



Director's Report
April 2026

Updates from IUG: I attended the Innovative Users Group conference in Chicago with a few of my staff and we attended several great sessions. While there, we also met with our new account success manager Rebekah Garrety, and spoke with some lead product managers from Vega Discover, Polaris Leap and Vega Reports.

Non-resident holds: There is a new functionality that we requested shortly after going live that is anticipated to be released in 2027 that will allow nonresident patrons the ability to place holds in the catalog, and for those holds to only be fulfilled by their registered library. This will bring back a missing piece of functionality that took us by surprise when migrating to Polaris.

Recent outages: We also discussed the recent outages and performance by Innovative with their rollout of the Account Portal. As a response to this, they are launching a new sandbox environment for their customers to try out new features prior to launching to reduce the number of glitches coinciding with software updates.

Vega Promote: It was also shared that Vega Promote will be launching with consortium support in July, although we may be able to get earlier access. This product was built on ActiveCampaign which is the industry leader for email marketing solutions. The platform will offer automation, email segmentation, and design tools to fully customize marketing campaigns. We'll continue to license PatronPoint for at least a year to provide ample time for member libraries to transition to this new product. I've also discussed with Innovative the possibility of their product manager, Taylor Fisher, attending STELLACon to give a live demonstration of this new platform.

Annotated Lists: Innovative is working on a new feature to add list annotation as an option for Vega Booklists – this may have the potential to replace products like Lib Guides with something built into our discovery layer.

Programs in search results: Innovative showed their design concept for including programs and events scheduled within Vega Program alongside search results in

the catalog. I confirmed with them that it would have consortium features to set defined scope of search range to within-library, etc.

In-transit slips: I also met with the Polaris Leap product lead to discuss a potential future need for Leap to print out routes and/or stop numbers on top of in-transit delivery slips which would help us with any internal delivery services in the future. This would remove the need for separate delivery slips when packing materials.

Vega Program as Equipment Booking Tool: Vega Program now has the capability of booking equipment separate from rooms and could serve as a basic library of things reservation tool.

Vega Syncing Issue: There was a Vega syncing issue that occurred towards the beginning of March. For a variety of reasons (wrong default ticket priority selected with Innovative, internal communications, etc.) this issue was not handled with the level of support we strive for. As a result, I've created a new internal "Troubleshooting and Communications Protocol" that defines how tickets with 3rd party vendors should be handled, methods for internal collaboration and when and how to share updates with the membership on potential system-wide issues. Providing these clear guidelines internally should help us maintain a high level of support and satisfaction among our members.

Updating Bib Records: Tricia has been working to determine best practices for how to handle updated bib records from Ingram. Several libraries receive updated bibs as part of their package in addition to the brief bibs they receive upon order. To avoid creating duplicate items, we're trying to determine the best way to handle these – there have been reports that duplicates are being created even though the files are being loaded with the 949. We'll share details once we have them.

Circulation Policies Handbook: We've shared our first draft of a circulation policies handbook with the Circ Protocols committee for them to provide feedback and additional sections. We'll be working with them to document our existing policies and recommendations into this formalized handbook.

Envisionware: We've placed orders for our first few libraries to be converted to Envisionware's Cloud Nine and Print Management platforms. We've set up an internal spreadsheet and will be reaching out to each member library to generate custom quotes and assess individual needs to ease the transition.

Quotes for Server, Networking, Backup: We have reached out to a few vendors for quotes on a new server, new network switch and firewall, as well as new backup appliance and battery backup device. While we have scaled down our environment over the years to more cloud-based solutions, Microsoft's best

practices still recommend having both on-premises and cloud-based infrastructures in place. We'll provide quotes and a proposal soon.

