Background

In early May 2004, OWLSnet began working on migration to a new Integrated Library System (ILS). Consequently, most of OWLSnet's time and energy over the past few years had been devoted to the migration: selecting a vendor, configuring the new vendor's ILS, migrating data to the ILS, training staff at member libraries, actually beginning to use the new system, developing and producing reports, and adapting workflow to work as efficiently as possible with the new ILS. There wasn't time to concentrate on much else during the migration period.

In August 2006, with most of the migration-related activities behind us, it was proposed that OWLSnet engage in a planning process to begin thinking about the future. This seemed like a good time because OWLSnet libraries have many needs and interests, because there are many possibilities for services that OWLSnet could offer, and because we have limited resources.

At the August 19, 2006 meeting of the OWLSnet Administrative Advisory Committee (AAC), it was proposed and accepted that OWLSnet engage in a planning process that would include an assessment of member library automation needs, a review of the effectiveness of the current governance and decision-making structure, identification of short-term development priorities, identification of areas in need of new or updated policies, recommendations for achieving uniform compliance with policies and procedures, and the identification of any other issues to be addressed by the membership.

Consequently, volunteers were solicited to serve on a planning committee, and the OWLS and NFLS directors appointed a committee that was representative of the geography, sizes of libraries, and types of libraries within OWLSnet. Appointed to the OWLSnet Planning Committee were:

- Becca Berger - Door County
- Joan Dennis - Oconto Falls
- Ann Hunt - New London
- Barbara Kelly - Appleton
- Rick Krumwiede - OWLS
- Mark Merrifield - NFLS
- Elizabeth Timmins - Seymour

Gerri Moeller, OWLS Library Automation Manager, served as staff for the committee.

A planning exercise was administered at the October 20, 2006 AAC meeting in order to solicit input from OWLSnet member library staff for the planning process. The Planning Committee held five meetings between November 28, 2006 and June 6, 2007. At their last meeting, the Committee achieved consensus on the values, goals, and objectives to be included in a proposed plan. The proposed plan was drafted by Rick Krumwiede, and committee members reviewed and submitted comments for further modification of the plan. The draft plan was presented for consideration at the July 13, 2007 AAC meeting, and the AAC recommended it for approval by the OWLS Board. The OWLS Board approved this plan at its July 19, 2007 meeting.

Planning Committee Meetings

Topics covered by the Planning Committee at their meetings are summarized below.

November 28, 2006
The meeting was spent reviewing and discussing the results of the October 20, 2006 planning exercise. Much of the discussion focused on the areas where system staff had a different perception than member library staff. Because there is some confusion about system roles and who to call about a given issue, the Committee spent time discussing the best methodology for conveying "who does what." There was considerable discussion about the pros and cons of meetings and the need to clarify expectations of member libraries. Overall, the planning exercise responses were very positive. Almost all of the respondents strongly agreed that "My library is glad that it belongs to OWLSnet."

January 5, 2007
Committee members were asked to discuss some of the immediate issues facing OWLSnet: the Attorney General's opinion and use of a collection agency, the Innovative enhancement request process, statistics in the new ILS, and materials too long in transit. The majority of the meeting was spent discussing possible values for inclusion in an OWLSnet values statement. There was also some discussion of areas in need of new or updated policies or procedures, e.g., strengthening patron registration procedures, local circulation practices that impact other libraries.

March 2, 2007
Following an update on topics discussed at previous meetings, the Committee discussed OWLSnet development priorities. Included in the discussion were the needs for better online usage statistics, clarification of Millennium statistics, InfoSoup content development, workstation management software, wireless Internet access for patrons, increased bandwidth at libraries, addition of new Millennium products, and increased use of the acquisitions module. It was the consensus of committee members that there was no need to review or modify the OWLSnet fee structure at this time.

April 3, 2007
The meeting was spent discussing a background paper on OWLSnet governance and decision-making. The result of this discussion was a number of specific recommendations regarding

how AAC meetings are conducted and how to convey a broader understanding decision-making within OWLSnet. The Committee agreed that consensus decision-making should continue to be used as much as possible, but members need to be better educated about the responsibilities involved. The recommendation that all votes be scheduled on meeting agendas has already resulted in a change to the OWLSnet Bylaws, and new ground rules for meetings have already been implemented.

