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BIC LCF PLUGFEST – Minutes

Capita Offices, Knights Court, 6190 Solihull Parkway, Birmingham B37 7YB

Tuesday 12th January 2016, 10am-4pm

Present

Alaina-Marie Bassett, BIC	Antti Kurenniemi, PV Supa Ltd
Marcus Blackburn, Civica	Karina Luke, BIC
David Brett, Bibliotheca	Ian Manson, Infor
Francis Cave, Consultant	Mark Oliver, Lorensbergs Ltd
Michael Chambers, 2CQR	Colin Parker, Bibliotheca
Matthew Dovey, Ceridwen	Declan Sheridan, Innovative
Mick Fortune, Consultant (Chair)	Neil Stevens, Capita
Neil Johnson, Insight Media Internet Limited	Anthony Whitford, Capita

1. **Welcome & Introduction**

   MF welcomed the Group to the PlugFest and each attendee introduced themselves for the purpose of the minutes.

   MF began the session by introducing BIC's Library Communication Framework (LCF) to the Group, detailing its origins and listing the benefits of its usage. He noted that LCF is the unofficial successor of 3M's Standard Interchange Protocol (SIP) and its aim is to find a more flexible approach for new specifications within the library community. MF noted that this project therefore needed an independent body to oversee the work done and BIC took on this role right from the beginning of the Project.

   MF explained the governance structure of LCF to the PlugFest attendees. He informed the Group that BIC has three LCF Technical Editors – Francis Cave, Matthew Dovey and Anthony Whitford – all of whom report to the LCF Technical Panel. In turn the LCF Technical Panel is overseen by the LCF Review Group, whose work is subsequently reviewed and signed off by the BIC Libraries Committee. MF noted that this structure was put in place to ensure that requests for changes / additions to the LCF framework are dealt with as quickly as possible. All requests are considered by the LCF Technical Panel in the first instance. Further information about both the LCF Technical Panel and the LCF Review Group can be found on the following page of the BIC website: http://www.bic.org.uk/121/Libraries-Committee/ Requests for changes / additions to LCF are submitted via GitHub (which is free to join): https://github.com/anthonywhitford/bic-lcf/issues.

   MF noted that the point of this LCF PlugFest is to get a number of developers in one room with a view to testing the implementations of LCF, to date. He suggested that, if this event proves to be useful, LCF PlugFests may take place at regular intervals going forwards.

   MF commented that, within the library community, SIP is now considered by some to be limited in scope. He noted that the LCF is designed to be more flexible in terms of its delivery

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mechanisms since it doesn't need to be implemented in a specific way. It's also co-operative with other library communication software and therefore facilitates interoperability. MF noted that LCF is standardised as much as possible to aid interoperability but not to the extent that it restricts organisations from achieving what they want to. He noted that organisations do not have to implement all aspects of the LCF, providing them use the same values for the items that are implemented. He noted that LCF enables customers to change easily from one supplier to another, giving them more freedom and creating more competition within the library community.

2. **The Vendor Perspective**

   AW informed the Group that LCF is an emerging standard – and, as such, it has logical entities. He noted that LCF is a well-documented standard (so it can be easily accessed by any organisation that wants to begin using it), is functional and includes Internet standards, all of which provide opportunities for the library community. AW noted that there is currently a large body of data available to libraries – including data access, web services, library protocols, proprietary, BIC LCF, SIP2, etc. – he reported that LCF bridges the gap between SIP2 and the proprietary needs of libraries, facilitating development.

   AW informed the Group that LCF facilitates modernised interactions, allowing organisations with a job vacancy to seek out an employee who is looking to develop that precise organisation's needs rather than a developer who is able to use the same selection of tools, i.e. JSON and HTML. He noted that LCF has defined schemas and well-documented entities, which include concise definitions, to ensure that interactions are understood and are not open to misinterpretation. LCF has security measures (including encryption in transit) and has interchangeable implementations so that users are able to from / to other system suppliers if their current supplier is unable to provide what the user needs.

