

We are all very excited about the rollout of the Montana Shared Catalog Project. We are happy to be involved both with initial funding and with providing staff support for the project, and very proud to be a partner with you!

As all of you know, this is a first for the state and, like you, we have learned much in the past three months. One of the unknowns was what level of staff support needed for the shared catalog. It turns out that we need a lot. The fact is that we have limited staff to provide this service. We are trying to balance this need with available staff resources.

As you might be aware, Sarah McHugh's position is the technical services supervisor for the State Library, so she has many responsibilities at MSL as well as answering questions about catalog applications and working with Mike Price to configure the system. These last responsibilities have kept Sarah from working on other jobs that are also important to MSL. So, to help Sarah meet our expectations and, most importantly, her own, Darlene and I made the following suggestions so that shared catalog members continue to receive quality support from MSL.

- Please post questions to the group serve first rather than contacting Sarah directly. If you know an answer to the question posted on the group list, please answer it!
- Before posting a question, please review the past posts on the group list to see if your question have been previously answered.
- Please try to solve the problem by experimenting with the system before posting a question.
- Please be as detailed as possible when describing the problem.

Sarah is spending 100% of her time on support issues. Darlene and I have asked Sarah to spend a total of 10-12 hours a week on her other duties. To manage this change, we have asked Sarah to dedicate Tuesday afternoon and Thursdays to non-MSL issues.

I want to stress three things. First, we hope that these suggestions and the minor change in Sarah's work schedule will not cause any service disruptions at your library. Please, let me know directly if they do. Second, we know that the volume of questions will decrease as we all learn. Third, in four-six weeks, we will meet with Mike, Bruce, and Sarah to figure out if these changes are working for all of us.

Again, we are all proud to be your partners in this significant project.