Consultancy Brief

Thames Valley Catalogue (TVCAT) Feasibility Study

Introduction

The Thames Valley Sub Regional Group of The Society of Chief Librarians, are calling for proposals to undertake consultancy for a feasibility study into a joint Thames Valley Library Catalogue system.

The objective of the study is to provide a report listing potential solutions to provide interoperable functionality between different catalogues of the partners within the Thames Valley area, with flexibility to allow future growth or changes.

Background

There is currently no direct means for customers to access the combined catalogues of the Thames Valley sub-region's holdings, in order to locate, request and receive delivery of stock contained within the region's stock.

There are significant benefits to customers by joining catalogues and related database services. These include access to a wider range of stock overall, and a greater choice of locations convenient for the user.

There are likely to be additional benefits for business process based upon shared resources and processes, such as economies of scale and savings associated with bulk purchasing.

Brief

The first step towards realising the benefits of the proposed Thames Valley Regional Catalogue (TVCAT) is to develop a business case for development of the technical framework, and associated amendments to business processes required.

The deliverables are:

1   A feasibility study is required that will identify available options for implementing technical solutions with recommendations for the most appropriate solution. All recommendations to be illustrated with costs, benefits and drawback, with thoroughly researched supporting evidence.

2   A recommendation for optimum solution, with an outline project plan and costs for implementation, based on a thorough investigation of existing projects' findings, and review of the partners' current capabilities.

Scope

Options for service delivery that need to be investigated will include:

1. Ability for staff or customers to search for holdings across any combination of all 7 catalogues of holdings in one search:
    a. From a terminal in a library service point

b. From a terminal remotely across the Internet using the web
2. Ability for staff or customers to reserve stock held at any library service point in any of the participating authorities at any other service point in any of the participating authorities or across the Internet/www [subject to agreed levels of staff mediation over ILL costs/delivery mechanism]
3. Ability for customers to visit any library service point in any of the participating authorities and use their library membership card issued by any of the other participating authorities to borrow items subject to local terms and conditions
4. Ability for librarians and stock managers to pursue co-operative purchase and holdings programmes to maximise coverage and minimise duplication of expensive stock items
5. Capacity for extending similar levels of co-operative arrangements to other public library authorities not immediately joining TV CAT and academic or specialist libraries or collections in the sub-region
6. Providing a solution that is independent of the current systems in use, to avoid supplier lock-in, to allow for future expansion, and support the wider use of interoperability standards within the sector.
    a. Defining a generic specification of recognised standards for TV CAT
    b. Using this to implement changes to existing suppliers systems, rather than being based on existing systems' proprietary functionality.
    c. A solutions that allows suppliers to be changed, and business processes to be adjusted as and when required
7. Implementing a system that is fully e-gif compliant
8. Implementing a fully accessible interface for Visually Impaired People (VIPs), based on real end-user testing in the design stages

Methodology

To satisfy the above objectives, the following outline methodology should be followed:

Detailed literature search to include (but not exclusively) the following areas:
1. Standards for DISCOVERY, LOCATION, REQUEST AND DELIVERY of information.
2. Existing projects implementing common aims
    a. Their use of standards, and the degree to which these are implemented.
    b. Good practise
    c. Problems
    d. User feedback post-implementation.
3. LIS and related sector joint arrangements or strategic partnerships
    a. Consortium purchasing of stock and access to e-information services
    b. Political and legal issues

Thorough review of current technological capabilities of partners' systems and infrastructure:
1. Partner's existing library management system:
    a. Implementation of standards
    b. Company policy and development plans
    c. Track history of supplier in similar projects

2. Comparative review of other alternative library management system:
    a. All partners are near to the end of their current contracts
    b. Capability of alternative systems to be included in options.
3. Corporate IT management arrangements:
    a. Network and desktop support policies
    b. Platforms used
    c. Project implementation methodologies for each partner
    d. Implications for other related projects such as e-government
4. Transport considerations
    a. Fitness of existing processes for purpose
    b. Costs implications of greater loan of physical stock
    c. Impact on delivery time for stock in transport in wider area

Thorough review of existing partner's policies, business arrangement's and working practises:

1. Library Service:
    a. Stock purchase agreements
    b. Interlibrary loan agreements
    c. Electronic stock procurement and delivery
    d. Income generation
    e. Loan periods
2. Arrangements with related internal and external organisation:
    a. Museums, archives and related agreements
    b. Academic or business links
3. Corporate:
    a. Political and corporate support
    b. Procurement processes
    c. Other joined up processes such as SMART CARD projects

Provide a summary of available options based on the above findings

Costed options should be supplied for satisfying the project aims, showing the following for each proposed solution:

1. The standards that the solution is based upon
2. The technological developments required to achieve the solution
3. Any standardisation of business rules required
    a. Authorisation levels for transactions
    b. Charges and fees charged at different service points
    c. Responsibility for stock between loaning and borrowing authorities
4. The advantages of the solution:
    a. Positive impact on customer service – immediate selling points to users and partners.
    b. Resource savings
    c. Development of standards
    d. Extensibility
5. The risks involved
6. The resources required to implement:
    a. Capital cost
    b. Staff time (e.g. training)
    c. Customer awareness and familiarisation

7. The means by which usage monitoring and other statutory performance indicators statistics will be recorded by the solution.
    a. Financial monitoring for audit and accountancy purposes.
    b. Membership information
    c. Issues per authority

Output

1   Draft report to be made available electronically in pdf format
2   Final report to be professionally finished, and available electronically in pdf format,
3   10 copies of the final report also to be supplied in bound hard copy.

Copyright

The Consultant shall treat as confidential any information obtained in the course of the work and it shall not be disclosed without the express permission in writing of the TVCAT partnership. The Consultant is expected to disclose that there was no conflict of interest if it was awarded the consultancy or identify any potential conflict of interest and the steps it considers appropriate to protect the interests of the TVCAT partnership

Copyright shall be vested in the TVCAT partnership from the date of the agreement. The TVCAT partnership may permit the Consultant to utilise the information gained in the course of development of the report for the purposes of learned papers or of other publications provided that acknowledgment is given in such papers to the TVCAT partnership.

The Thames Valley Sub Regional Group of The Society of Chief Librarians reserves the right not to accept the lowest bid.

Timing

A draft report shall be supplied for comment to the TVCAT partnership within 6 weeks of the commencement date of the consultancy.
The final report shall be provided within 4 weeks of receiving comments upon the draft report from the TVCAT partnership and others on the draft report, and taking account of any comments raised.

Payment

The fee will not exceed £15,600, (may be less dependent upon competitive selection)
The successful bidder will be paid 30% of the contract price upon commencement of the consultancy.
The remainder of the fee will be paid by the TVCAT partnership upon receipt of an acceptable final report.

Reporting structure

The contractor will report to Andrew Lewis, e-Services Officer, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library and Information Services. 01628 796 592 or by email: andrew.lewis@rbwm.gov.uk

Bids

Bids should include the following information:

Consultancy Plan

A fully worked out project proposal and plan for undertaking the work as described in this brief, showing work-plans, timescales and approaches to achieving the objectives.

Contact details
Name and address of Consultant organisation.
Name, position and telephone number of contact person within Consultant organisation.

Viability of proponent:
Background – number of years in existence

Ability to undertake project:
Details of the range of skills, areas of expertise, prior experience in carrying out studies similar in nature to this study.
An example of a previous report on a similar study is required
Contact details for referees able for approach by the TVCAT partnership.

An electronic copy in Word and PDF formats no longer than 8 A4 pages should be submitted by **7th June 2004** to Andrew Lewis, e-Services Officer, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Library and Information Services.
andrew.lewis@rbwm.gov.uk Tel 01628 796 592.

Assessment

The bids will be assessed by the project group with final approval by the steering group. The evaluation criteria will be that bids meet all the requirements of this invitation to tender in terms of:

- scope
- appropriateness of methods and technologies
- value for money
- deliverables
- credibility and track record of bidding consultants

If it is deemed necessary, bidders may be required to attend an interview.

Selection is planned to take place in the week starting 21st June 2004, and the successful bidder to be informed by **28 June 2004** and we would expect the work to start as soon as possible after this date.

Sources of information

The following lists sources that may be of use in preparing proposals.

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  www.co-east.net/documents/co-east_ict_report.pdf
  Accessed 14th April 2004

- Sage website [WWW]
  www.sage-sw.net
  Accessed 19 May 2004

- Four-site Consortium catalogue website [WWW]
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