   AW noted that Capita have already implemented the following into their system:
   - People (Patron, Contact)
   - Things (Manifestation, Item)

   In addition, he suggested that 'Places (Location)' may be live at Capita by the end of this event, concluding that organisations can achieve more with LCF in a quicker space of time than when using other standards.

   AW informed the Group that BIC's LCF schemas are available on GitHub (see p.1 for the link); rights are restricted. He suggested that organisations looking to file a new request / change should check the Issues tracker before submitting, to ensure that the issue is not already being dealt with or else been resolved.

   Capita's implementation can be accessed here:
   http://integration.capita-libraries.co.uk/bic-lcf/TalisSOA/protocols/lcf/1.0/patrons
   Username: lcf@GA
   Password: bic-lcf-2015

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3. **Bibliotheca: An LCF RESTful Web Services Client**

CP informed the Group that LCF can be implemented by web services – making the process easier for developers. The LCF specification comes with schema definitions, meaning that the information sent by organisations will be understood and what is sent back in response will be both comprehensive and well-formatted. CP noted that LCF's development tools facilitate the generation of code and LCF can serialise / de-serialise, i.e. converting to HTML or de-serialising to a class system.

CP noted that there are various terms used for manifestations including entities and classes. XSD classes generate class from XSD which is then sent to the server. CP showed the Group a sample application for registering a Patron, noting that a barcode does not need to be specified during the registration process; however Capita is capable of generating a new barcode, if required. CP noted that all of the links provided in his presentation slides are available in the documentation on GitHub. He also noted that the source code will be made available both for transparency purposes and to help other organisations to implement it into their system. The expectations / behaviour of the server may need to be defined. CP noted that deleting a Patron does not delete the history / records for that individual. He noted that this application is live.

4. **The purpose of the LCF PlugFest**

FC informed the Group that the purpose of this event is to either continue work on a development that had already been started within your organisation or else to begin a development during the event. Once the development has been produced it should then be tested during the PlugFest. The work produced can be implementations for either clients or servers but must use the schemas which are located on GitHub. FC noted that this Group should aim to produce a development that works by the end of the event.

FC noted that, while LCF is already a standard, it is still evolving. He suggested that there may be bugs and/or essential functions that aren't yet available but need to be added to LCF to ensure that what is written in the LCF documentation works; as such, the attendees of the PlugFest were encouraged to identify gaps and errors in LCF. FC also noted that gaining feedback on the current specifications that are available on the BIC website would be advantageous. FC and MD noted that they are available to answer any specification questions that may arise during the event, and AW and CP are available to answer implementation questions. CP noted that Capita's implementation was developed in C#.

MB asked whether there is a timeline for LCF developments; in particular, he wanted to know when libraries may be able to replace SIP (with LCF) in kiosks. CP suggested that the developments may be completed by the third quarter of 2016, noting that Contact and Patron were developed for discovery purposes. MB commented that an increase in the demand for LCF, specifically getting libraries to request it, will drive the developments forward. He also suggested that RFID may increase the need / requests for LCF. AW noted that developments need to be started now in order to ensure that LCF is ready in time to meet with the demands. MF informed the Group that he has already been approached

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about LCF by libraries that have wanted to know what LCF includes and what they should ask for from their system supplier. He agreed that the demand for LCF is rising and will continue to do so. MB informed the Group that Civica is fully committed to having LCF ready in the coming months and are now focussing on how LCF can be the CRM system that they need.

The Group began to work, some individually and others in small groups, on their LCF developments.

5. **Update half-way through the Hands-On Technical Group Session**
   FC informed the Group that Patron now reflects the personal detail of a person and Contact reflects solely the contact information for that Patron; Contact is now therefore devoid of personal details.

