

# **Cost Effectiveness of the MOBIUS Common Library Platform: Review Draft of a Comparative Analysis**

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The MOBIUS Common Library Platform is a shared system of servers and software providing staff, administrative, and user access services to academic libraries in Missouri. The Common Library Platform is based on clusters of hardware shared by multiple libraries, with operational support provided by the MOBIUS Consortium Office and the University of Missouri System's information technology personnel. Several libraries operate their own servers and link to the shared union catalog that is central to MOBIUS's statewide lending and delivery systems.

## **About the Analysis**

The analysis compares the costs for MOBIUS participation, using the costs as projected for 2009–2010 with a new apportionment model, to the costs estimated for three sample MOBIUS libraries if the libraries were to operate their own “standalone” Integrated Library Systems (ILS). For the purposes of the analysis, the estimated costs use some projected prices for features of the Innovative Interfaces, Inc. system. Innovative is the provider of the software in use in the CLP.

It is important to note that one assumption built into the analysis is that libraries operating their own “standalone” ILS systems would require personnel to manage and operate the equipment. The MOBIUS Consortium Office (MCO) provides the bulk of software and library support, while the UM System operates the Sun Microsystem servers. Thus, a major element in cost effectiveness is reduced personnel expenses for the CLP in comparison to standalone systems.

Another assumption is that to continue participation in the MOBIUS lending and delivery systems, a library would need to have access to the ILS INN-Reach product within MOBIUS.

For all the estimated costs for standalone systems, the author used costs that are derived from proposals made to other customers. It is entirely possible that a negotiated contract might contain different figures than those shown in the tables of estimated costs.

In every pair of tables in this document, the final row of each table shows costs for comparison.

## **Libraries Selected for Comparative Analysis**

This document analyzes the estimated costs for three Missouri academic libraries, for use of the Common Library Platform and for a separate purchase and operation of the same software if the three libraries were conducting their own ILS services. These three libraries have each given permission to be used for the comparative analysis.

- Moberly Area Community College (MACC)
- William Woods University (WWU)
- University of Central Missouri (UCM)

### Attributes and Cost Estimates for MACC

MACC is a small institution within MOBIUS, and because of its small size, MACC might not be a Millennium customer as a standalone user, since III has created Millennium for larger libraries. MOBIUS and its services provide great benefit to MACC as a result of the advanced service and technical features, system capacity, and access to other libraries made possible through MOBIUS.

Note that in order for MACC (and any library in MOBIUS) to access the shared catalog used for inter-library lending, a license to use the INN-Reach software is also required. This cost is included in the overall MOBIUS billing for CLP libraries.

*Table 1-A: Attributes for Moberly Area Community College Library*

Item	Description	Number & Cost
1.	User licenses	6
2.	Items in collection	21,641
3.	Total circulation activity	3,206
4.	Cluster loans	209
5.	Cluster borrows	707
6.	INN-Reach loans	458
7.	INN-Reach borrows	647
	<b>MOBIUS Costs for 2009–2010</b>	<b>\$19,254</b>

*Table 1-B: Estimated Cost to Replicate MOBIUS Services on Standalone System, MACC*

Item	Description	Units	Unit Cost	Year 1 Cost	Annual Recurring Cost
1.	Server and related equipment	1	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$1,000
2.	Basic Millennium software	1	30,000	30,000	4,500
3.	Millennium user licenses	6	2,500	15,000	2,250
4.	Implementation, training, conversion	1	10,000	10,000	0
5.	INN-Reach license	1	10,000	10,000	1,500
6.	System operations salary(ies)	1	35,000	35,000	35,000
7.	Miscellaneous & contingency, 10%	1	9,550	9,550	9,550
	<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$117,550</b>	<b>\$53,800</b>

## Attributes and Cost Estimates for WWU

William Woods University Library is very near the median of the MOBIUS libraries in number of items held in its collections, with about 29 libraries having larger collections and 33 having smaller. As with MACC, WWU benefits greatly from its participation in MOBIUS in terms of the power, capacity, and access that the MOBIUS systems provide to the students, faculty, and staff at WWU.

*Table 2-A: Attributes for William Woods University Library*

Item	Description	Number & Cost
1.	User licenses	6
2.	Items in collection	120,996
3.	Total circulation activity	22,592
4.	Cluster loans	666
5.	Cluster borrows	209
6.	INN-Reach loans	1,314
7.	INN-Reach borrows	419
	<b>MOBIUS Costs for 2009–2010</b>	<b>\$19,690</b>

*Table 2-B: Estimated Cost to Replicate MOBIUS Services on Standalone System, WWU*

Item	Description	Units	Unit Cost	Year 1 Cost	Annual Recurring Cost
1.	Server and related equipment	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$1,250
2.	Basic Millennium software	1	30,000	30,000	4,500
3.	Millennium user licenses	6	2,500	15,000	2,250
4.	Implementation, training, conversion	1	10,000	10,000	0
5.	INN-Reach license	1	10,000	10,000	1,500
6.	System operations salary(ies)	1	50,000	50,000	50,000
7.	Miscellaneous & contingency, 10%	1	11,250	11,250	11,250
	<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$136,250</b>	<b>\$70,750</b>

## Attributes and Cost Estimates for UCM

UCM's collections place it among the largest libraries in MOBIUS in terms of collection size. Only 6 MOBIUS libraries have larger collections.

By collection size and staff population, UCM is a likely purchaser of III software if it were conducting a standalone system purchase, because the price and performance factors in the Millennium product line lend themselves to larger academic libraries like UCM.

The major benefits to UCM in MOBIUS participation are likely the cost reductions associated with shared hardware and software, and the access features associated with the central union catalog, statewide borrowing, and delivery.

*Table 3-A: Attributes for University of Central Missouri Library*

Item	Description	Number & Cost
1.	User licenses	29
2.	Items in collection	831,284
3.	Total circulation activity	158,783
4.	Cluster loans	811
5.	Cluster borrows	710
6.	INN-Reach loans	5,618
7.	INN-Reach borrows	2,418
	<b>MOBIUS Costs for 2009–2010</b>	<b>\$77,653</b>

*Table 3-B: Estimated Cost to Replicate MOBIUS Services on Standalone System, UCM*

Item	Description	Units	Unit Cost	Year 1 Cost	Annual Recurring Cost
1.	Server and related equipment	1	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$3,750
2.	Basic Millennium software <sup>1</sup>	1	45,000	45,000	6,750
3.	Millennium user licenses	29	2,500	72,500	10,875
4.	Implementation, training, conversion	1	10,000	10,000	0
5.	INN-Reach license	1	10,000	10,000	1,500
6.	System operations salary(ies)	1	60,000	60,000	60,000
7.	Miscellaneous & contingency, 10%	1	15,750	15,750	15,750
	<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$243,250</b>	<b>\$98,625</b>

## Summary and Conclusions

The author concludes that the cost effectiveness of MOBIUS is demonstrated by a comparison of the MOBIUS costs with the estimated costs to acquire like services in a standalone mode. In every case, regardless of library size, the recurring MOBIUS costs are less than the costs of operating a standalone system.

The combination of Year 1 Costs, those unavoidable capital expenses associated with initial purchase of new information technology, and the recurring costs associated with owning and operating those products, contrast sharply with the recurring costs of MOBIUS participation.

<sup>1</sup> Most ILS vendors market their products based on the number of staff users, thus charging larger libraries more than smaller ones. The estimate for UCM shows that greater projected cost than estimates for MACC or WWU.