<u>June 5, 2007</u>
Committee members achieved consensus on values, goals, and objectives to be included in the draft OWLSnet plan. It was decided that no additional meetings were necessary, and the draft plan could be finalized via email.

OWLSnet Values

Many issues and challenges faced by OWLSnet in the past can be traced to lack of a commonly understood philosophy or vision. System and member library staffs have differing perceptions of OWLSnet membership responsibilities, the roles of individual libraries, and the roles of the systems. The Planning Committee believes that it would be helpful for OWLSnet to achieve consensus on some guiding principles or values. An agreed upon statement of values would help guide OWLSnet development, assist with the understanding of roles and responsibilities, and aid in decision-making by system staff, member library staff, the AAC, and the OWLS Board.

The Planning Committee proposes that OWLSnet adopt the following values statements:

1. OWLSnet is established to provide a shared, integrated library automation system to NFLS and OWLS member libraries for the purposes of:
    *   Facilitating resource sharing among members
    *   Assisting member libraries in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of operations
    *   Assisting member libraries in enhancing patron access to services.

2. OWLSnet works to accommodate the needs of all member libraries, regardless of size, funding, or staffing levels.

3. OWLSnet has a responsibility to provide sufficient training opportunities to ensure that library staff can be adequately trained in using the integrated library system and in the application of relevant policies and procedures.

4. NFLS and OWLS have a responsibility to make it possible for any NFLS or OWLS library to participate in OWLSnet.

5. Member libraries have a responsibility to be good citizens of OWLSnet by
    - Participating in governance and decision-making through active representation on the Administrative Advisory Committee
    - Staying informed about and adhering to all OWLSnet policies and procedures
    - Disseminating relevant OWLSnet information to appropriate library staff
    - Ensuring that staff are properly trained in using OWLSnet resources
    - Ensuring that staff are trained in the application of relevant policies and procedures
    - Providing local library information or responses needed by OWLSnet staff
    - Developing local collections to meet the needs of local library patrons
    - Freely lending all circulating materials to other participating libraries

6. Member libraries have authority to make decisions regarding their own policies, procedures, and practices as long as such decisions do not conflict with OWLSnet policies, procedures, or agreements. Member libraries should be mindful that local decisions may have a negative impact on other OWLSnet member libraries.

Goals and Objectives

Goal A: To provide OWLSnet services to OWLS and NFLS member libraries that help libraries increase patron access to library and information resources and that help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of library operations.

Objectives:

1. OWLSnet will continue to provide and support Millennium integrated library system (ILS) software from Innovative Interfaces that offers a variety of functions to members including circulation control, a central bibliographic database, a central patron database, management reports, an online public access catalog (InfoSoup), overdue and reserve notices, resource sharing, and acquisitions. (2007-2010)

2. OWLSnet will continue to provide access to subscription-based electronic information resources (e.g., Gale databases, Ancestry, HeritageQuest, Overdrive, Tumblebooks). (2007-2010)

3. OWLSnet will continue to work with member libraries to provide enhanced information resources to patrons via InfoSoup (e.g., staff picks, recently added materials database, booklists, Readers' Page). (2007-2010)

4. OWLS and APL technical services staff will continually monitor and make recommendations regarding OWLSnet technical services processes. (2007-2010)

5. OWLSnet will continue to provide Internet services (e.g., World Wide Web access, website hosting, email accounts) to member libraries. (2007-2010)

6. OWLSnet will continue to provide and support the network infrastructure necessary for OWLSnet services, including firewalls, servers, telecommunications equipment, data circuits, and software. (2007-2010)

7. OWLSnet will continue working to secure sufficient bandwidth to meet the needs of members by upgrading bandwidth from the BadgerNet converged network, by continuing to monitor the bandwidth needs of member libraries, and by securing adequate bandwidth to connect to an Internet Service Provider. (2007-2010)

8. OWLSnet will continue to install new switches at member libraries in order to increase security by segmenting the network at each library location. (2007-2008)

9. OWLSnet staff will work with member libraries, when requested, to facilitate the installation of wireless networks. (2007-2010)

Goal B: To optimize the governance and operation of OWLSnet by formalizing policies, procedures, and decision-making and by increasing member library understanding of what is expected of them.

