantycovered service calls for the period of at least ninety (90) days commencing at the completion of training at no additional charge.