   FC noted that there are currently two significant issues in LCF for which a satisfactory resolution is actively being sought:
   1) Whether certain fields should be read-only from a client terminal's perspective and should only be seen in responses from the server and not in requests from the client. FC asked attendees of this PlugFest to consider which data elements should and should not be read-only.
   2) Whether the selection criteria for entities is too flexible for implementation purposes. FC suggested that a list of defined criteria, which it would be expected for implementations to support, may need to be produced as a new code list.

6. **Show & Tell – Results / Feedback from the Group Session**
   FC informed the Group that one of the attendees of this PlugFest identified a problem in the definition of the Patron entity in the XSD. He noted that this issue has now been resolved. Further information about the issue can be found on GitHub.

   AK informed the Group that he had nothing to report at this stage. He noted that he had also not identified any issues that need to be addressed. AK and MC informed the Group that 2CQR have now implemented Patron into their system.

   MB informed the Group that Civica also implemented some Patron entities into their system during the event. He noted that the work done will be made public so that AW can see it / interact with it.

   DS informed the Group that he is in the process of implementing aspects of Patron into Innovative's system and checking the elements.

   MO noted that Lorensbergs will need to find a way to express: "is this the right PIN for this user" and a number of other features / entities including Date of Birth. He noted that PIN is the most urgent of these requirements. He noted that the PIN will need to be authorised / accepted and it will need to be possible to differentiate whether the code is correct or incorrect. FC suggested that this topic should be raised on GitHub as a technical issue.

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ACTION: MO to add PIN as a technical issue on the LCF's GitHub page.

CP informed the Group that Card Status has now been resolved by FC. He noted that the XSDXE was including Class as mandatory, causing a peculiar sequence. FC commented that the original intention had been to only show Card Message if using Card Status; he noted that this does not work in some element environments however. Card Element Information has now been created as a solution to this issue. FC noted that this new tag should only be used if the status suggests that Card Status is blocked. MD noted that this issue has been ongoing for some time. CP noted that there is currently no way to detect whether it's read-only or not. FC commented that the only alternative would have been to have two sets – one for requests and one for responses – however he reported that this isn't viable.

MD commented that when something is mandatory, it cannot be conceived as being anything but mandatory. In this way, he noted that an item cannot be checked out without an identifier regardless of what identifier is used, i.e. a barcode, RFID tag, etc. FC noted that there is no issue, in principle, in adding a JSON binding into LCF. DS agreed, noting that XSDs are all entities. FC noted that in RFID everything is a resource / entity too.

FC commented that it would be beneficial to BIC to receive feedback about this event. He suggested that the feedback should be sent to KL and AMB or one of the LCF Technical Editors (FC, AW, MD).
ACTION: ALL to send any feedback about this event to KL and AMB, or the LCF Technical Editors: FC, AW and MD.

FC informed the Group that Version 1.0.1 is the version of LCF that is now being worked on, and it is this draft version that is to be found on GitHub. He noted that the LCF Technical Panel will decide when Version 1.0.1 is ready to be published; this decision will be discussed following this event. FC noted that the feedback from the LCF PlugFest will need to be digested and will then be fed back to the LCF Technical Panel, the LCF Review Group and finally the BIC Libraries Committee in turn. He advised that the next meetings of the LCF Technical Panel and the LCF Review Group will take place on consecutive days: Monday 1st February and Tuesday 2nd February 2016.

FC commented that this event is likely to be repeated in future to provide organisations with the opportunity to develop collectively. For this reason, he suggested that the growth of LCF is likely to be rapid – though this will come down to the amount of implementations. He noted that all requests for additions / changes should be submitted on GitHub. FC suggested that organisations should each submit a list of the organisations they would like to see represented at this event going forwards in order to get implementations underway, these lists should then be collated into a single list and the organisations should be approached.
ACTION: ALL to consider which organisations they would like to see represented at the next LCF PlugFest (particularly those that would be beneficial to your respective organisation) and send the list to AB for the information to be collated.

