

2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

CSG reserves the right to use or publish in other CSG products and services the information provided in this Innovations Awards Program Application. If your agency objects to this policy, please advise us in a separate attachment to your program's application.

ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-M-07MI

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Michigan

Assign Program Category (applicant): Human Resources/Education (Use list at end of application)

1. **Program Name:** Michigan eLibrary Catalog (MeLCat)
2. **Administrating Agency:** Library of Michigan
3. **Contact Person:** Sheryl Mase, Statewide Library Services Director
4. **Address:** Library of Michigan, 702 West Kalamazoo St.,
P.O. Box 30007, Lansing, MI 48909
5. **Telephone Number:** 517.373.4331
6. **Fax Number:** 517.373.5700
7. **E-mail Address:** smase@michigan.gov
8. **Web site Address:** <http://mel.org> (main site – navigate to MeLCat)
<http://elibrary.mel.org/search> (direct link, MeLCat search)
9. **Program Description:** The Michigan eLibrary Catalog (MeLCat) is a statewide, shared online catalog and resource sharing system for books and non-print materials available 24/7. Any library - public, school, academic or special - in the state of Michigan may join MeLCat, enabling patrons from its service population to initiate requests on MeLCat for available materials from any computer with web access at any time of day. These materials arrive at the patron's home library for pickup, generally within 2-4 days. As of October 2007, there were 26.2 million items in MeLCat, representing 7.86 million unique titles, with more being added as new libraries join. Currently, there are 251 libraries activated: 42 are academic; 181 are public; 24 are K-12; and 4 are special libraries (governmental, tribal, hospital, etc.).
10. **How long has this program been operational?** MeLCat officially came online January 10, 2005.
11. **Why was the program created? What problem(s) or issue(s) was it designed to address:** MeLCat was created to provide residents of the state of Michigan access to a statewide shared

catalog of books and other non-print materials and enable them to initiate requests for materials not available from their home libraries. While traditional Inter-Library Loan (ILL) service involved the assistance of library staff and typically took weeks to fulfill requests, the MeLCat system enables users to search the shared catalog and immediately place a request for the delivery of the material to their home library within a few days. MeLCat significantly expands access to resources and helps to extend core library service across the state.

MeLCat is part of MeL, the Michigan eLibrary, which contains not only MeLCat but also databases providing access to full-text articles from magazines, journals, newspapers and more, plus MeL Michigana, a collection of digitized primary source materials, and MeL Best of the Web which showcases subject specialist selected websites with a Michigan focus. MeL provides the complete package for Michigan residents from all walks of life.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order: In 1999, a statewide committee was formed (“ATLAS,” Action Team for Library Advancement Statewide) to plan the design for a statewide catalog and resource sharing service. In 2000 and 2001, the Library of Michigan funded two regional pilot programs, “InMich” and “MiLE,” with federal Library Services and Technology Act funds. Both projects established patron-initiated resource sharing systems composed of libraries of various types (public, academic, school, etc.) with a variety of local automation systems. Research on other statewide projects, visits to a variety of sites and discussions with several library automation vendors resulted in the issuance of a request for proposal in 2003. Most of 2004 was spent evaluating vendor responses, holding vendor demonstrations, selecting the desired system features and vendor, and negotiating a contract. In October 2004, the State Librarian sent out a call for participation statewide. On January 10, 2005, MeLCat was inaugurated with its first set of participating libraries.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

We had been aware of other statewide systems for resource sharing, but most of these required the local libraries to have the same type of automation in order for the system to work. In Michigan, with over 2,000 libraries of various types and sizes, with a variety of local automation systems, we looked for an approach that would not require local libraries to change automated systems. We also saw a benefit to having all types of libraries in the mix (school, public, academic, etc.) – to broaden the range of resources available to all users. The MeLCat system works within this framework and continues to grow and attract user attention statewide. The statewide delivery system, managed via contract by the Michigan Library Consortium, is key to the success of MeLCat, as it is constantly running materials across the state between libraries. Adding statewide delivery adds a creative spin to traditional inter-library loan systems that in the past have relied largely upon book-rate U.S. postal service.

