



To: Kaukauna Public Library Board of Trustees
From: Library Director Ashley Thiem-Menning
Date: 11/20/2023
Re: OWLS Update

We had a major AAC meeting on November 17. This is the meeting where we were voting on whether or not OWLS would begin to look for a new ILS for us or whether we would continue with the TLC product CARLX. Our contract with TLC ends in 2024 and it will be time to renew soon.

Kaukauna voted yes with many other libraries for OWLS to begin the process of searching for a new ILS. While there was almost a 50/50 vote, it takes a 2/3 vote for motions to pass, which it did not, much to KPL's frustration.

The software has been a continued source of irritation since 2020. While no one could have prepared us to migrate to a new software in the middle of a global pandemic where no in-person training could actually take place, my professional opinion on the product has not gotten better with age.

Right now we have to use two different products instead of one. We have a software based program we call CARL Client and then we have a web based version of it called CARL Connect. Neither option works fully, so we must use both for different things. This has been extremely frustrating for our staff, specifically with training new hires. This year alone, James has trained four new staff members and we have another four coming on board before yearend.

A representative from the company was here this year and I did ask when we would have the one product they had promised us in 2019 and they could not answer. I asked if we are talking more than five years and again, they could not comment.

OWLS says they are committed to making this easier for us, but with a rate of 50% of the libraries being only somewhat satisfied and total satisfaction going down in the product, I don't feel confident that there will be an improvement. I will be voting yes again in the future to migrating to a different ILS.