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FC suggested that the following issues still need to be addressed:

- Read-only / mandatory
- Selection criteria for Patrons – which should be included?

He noted that the question about selection criteria for Patrons cannot be answered now but he encouraged the Group to consider what should be included. He noted that suggestions from this Group are welcome since BIC will shortly produce a list of criteria which will be circulated to this Group for comment. MB noted that the suggestions will need to be succinct and the Group agreed.

ACTION: ALL to inform FC, AW and MD if issues occur related to read-only / mandatory.

ACTION: FC to collate a list of selection criteria for Patrons and circulate to the attendees of this PlugFest for comment.

MD and AW noted that self-service systems do not need to be able to search for Patron information; though offline access to this information might be useful in some instances, i.e. when renting an 18 rated DVD. AW noted that this example could cause issues. CP noted that, when using selection criteria, organisations are unable to restrict the amount of data that is returned. He suggested that organisations would like to limit this information to the basics, i.e. item numbers, title information, etc. He noted that it is not possible, currently, to define what information you require within the request. AW noted that the viability of this change will depend on how flexible the criteria need to be. DS suggested that a reference implementation would also be useful.

MC reported that this event has been a great success and has proven to be beneficial to 2CQR. FC agreed but noted that there is still a lot of work to be done. AW informed the Group that, during this event, Capita produced a development that will now need to be tested by another organisation, such as Civica.

The Group suggested that MD should articulate the selection criteria issue, mentioned above, for circulation purposes. MD noted that the selection criteria will be more difficult to define for self-issue terminals. CP noted that this Group will need to document what the expected behaviour of the system should be, explicitly. AW agreed, suggesting that a case study should be used. The Group agreed that this topic should be discussed by the LCF Technical Panel at their next meeting, especially how to ensure that organisations do not think that the listed criteria are the only entities available / that LCF is capable of expressing – since this is evidently not the case.

ACTION: MD to outline the selection criteria issue with a view to this document being circulated for information / education purposes.

ACTION: AMB to add 'selection criteria' to the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the LCF Technical Panel meeting on Monday 1st February 2016.

DS suggested that LCF should be included in the revised e4Libraries Accreditation Scheme, which will be launching in 2016. He noted that LCF's inclusion in the scheme could help to drive adoption. FC noted that there isn't an answer to what conformance is for the purpose of the accreditation scheme. He reminded the Group that it would be difficult to specify

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what conformance involves for LCF in particular since organisations implement the parts of the standard that are relevant to them. FC noted that, in this way, the accreditation scheme should instead ask organisations whether they are committed to implementing LCF. KL noted the more organisations that use LCF, the more obvious the needs / requirements / mandatory aspects of the standard will be.

MB suggested that it would be beneficial to have Solus involved in forthcoming LCF activities.
ACTION: AMB to email Andrew Daye and Neil Wishart after this event to ask them to join the LCF Consortium and attend forthcoming LCF PlugFests.

FC informed the Group that the LCF Technical Editors will review the work done during this PlugFest and make the necessary changes to the draft v1.0.1 specifications of LCF. This work will then be forwarded to the LCF Technical Panel and the LCF Review Group. He requested that any further feedback on the work done should be sent to the Technical Editors by Friday 29th January 2016.
ACTION: ALL to provide any further feedback on the work done to the Technical Editors (FC, AW, MD) by Friday 29th January 2016.

CP noted that Bibliotheca focussed on non-self-service issues to encourage adoption and ensure that organisations are aware of the reasons to move from SIP.

FC and KL thanked the Group for attending the LCF PlugFest, noting that progress has been made with the LCF implementations! They also thanked Capita for kindly hosting the event.

7. **Date of next meeting**
The Group suggested that the next LCF PlugFest should take place in May / June 2016 (before the schools' summer holidays).
ACTION: AMB to arrange a Doodle Poll for the next LCF PlugFest.

Post-Meeting Update: The next LCF PlugFest will take place in May 2016, exact date TBC shortly.