PrairieCat

March <> , 2026

Yariv Kursh
SVP and General Manager
Innovative Interfaces, Inc.

Re: Ongoing Innovative Interfaces support issues for PrairieCat Libraries

Mr. Kursh.

As the governing board of PrairieCat, a consortium of 138 Illinois libraries, we are writing today regarding the number of issues PrairieCat has been experiencing with the Sierra ILS system and associated functionality.

I'd like to bring to your attention a list of issues that we have experienced in the last 6 months or so:

1. 3/10/25: Upgrade to V. 6.3: Although this happened a year ago, I think it is worth mentioning in this letter. In this instance, Innovative support upgraded wrong server (upgraded our production server rather than training server as requested, caused multiple outages and significant downtime). This was a very bad situation for us and a result, in our opinion, of poor communication on the part of the upgrade technician.

2. 11/18/25: Upgrade to V. 6.4: Our production environment was upgraded with one day notice via email, and with no acknowledgement from us before the upgrade occurred. Due to this happening a few days before a holiday, most of our staff were out of the office. The lack of notification caught us unaware that the upgrade occurred, which caused us to be down, libraries had to scramble to upgrade their locked down circ machines in some instances, and notices didn't run. It was a bad situation for us, especially being short staffed due to the holiday. If the acknowledgement from us isn't received, please wait until we do respond to proceed in future. Again, this is a communication issue. We didn't have time to communicate with membership before the upgrade, so changes to the software also occurred without us giving them proper notice.

3. 12/23/25: Chicago data center went down, bringing Encore searching down. This isn't as impactful as other outages, but we are still using Encore at some sites.

4. 12/27/25: Chicago data center went down again, causing Vega "My account" access to be down for hours. Indexing also stopped working; however, this wasn't discovered until 1/12. It appears

to us that there should be a checklist of processes that should be reviewed after a down like this, to make sure everything is functioning. As it was, we had to report it after it was noticed by members.

5. 12/31/25: Last year circ conversion failure. Of 5 methods set up to perform the conversion, 3 resulted in failure. This failure required technical support to rectify, defeating the purpose of the "enhancement" that would allow this process to run automatically. Our head of systems here worked most of New Year's Day getting this resolved.

6. 1/4/26: Chicago data center was down again, once again our notices didn't run. Once restored, data exchange was stuck, link maintenance failed, and Vega hold info wasn't updated correctly. Indexing was also found to be down after the systems were restored. Support did not check to see if this had stopped again with the data center outage as had occurred during the last outage. We were forced to insist they check it to verify it was down and have it restarted. Again, a checklist to review after downtime would avoid these issues.

7. 1/6/26-1/8/26: Mobile app searching down for two days due to API issues with Vega.

8. 1/14/26: Chicago data center was down again, picklists didn't finish in AM. This caused the real time item status stream to Vega to stop. We discovered this on 1/21, and support investigated and restarted the stream, as well as running a full MARC extract to make sure everything was synched correctly. Again, this should be something that support checks when servers come back from a down status.

9. 1/20/26: Phone notification was system down for several hours, causing inbound and outbound notifications to fail and the inbound system to be unavailable.

10. 1/27/26: Encore indexing found to be not functional. This was found to be a process that was shut down. Tech support is monitoring now, which is good. From the response on the ticket: "In this case, Encore's indexing software was not running. Based on logging, it appears the Encore indexer had been down since December 23. When the indexer is not running, new and updated bib records get synced with Encore's database but are not yet searchable." This is the same date that the Chicago Data center went down and brought our Encore searching down. Again, a checklist as part of server recovery would rectify many of these issues.

11. 2/6/26: Vega Account Portal upgrade was performed midday and resulted in several significant performance issues. Numerous flaws in the new software caused Vega Discovery to be virtually inoperable for patrons. We rolled back Account Portal to My Bookshelf, pending upgrade 5/5/26 if issues are corrected.

12. 2/9/26 (time frame unclear): Phone notification issues caused notices to fail, apparently primarily a QuestBlue phone trunk problem, however it is still not clear why we did not receive

proper notification about failed calls during much of this time. We are not sure how long this persisted; however, we do see that performance has returned to normal.

13. 2/15/26: Sierra hosted server reported being down multiple times, flapping at least three times during the day. Later it was reported that the server wasn't down, the notifications were sent erroneously. We were never disrupted, but the alert system was not functioning correctly.

14. 2/19/26: Training server upgrade tech enabled the notice jobs after the upgrade, causing thousands of old, erroneous notifications to be sent to patrons. We continue to feel fallout from this event.

15. 2/24/26: Unable to place Vega holds, error returned "Read times out executing GET http://gates-edge/gates/resource-count?<bibID>". This issue was thankfully resolved the same day.

16. 2/24/26: We received alerts that the Sierra server reported down 8:30, came back 9:44. Checking the status site, multiple hosts were down marked during this time. The reported outage did not, however, seem to impact our workflows or Vega Discovery. No reported issues from members. Later we learned that these alerts regarded some internal data center network issues that did not impact on the production environment.

17. 2/25/26: We discovered email to Outlook/MS/Hotmail being delayed since 2/23/26. We reported this very significant issue in a support ticket. We received a wholly inappropriate response to this ticket from Innovative support staff covering the issue. Our director's frustration with that situation was addressed in a call with Kat Cuff and others on 2/26/26.

18. 2/25/26: We received email alerts that the Sierra host server reported an outage again and were again notified that the server came back in about 1.5 hours. This seems to stem from the same erroneous alert issue we saw on the previous day.

We have had multiple talks with Kat Cuff, Caitlin Spears, Jesse Jensen, Angela Clough, and Dean Cooper regarding these issues, and they have assured us that Innovative has plans to address these shortcomings moving forward. We think that it is appropriate, given the ongoing issues and scope of our problems, to bring these failures to your attention. Our membership is growing weary of the constant disruptions to service, as is the PrairieCat staff who must deal with the fallout. We hope that by bringing this to your attention these problems can be addressed and the situation rectified.

Sincerely,

<board member names>
PrairieCat