Objectives:

1. Representatives of OWLS, NFLS, and all member libraries (i.e., AAC) will meet at least quarterly to discuss the technical and administrative operation of the network. (2007-2010)

2. OWLSnet will implement recommendations of the Planning Committee for conducting AAC meetings including: meeting only in large enough rooms, developing ground rules for meetings, advance distribution of all meeting materials, providing advance notice of issues to be voted upon, distributing meeting outcomes immediately following meetings. (2007)

3. OWLSnet will develop and implement a program for orienting library directors on the responsibilities of OWLSnet membership, the structure and governance of OWLSnet, and the nature and meaning of consensus decision-making. (2007)

4. OWLSnet will continue to codify membership requirements, policies, and procedures and will regularly communicate them to member libraries. (2007-2010)

5. OWLSnet will monitor member library compliance with policies, procedures, and membership requirements and will notify any library that does not comply. (2007-2010)

6. OWLSnet will investigate the feasibility of establishing a Policy Committee that would adjudicate disputes between libraries over whether a particular practice conforms to OWLSnet policies and procedures. (2008)

Goal C: To further develop OWLSnet services in order to improve and enhance the services and information available to member libraries and their patrons.

Objectives:

1.   OWLSnet, in cooperation with member libraries, will continue to develop and enhance InfoSoup. Input regarding InfoSoup development will be solicited from member libraries via the InfoSoup Development Blog, at AAC meetings, and at other appropriate meetings. (2007-2010)

2.   OWLSnet, in cooperation with member libraries, will develop pages for inclusion in InfoSoup (e.g., local history page) that highlight unique content developed by member libraries. (2007)

3.   OWLSnet will work with member libraries to explore methods for linking to and promoting local library resources through InfoSoup. (2007-2010)

4.   OWLSnet will add the capability for patrons to add reviews to materials in InfoSoup. (2007-2008)

5.   OWLSnet will regularly evaluate current use of online information subscriptions, provide trials and evaluations of prospective resources, and begin providing access to additional Internet-based information resources. (2007-2010)

6.   OWLSnet will convene a committee to evaluate and recommend a PC Management software vendor for member libraries, and OWLSnet will implement the recommendation if financially feasible. (2007-2008)

7.   OWLSnet will work with the Brown County Library director, if requested, to explore the impact and feasibility of the library joining OWLSnet. (2008)

8.   OWLSnet will continue to assess the desirability and feasibility of implementing additional Millennium software modules (e.g., E-Commerce, Collection Agency Interface). (2007-2010)

9.   OWLSnet will develop and implement a schedule for replacing servers, computer room network equipment (i.e., firewalls, routers, switches), uninterruptible power supplies, and backup units. (2007-2010)

10.   OWLSnet will evaluate its current antivirus software, PC security, and network security provisions and will make recommendations for maintaining and improving security. (2009)

11.   OWLSnet will implement recommendations of its evaluation of PC and network security and virus protection. (2010)

12. OWLSnet will work with member libraries to explore their participation in the acquisitions module of the Millennium ILS. (2007-2010)

Goal D: To facilitate effective resource sharing among OWLSnet member libraries in order to provide patrons with convenient access to library and information resources.

Objectives:

1. OWLSnet will continually evaluate the cost effectiveness of OWLSnet's resource sharing policy, which encourages the sharing of all local materials with all other network members. (2007-2010)

2. OWLSnet will continually evaluate the impact of resource sharing growth on member libraries' operations and will make recommendations for desirable changes. (2007-2010)

3. OWLSnet will continue to provide member libraries and their patrons with access to BadgerCat and other area library catalogs via InfoSoup. (2007-2010)

4. OWLSnet will make its Millennium server available as a z39.50 target in order for libraries in the state using WISCAT to have access to information about member library materials. (2007-2010)

5. OWLS and NFLS will continue to monitor resource sharing among OWLSnet members and, if necessary, will implement methods for addressing resource sharing inequities that may exist between systems and libraries. (2007-2010)

6. OWLSnet will continue to allow patrons to request the interlibrary loan of items by placing holds or sending email messages via the online catalog. (2007-2010)

Goal E: To provide training and assistance to member library staff in using services provided by OWLSnet.

