

MONTHLY REPORT

By: John Lolis
Dept. Library Systems
Subject: Monthly Activity Report - July/August 2019

- On July 2nd, WLS reported issues with their VDI (Virtual Desktop Interface) environment that prevented staff at other libraries from logging in to their network and consequently into the Evergreen ILS. Although those issues—which did not affect us in White Plains—were said to have been resolved later that day, on July 3rd, WLS confirmed that their network was infected with the Ryuk ransomware virus which affected their servers and VDI environment. In response to this, on July 5th the City of White Plains IT Department blocked all email originating from WLS. This also prompted the expeditious implementation of a much more robust antivirus platform, Cisco AMP (Advanced Malware Protection), made available through the City IT Department. It has since been installed on all staff and public access computers. As an added precaution, we implemented native Windows software restrictions on all staff computers. Previously only implemented on public access computers, software restrictions prevent the execution of unauthorized programs. On July 26th, after hardening our environment as much as possible, we removed the block on WLS email. Meanwhile, WLS worked on rebuilding their environment from backup files; however, the most recent backup available was three months old.
- As part of our initiative to increase security, we upgraded Windows and all applicable software on the Hub public access computers.
- It was discovered that checking out audiobooks on our selfchecks caused the DVD and music CD case unlockers on them to be activated, even though the audiobooks are not in locked cases. After much investigation, it was found that the media type assigned to audiobooks had changed after the Evergreen migration. Once the selfchecks were reconfigured with the matching media type, they worked properly.
- We purchased a new KVM (Keyboard/Video/Mouse) switch for our server room. It replaced the 15-year old model that was becoming increasingly unreliable. The KVM switch allows an operator to individually control up to 16 computers with one keyboard, mouse and monitor. It also provides for remote control access of a server from any location.
- On the morning of Sunday August 4th, I found that our website was inaccessible. It was found that our main gateway server was powered down. It booted up without issue. A contingency plan was put into place to allow remote wake up of the server in the event that this occurs again.
- From the Systems budget for the last fiscal year, a total of eight computers were ordered, intended to replace WLS-provisioned staff computers. Due to availability issues, it was necessary to order the display monitors separately which have since arrived. The matching computers are expected in September. We expect to order enough computers by the end of the calendar year so that we can do away with all WLS-provisioned computers (23 in total), and in turn the high associated cost.
- Our antispam firewall appliance crashed on August 7th for the first time after 13 years, but recovered after a reboot. On August 23rd however, it crashed and could not be recovered. Although it had no longer been needed to prevent spam after we migrated to a City-wide Gmail platform, it was used as a convenient mail relay for automated messages from our web and intranet servers. After its demise, it was necessary to reconfigure email routing on our web server which was successfully done; however, this was not the case with our intranet server...

- While attempting an email reconfiguration on our intranet server, it began acting erratically which prompted a reboot; however, it is now unable to locate a bootable operating system. While it at one time served as our web server, the most important service it recently provided was our helpdesk ticketing system. A much more improved ticketing system had already been under development and that development is now being prioritized.
- We received 10 new mobile hotspots through Mobile Beacon's technology donation program to complement the 17 we have had in circulation. After being configured, they are expected to be made available for circulation in the first week of September.
- Evergreen Issues - On the morning of both August 7th and 22nd, staff were unable to log in to the Evergreen ILS; however, staff already logged in could continue to work in it. On both days, the issue was quickly fixed by Equinox, the ILS hosting provider. It should be noted that the intermittent login issues are associated with the more complex authentication integration between Evergreen and Windows Active Directory that was implemented. On August 30th, WLS reported that late fees were not being accrued for certain unspecified items due to a misconfiguration and that a fix was to be scheduled. Another issue yet to be resolved is the lack of an accessible Evergreen Z39.50 server, necessary for Collection Management vendors to retrieve bibliographic data from the ILS and populate on order item records. This problem too appears to be associated with the unique access restrictions WLS imposed.
- Arising out of the many contentious technical issues member libraries have had with the WLS IT Department, it was decided that an outside audit of their IT infrastructure, policies and procedures was necessary, and in response a WLS IT Audit Request for Proposal Committee was formed. I am pleased to serve on that committee and the hope is that this will result in not only an improved technical environment with better performance, but also improved communication and much greater transparency. The target date for receipt of the report is November 15th of this year.

###