Dynix ILS and Horizon Statement of Direction

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The Dynix ILS Legacy

Now in its twentieth year, Dynix ILS represents one of the most successful library automation systems in the world. Dynix ILS forged new ground in creating library services for users and innovations for library staff. The product quickly became the industry's premier integrated library system, and the foundation for the company's overall success. Even today, Dynix ILS remains far superior to most other ILS systems in the market, and is used by more libraries than any other system.

We understand that when libraries choose their library management system, they are making a long term commitment to a solution they will use for at least 5 years. And when the time comes to compare an existing system with alternatives, it's done with careful consideration of the benefits offered by a new system.

Dynix (the company) currently has no timetable to end of life Dynix ILS and require customers to choose Horizon or an alternative system. It is the company's objective to create a version of Horizon that clearly exceeds the current Dynix ILS release 190 product in features, flexibility, performance, interoperability, scalability and workflow, so that every Dynix ILS customer will have a strong desire to move to Horizon. Many customers believe Horizon 7.3 delivers on this goal with its many new features and enhancements such as improved acquisitions and best of breed workslips. While Horizon 7.3 does exceed Dynix ILS benefits in many areas, we continue to rapidly advance the Horizon platform.

There is a systematic effort underway in the company today to far exceed the capabilities of Dynix ILS 190 by developing a truly internet empowered version of Horizon with many new features from integrated e-commerce for improved acquisitions to LDAP directory services for more robust authentication. We are dedicated to it, and many man-months of effort have already been expended towards achieving this goal under the leadership of our new management team.

On January 22, 2003, when the company changed its name from epixtech to Dynix, a press release went out quoting Jack Blount, the company CEO: "Our name change is significant as it reflects our renewed commitment to addressing the need for libraries to manage increasingly complex user demands and keep pace with today's multi-media, digital world. The Dynix ILS solution was revolutionary in the library community, and it is in that spirit of leadership and commitment to libraries that we are moving forward with evolving our Horizon products."

Until the end of life of Dynix ILS, the company will continue to maintain the product and provide ongoing development for its customers. We will continue to fix bugs, make essential enhancements due to changes in library practices and interfaces, and continue to make Dynix ILS work with new Horizon add-on products where possible.

Benefits of Horizon for Dynix ILS Customers

When discussing the company's efforts to deliver a version of Horizon that will exceed the benefits of Dynix ILS, there are two important considerations to take into account. First, Horizon and Dynix ILS are two completely different systems built on two very different architectures. As such, they will not have the same identical feature set or workflows. Even still, the new Horizon 7.3 matches the current Dynix ILS with much of the same level of functionality needed by today's libraries. While it is true that in some areas Dynix ILS has features or workflows that Horizon does not have, it is also true that in many other areas, Horizon offers features and workflows which Dynix ILS cannot provide.

Second, the strengths of Horizon over Dynix ILS are not widely understood. We have not educated our customers as well as we might on the key areas where Horizon clearly offers better capabilities than Dynix ILS. A few examples:

- The Horizon Launcher (the staff user interface environment) can be customized to each staff member and automatically create a work environment based on individual logins, regardless of what PC they login to.

- The Horizon Launcher allows library staff to move and copy data between Horizon modules very easily and seamlessly, expediting otherwise difficult tasks.

- The Horizon Launcher offers a standard MS Windows environment, providing the familiar look and feel of Windows, and it can be a launching point for other Windows applications the staff may use.

- The Horizon Table Editor allows the system views (screen layouts and field rules) and workflows to be extensively customized to fit the unique needs of an individual library.

- The Horizon MARC Editor has been called the best in the library community-certainly superior to Dynix ILS text-based Cataloging or Cataloging for Windows.

- Because Horizon is built on an open SQL relational database it supports easier integration with other third party applications, such as state financial systems and student registration databases.

Horizon's Future

We have stated the goal of the company is to move to a single ILS system, with Horizon being the platform of choice for users today and in the future. Dynix ILS, like most other library automation systems, is built using an old programming language with an architecture designed in the days of closed, proprietary systems that used limited, proprietary databases. While that allows some benefits, like menu-driven workflows and simple modifications, it no longer supports current and future library needs. Future needs, such as database independence, thin client support around the emerging computing devices like wireless PDAs, e-commerce services, total union catalog support for consortia, pro-active systems management, new standards like LDAP, XML and Web Services, and enhanced security, will only be provided through an open systems, multi-tier architecture like Horizon offers to meet these needs.

Dynix (the company) is enhancing Horizon to help library automation move beyond what is happening inside the library and expand to what can happen outside its four walls. This includes a focus on new users and new opportunities for libraries to offer services to their communities. Some planned enhancements to Horizon include:

- Support for a wide variety of wireless devices, such as wireless PDAs and mobile phones, especially as support for faster wireless data networks become a reality throughout the world.

- Use of various methods for continuous learning of a user's preferences, to better tune the interests and needs of the Horizon Information Portal to a specific user's interests, all of which can be enabled or disabled by the user.

- Support for e-commerce solutions through the Horizon Information Portal. This would allow for online payment of fines, rental fees, printing fees, interlibrary loan fees, home delivery, and potentially online book sales.

- Enhanced multi-lingual support, such as the ability to search in multiple languages simultaneously. The entire Horizon product line will be fully Unicode enabled with design for easy localization.

- Support for LDAP directory services for single sign-on, authentication and access support, both for staff and library users, as well as integration with other systems like ERP solutions and campus enrollment systems.

- The use of the new Internet Web Services standard to enhance integration with third party systems, such as with book jobbers, online database vendors, and state/county/city financial systems.

- Support of new library standards, such as the FRBR standard, which enables quicker location of the media desired by users through their online catalog searches.

- Support for Oracle 9i and IBM DB2 database technology, which are the most requested databases solutions requested by libraries.

- Union catalog and record ownership down to the MARC field and subfield level for enhanced consortia support.

- Thin client support that is not dependent on Citrix for staff workstations. The staff clients will be capable of running over low speed connections, enabling library branches, smaller libraries, and bookmobiles to easily run their own Cataloging and Circulation off of a remote Horizon system, without the complexities of the additional servers and software currently required.

- A system architecture that is designed for high performance and easy scalability. This will allow libraries to buy the amount of system they need at the time of the initial Horizon installation, and then easily add additional system horsepower, while still leveraging their initial hardware investments. No more will libraries be required to forecast their needs for a system platform for a five-year period and then hope they don't out grow it.

- A multi-tier system architecture designed for high availability. This will ensure that single hardware failures will not bring the system down. Built-in redundancy with options for extended redundancy will be provided.

We appreciate all of our Dynix ILS customers and feel a true commitment to provide you the same kind of technology benefits and leadership today that Dynix ILS represented when it was introduced twenty years ago. It is our goal to continue to serve you to be able to provide excellent services to your users and your communities, while also making your staff more efficient at running your library.