Objectives:

1. OWLSnet will continue to provide group and individual training to staff of member libraries in the effective use of Millennium software and related management reports. (2007-2010)

2. OWLS will continue to provide assistance to staff of member libraries in troubleshooting problems with the use of OWLSnet services. (2007-2010)

3. OWLSnet will provide information on its web site about using OWLSnet services effectively. (2007-2010)

4. OWLSnet, upon request, will assist OWLSnet member libraries with the initial set-up of new web sites. NFLS and OWLS are each responsible for assisting with the development and maintenance of their own member library web sites. (2007-2010)

5. NFLS and OWLS are each responsible for providing training or consultation to their own member libraries in the effective use of electronic information resources, computers, software, or other new technologies not related to the ILS. (2007-2010)

Goal F: To engage in continuous study and planning in regard to OWLSnet services, library automation, resource sharing, and new technologies.

Objectives:

1. OWLSnet will appoint a planning committee to evaluate the current plan and develop a new plan. (2009)

2. The OWLSnet planning committee will present a new plan for consideration, modification, and adoption by the Administrative Advisory Committee. (2010)

3. OWLSnet will encourage and support participation by its staff in activities to help them keep abreast of technological developments relevant to OWLSnet services. (2007-2010)

Evaluation

This plan will be evaluated by an OWLSnet Planning Committee to be appointed in 2009. Evaluation will include a written assessment of the extent to which goals and objectives have been met. This assessment will include 1) a list of the objectives that have been achieved, 2) a list of objectives that have not been achieved with an explanation of why they weren't achieved, 3) suggestions for how any unmet objectives might be achieved in the future, and 4) a description of any unanticipated outcomes.

This plan will also be reviewed annually by staff, and any proposed revisions will be recommended to the AAC for consideration.

Appendix A

OWLSnet Planning Committee
Summary of Recommendations about AAC Meetings and OWLSnet Participation
May 10, 2007

The Planning Committee discussed governance and decision-making at its April meeting.
- Staff prepared background paper identifying issues and concerns about how we conduct meetings
- It was agreed not to change the governance structure
- Efforts will be made in an attempt to improve decision-making
- Measures will be implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness of meetings
- Evaluation will be conducted after improvements have been made

The Planning Committee made the following recommendations:
- Only hold meetings in rooms large enough to accommodate group comfortably
  - No more meetings at NFLS
- All issues and proposals for discussion should be known prior to meetings
  - Prefer that all materials go out in packet one week prior to meeting
  - All votes scheduled on agenda
    - Requires bylaws revision
  - Use official contacts for voting
    - Allow alternates
- Continue to use consensus decision making as much as possible
  - Need to inform members about nature and meaning of consensus decision-making
  - Members need to understand the responsibilities involved
- Develop basic standards for membership
  - Develop a list of membership responsibilities
  - Members need to know what is expected of every member
- Develop a program or materials for new director orientation
  - Include responsibilities of membership – not just how to use ILS
  - Distribute materials to all libraries
  - Offer program to any library
- Develop ground rules for meetings
  - Two rules to start
    - Only speak when recognized
    - Only one person speak at a time
- Distribute meeting reports, not necessarily complete minutes, via Network News immediately following meetings
  - Email link to minutes when they are finished

Appendix B

Annotated List of Additional OWLSnet Planning Resources

OWLSnet Planning Process Proposal (August 18, 2006)

Accepted at the August 19, 2006 AAC meeting, this proposal describes the need to engage in a planning process, the activities to be included in the process, the methodology to be used for planning, and the proposed timetable.

http://www.owlsnet.info/planning/planproposal8-06.pdf

OWLSnet Planning Process – Summary: Individual Exercise Compilation of Results (October 20, 2006)

This is a summary of results from the planning exercise that was administered at the October 20, 2006 AAC meeting. No attempt was made to segregate member library staff responses by system. However, responses from NFLS and OWLS staff members are presented separately from those of member library staff.

Responses to open ended questions have been compiled.

http://www.owlsnet.info/planning/ExerciseSummary10-20-06.pdf

OWLSnet Planning Process: Individual Exercise Compilation of Results (October 20, 2006)

This is a summary of results from the planning exercise that was administered at the October 20, 2006 AAC meeting. No attempt was made to segregate member library staff responses by system. However, responses from NFLS and OWLS staff members are presented separately from those of member library staff.

Responses to open ended questions have not been compiled.

http://www.owlsnet.info/planning/ExerciseResults10-20-06.pdf