14. What were the program’s start-up costs? First year costs were \$1,559,313.

15. What are the program’s annual operational costs? The costs have varied, due to the payment/implementation schedules of the software and service vendors, however the total over three fiscal years, 2005 – 2007, was \$3,421,873. This makes the average annual cost \$1.14 million. The local costs for participating libraries is the cost of statewide delivery for a

minimum of two stops per week, and whatever costs they may incur with their automation vendor to be able to export the appropriate files to the MeLCat system.

16. How is the program funded? Currently MeLCat is funded by the State of Michigan through the Library of Michigan, an agency of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries. Primary project support comes from the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) via the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Every five years, the IMLS approves our five-year state plan for the use of these LSTA funds according to the federal legislation.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? No. The Governor's Administrative Board approves all state contracts above a certain amount. The Department of Information Technology worked with the Library of Michigan to vet the RFP and contract, and currently hosts the MeLCat server.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? Library staff members use client-based software on PC workstations to process MeLCat requests. For libraries using Innovative Interfaces as their automation system, additional software is installed on their file server. For libraries using other systems, client software is installed on staff workstations during the implementation process. The statewide catalog is not a replacement for a local system. An online catalog for the library's patron database, circulation, cataloging, acquisitions, and links to vendors' and institutions' computer systems is needed.

There is a central database with resource sharing software, an authentication module, etc., loaded on the main MeLCat server. There is also a direct consortial borrowing server that handles the translation of system messages from dissimilar systems prior to sending them to the central server. The NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol (NCIP), once implemented by the participating vendors in a consistent fashion, will streamline this messaging so that transactions are handled automatically.

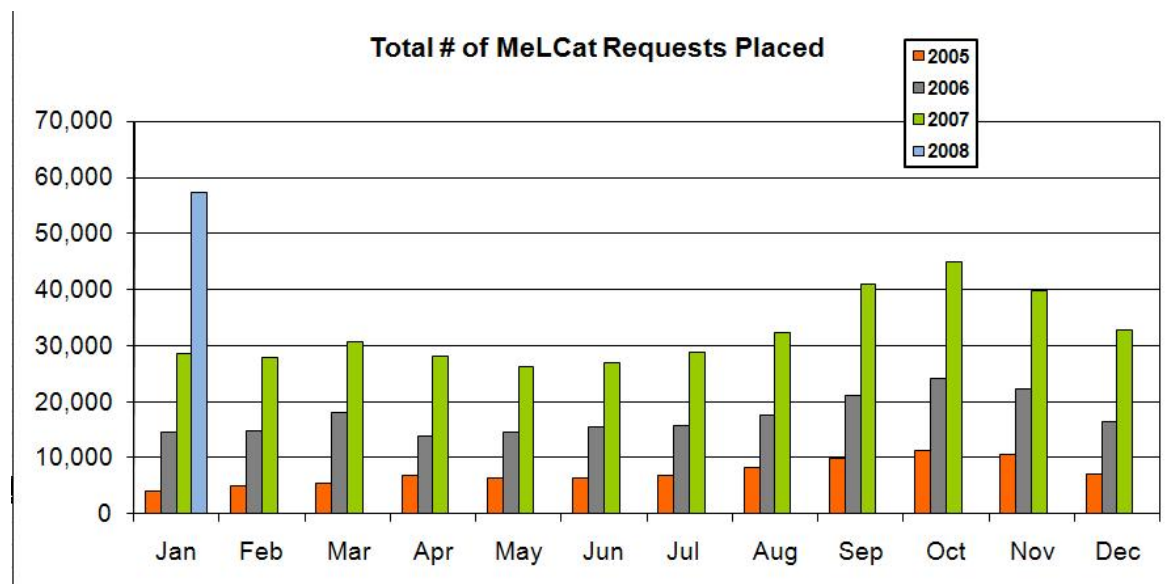
19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? We had been aware of other statewide systems for resource sharing, but most of these required local libraries to have the same type of automation in order for the system to work. The concept of resource sharing is fundamental to libraries, and inter-library loan systems have been in existence for many years. Patron-initiated resource sharing is the newer wave of service, and adding statewide participation by all types of libraries, regardless of their local automated system, plus statewide delivery, make for a combined package that is innovative and user-friendly. We believe we are the first state to do it all in tandem.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? See no. 19

