October News from PIAC (Polaris Innovative Advisory Committee)

Accessibility in Leap 7.4

PIAC asked whether the accessibility improvements coming in Polaris 7.4 includes improvements for users with dyslexia. Ryan Long explained that Innovative uses a third-party company that evaluates Leap and generates a VPAT that identifies accessibility issues for Innovative to fix. They are aiming to meet the WCAG 2.2 level AA standard. More information about the specific improvements in Polaris 7.4 will be made available closer to the version release date.

Communications Regarding Hosted Outages

Jennifer Pelton thanked PIAC for the frustrations and feedback they shared at the September meeting regarding communication around recent email delivery issues for hosted customers. Cloud Ops and Support leadership acknowledged they need to do better, and have been meeting to discuss how communication can be improved. Both groups have agreed to move to a "post-first" mentality. They have been caught up investigating suspected and reported outages first, instead of posting notification to impacted customers. The shift to a "post-first" approach means they will post identified outages and issues immediately, instead of waiting to identify the cause first.

Innovative is looking to additional ways to improve communication, for example a product status page similar to the ExLibris system status page. In the meantime, customers should continue to monitor the Supportal and subscribe to Supportal Announcements.

In addition to the above, Cloud Ops has started to look at ways to help identify system issues more quickly.

Ongoing Email Issues for Hosted Customers

PIAC asked several questions related to recent email delivery issues for hosted customers:

1. Libraries that were caught up in the outage are continuing to see sporadic problems with message failures. Is Innovative working to resolve these?

Several hosted PIAC customers have encountered intermittent issues with varying email and text providers over the past few weeks. The bounce back messages indicate the emails are being temporarily rate limited due to IP reputation. Jennifer will take this issue to Cloud Ops and provide an update.

2. Does Cloud Ops monitor smtp traffic for notices sent out? Do they see the failure codes that can help libraries know why a message failed?

Cloud Ops monitors when servers are added to global blacklists. They can check mail server logs in detail if issues are reported, but they do not proactively monitor. Cloud Ops has opened a project to investigate what ability they have to better monitor failures or blocked blacklist.

3. Are there best practices the libraries can use to avoid being flagged as spam by providers?

Innovative is working on a Supportal solution for this. In the meantime, here are suggestions from Cloud Ops:

- Make sure return addresses are legitimate addresses. Don't use generic email addresses (Gmail, O365, etc.) as return addresses – use an address at a domain the library controls. The use of generic addresses as reply-tos greatly impacts IP reputation and should be eliminated.
- Ensure the III SMTP server is included in the customer's domain SPF record. (There is a new solution for this <u>Hosted E-mail Issues - Add SPF Record</u>).
- Libraries should be removing invalid addresses as this also downgrades the sending reputation.

4. When hosted libraries are shopping for a third-party vendor to help with email and text message issues are there any limitations on Polaris/III's side they should be aware of to help them choose the right vendor?

There are two primary limitations on what third party notice vendors can do.

1. <u>Ability to export from the database:</u> Text messages can be exported from the database. Any third-party text message vendor has to be able to consume the data in the data format sent by Polaris. Email notices do not have an export function, and cannot be sent to a third-party vendor.
2. <u>Ability to post to the database:</u> The ability to post a notice to the database requires either write access to SQL or a PAPI connection. The Cloud Operations security policy does not allow write level access to the database, so a hosted library would need the vendor to use PAPI for this step.

Based on the above limitations, hosted customers could use a third-party vendor for text notices. Third-party vendors are not supported for email notices.

If you have questions, concerns, frustrations, praise, suggestions, PIAC is here to represent you to Innovative. Please feel free to reach out to Debra (dwischmeyer@ccslib.org) or any PIAC member.