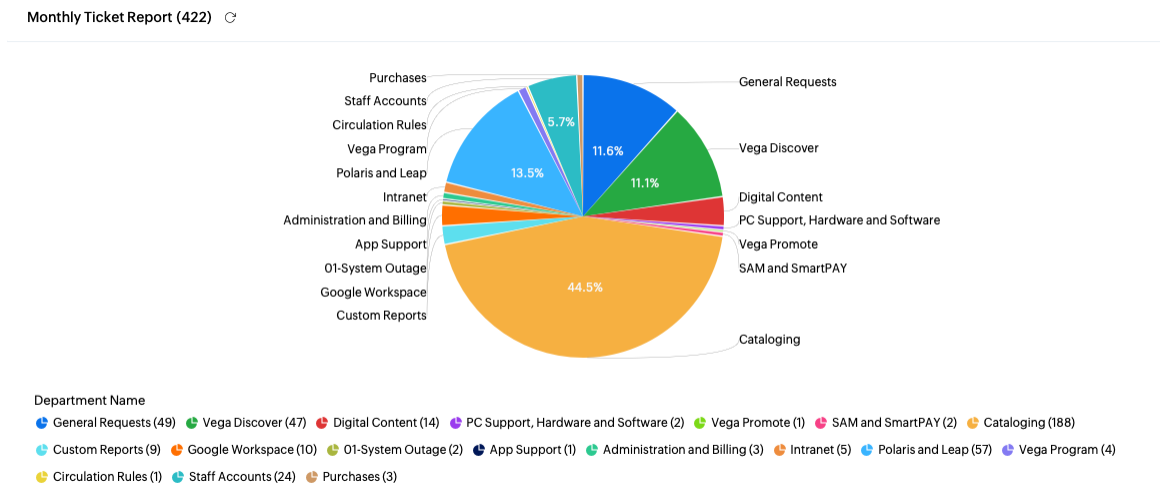
Systems Monitoring: As a result of some recent outages, we have set up a product called Uptime Kuma to monitor servers and track how many incidents or outages occur. This has the potential of becoming a systems monitoring tool that could be visible to member library staff from our intranet.

Asbury Park: Christy and her team have been working with Ann Lorish at Innovative on our implementation project for Asbury Park. We've completed the workbook and data is being imported into our training server. Mike and Atul did a visit to Asbury Park to examine their existing IT and make any recommendations. I'll be going there next week to meet with Kathleen for new library/new director orientation. Just yesterday we finished migrating their email to our Google Workspace environment. As a reminder, Asbury Park will be going live on June 18th, and the following information has been shared with the membership:

| | |
|------------|--|
| June 15-18 | All STELLA Libraries are offline with Polaris. In Leap Offline, Staff will be able to check materials in and out only. Staff cannot register new patrons, collect fines, place or fill holds or do any other circulation activities during the offline time. |
| June 15-17 | Final Data load of Asbury data into STELLA database |
| June 17 | Asbury Park data review and acceptance of data load |
| June 17 | Vega Ingestion Process for Asbury Park data |
| June 18 | Asbury Park and all STELLA libraries Live on Polaris |

STELLACon: Elisa has been reaching out to venues including Middlesex College and Union County College. We'll be visiting venues with a few volunteers from the Outreach committee and will be preparing a cost proposal for the event for next month's board meeting. We're trying for October 23rd or surrounding dates.

March Help Desk Statistics – 422 tickets:



Statistical Summary Data:

| | March | February | Change |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Total Bib Records | 1,068,197 | 1,065,126 | 0.29% |
| Total Items | 3,371,091 | 3,380,898 | -0.29% |
| Check Outs | 359,805 | 305,557 | 17.75% |
| Unique Borrowers | 44,621 | 41,147 | 8.44% |
| Holds Placed | 46,827 | 41,145 | 13.81% |
| New Bibs Added | 4,256 | 9,886 | -56.95% |
| New Items Added | 13,844 | 17,312 | -20.03% |
| New Patrons Added | 4,492 | 3,436 | 30.73% |

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric P. Lozauskas
Executive Director