21. Has the program been fully implemented? Joining MeLCat is optional; not every library in the state of Michigan is required to be a member. Currently over 250 libraries are part of MeLCat. Each year an additional 120 libraries are targeted to join MeLCat. There is an in-depth implementation process in place for libraries joining MeLCat that begins with a simple form of intent, followed by questionnaires regarding their automated system and selected parameters. The policies and procedures have been established and are posted online. These will evolve

along with the system over time, with a representative committee working out any issues that arise and recommending necessary changes to the State Librarian for approval. MeLCat will be evolving over time, not only in size, but in functionality.

22. Briefly evaluate the program’s effectiveness in addressing the defined problem(s) or issue(s). Provide tangible examples.



The fill rate for requests was 84.8% in 2005, 88.6% in 2006, 88.9% in 2007, and so far in 2008, the fill rate is 91.2%. A visual representation of MeLCat participating libraries in Michigan may be found at <http://tinyurl.com/26qh3j>.

Anecdotal comments:

Focus: Educating Michigan residents

A patron had seen the MELCAT screen option on our website and couldn't believe it was as good as it sounded. He made the trip to the library today just to check it out. He wanted to know if there was a charge, I of course told him there wasn't. He was so pleased - he couldn't believe it was so easy. He asked again if it mattered if the library was in Kalamazoo- I told him it didn't matter what location in Michigan it came from. He couldn't believe how great the service was and he was just blown away that we would provide it. You made a friend for life for the library.

Jackson District Library

Focus: Quality education for state residents

I made a last minute decision to do a class module and simulation on business networks and networking. I was hoping to supplement this more academic material from MSU’s library with some for a practitioner audience. With MeLCat, I could immediately access a very broad range of "how-to" books and I can then pick the titles I find intriguing, and decide whether to drive to a nearby library (LCC) and look at the 2005 edition of "Networking for Dummies," or have it delivered directly to us (it arrived in a few days). The links allow me to see in just a few clicks if they are open late enough that I can go there after class that evening, or before work the next day. While doing this research I noticed the K-12 resources page and I've book marked the ones for elementary students for my 11-year old son. I don't know that I can say enough good things

about this service -- it's helped provide many resources for every research project I've done, as well as the classroom preparation that I've described.

Associate Professor, Michigan State University

Focus: Sharing resources, saving money

I'm writing to you in this time of budget cutting about how important having the MeL is to those of us who live in rural areas. We recently used the MeL to research resources for a trip to the Netherlands. We were able find books and videos that were not available at our library.

However, because our local library participates, we were able to get those helpful resources right here in our community. Please let those who are considering budget cuts to this program know that a user of the service is willing to see state revenues increased by (yes....) a tax increase of some kind because too many of Michigan's services and amenities are being lost to the no-new-taxes (i.e., revenues)-ever chopping block...and it's just not realistic to only look at that side of the coin anymore.

Patron in Harrison, MI

Focus: Sharing resources, saving money

By using the MeLCat system \$1,225,770 worth of books were borrowed for White Pine libraries/patrons in the last year via MeLCat, an amount of funding for books the libraries individually would never able to spend for their collections.

White Pine Library Cooperative

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? MeLCat began in 2005 with 20 libraries; today there are over 250 participating libraries with more scheduled to join this year (2008).

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program? There is a lot of collaboration and cooperation involved in making this a successful program. There have to be some common circulation rules statewide and agreements on what materials will be shared and for how long. The technology is complex, given the number of dissimilar systems and the goal of interactivity. As a wise man once said, "The perfect is the enemy of the good," and that is our motto for MeLCat. If we waited for perfection, we would not be serving the residents of Michigan in this capacity even now. We jumped in and success has come, even though we strive to implement a standard (NCIP) that will make the system much more interoperable in the future.