

Evaluation of new mobile app vendor

Three vendors demonstrated their mobile app products for the Mobile App Workgroup. The three vendors were: Capira, Solus, and Communico. The three vendors were evaluated based on the criteria listed in the table below. Each item was ranked by the Workgroup members on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the worst, 5 being the best). Workgroup members filled out evaluation forms indicating whether they were satisfied with the features demonstrated. The percentages listed below are the percentage of Workgroup members who indicated that Yes, they were satisfied with the feature as demonstrated. Workgroup members also gave each vendor an overall satisfaction rating. After the demos, the Workgroup opted to eliminate Communico from consideration due to its poor showing.

Criteria	Average criteria ranking	Capira (% satisfied)	Solus (% satisfied)	Communico (% satisfied)
Speed of App	4.7	92%	82%	67%
Digital Library Card	4	92%	91%	78%
Mobile checkout	2.5	67%	91%	11%
Mobile checkin	1.5	17%	73%	0%
Ability for patrons to sign up for a library card	3.1	67%	45%	44%
Ability for libraries to opt out of certain features	3.3	92%	64%	33%
Integration with meeting room software	3.6	92%	91%	44%
Integration with 3 rd party content (OverDrive, Flipster, etc.)	4	58%	91%	78%
Ability to schedule curbside delivery and/or other library services (computer use, etc.)	2.7	50%	82%	67%
Available in multiple languages	4.1	75%	82%	11%
Ability to "push" information to patrons, if patrons opt in	3.1	75%	82%	0%
Ability to customize and brand to local library	4.2	83%	91%	33%
Ability for patrons to easily customize access to more than one library	3	33%	64%	44%
Ability for patrons to find app in app stores by searching for either LINKcat OR library name	4.5	42%	82%	33%
Ability to set up mobile beacons, so patrons can be alerted as they get close to the beacon	2.4	83%	100%	11%
Ability to add a custom page that that we can name and include our own content	3.6	58%	73%	56%
Ability to add buttons that bring up features such as the New York Times best sellers list, the New this week list, Don't Miss Lists, etc.	3.4	92%	91%	67%
Ability to set up different "views" or "skins," such as a Kid's display	2.2	17%	45%	0%
Works on different devices, such as tablets and phones, and on both Apple and Android devices	4.9	92%	100%	100%
Accessibility considerations: if someone is visually impaired, physically impaired, cognitively or hearing impaired can the App be fully used?	4.5	33%	73%	33%
Good data and privacy policies	4.5	75%	100%	67%
Ability to get use data and statistics	3.5	100%	100%	33%
Support provided by vendor: how often do they push out updates, do they keep up with device and OS updates	4.6	83%	100%	44%
Staff user interface is easy to use, and is hierarchical at system level and library level	3.9	17%	73%	0%
Ability to streamline patron access by saving patron's login and password info	4.5	100%	91%	89%
OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH VENDOR (scale of 1 to 5)		3.8	4.7	2.6

Recommendation for new mobile app vendor

At the July 17 meeting of the Mobile App Workgroup, the Workgroup decided to recommend that the ILS Committee move forward with Solus as a new mobile app vendor for the LINKcat mobile app. The implementation fee and annual base price would be paid for out of the ILS fees. Individual libraries could choose to purchase add-ons, and would be responsible for the set-up and annual fees for the add-ons.

The Workgroup recommends Solus due to its high level of overall satisfaction as rated by the Workgroup members (4.7 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best), as well as the satisfaction level for the app criteria (as compared to Capira). The Solus base app will provide the same or better features and functionality over what we currently have. Features that will come with the Solus base app include:

- Digital library card with the ability to store multiple patron accounts in the app
- Multiple languages, including Spanish and Hmong (note: Hmong is slated to be added to the app by the end of 2020)
- Accessibility features for patrons with disabilities
- API connection to the ILS (rather than screen-scraping) which should improve speed
- Integration with OverDrive
- Ability to more fully customize the app
- Improved access to use statistics
- More frequent vendor updates to both add features to the app, add bugfixes, and address changes due to iOS or Android updates
- Improved administrative interface for SCLS staff
- Curbside pickup integration
- List of LINKcat libraries with information on location, hours, as well as contact information
- Push notifications are slated to be added to the app by the end of 2020

In addition to the base app, libraries will have the option to purchase templates that will provide patrons with a customized experience after they log in to the app (using the patron's home library). Templates allow libraries to:

- Customize with their library logo, colors, fonts, etc.
- Manage their own content through an administrative interface
- Integrate with the library's 3rd party content subscriptions (such as Hoopla, Kanopy, etc.)
- Integrate with the library's event calendar (such as Evanced, Eventkeeper, etc.)

Finally, libraries will have the option to purchase these additional add-ons:

- Self-check In/Out via Barcode
- Self-check In/Out via RFID
- Bluetooth beacon-based marketing notifications (slated to be added by end of 2020)
- Children's app called Planet Library (<http://planetlibrary.net/>)

Cost comparison for mobile app vendors

ONGOING COSTS	Capira (all costs are annual)	Solus (all costs are annual)
Base annual subscription fee	\$36,000 (each year for 3 years)	\$23,092 (Includes 25% discount; 1.25% increase yearly)
Languages (English and Spanish)	\$2,250	Included in base price
Languages	\$4,750 for English plus two additional languages (Capira does not have Hmong)	Included in base price (English, Spanish, Chinese Traditional, Chinese Simplified, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Vietnamese and Hmong (coming))
Digital library card	Included in base price	Included in base price
Curbside pickup	\$499 per library	Included in base price
Address & hours for each library	Included in base price	Included in base price
Custom integration for each library (library branding, event calendar integration, integration with local 3rd party content such as Hoopla)	Included in base price	\$500 per library (group discounts are available)
Self-checkout	\$500 per library	\$500 per library (barcode only is \$250)
TOTAL ONGOING COSTS	Capira	Solus
Base app (all libraries)	\$38,250	\$23,092
Base app + custom integration for all libraries	\$38,250	\$47,092 (libraries may opt out; group pricing discounts are available)
STARTUP COSTS	Capira	Solus
Base setup	None	\$3,000 (would be covered by ILS contingency funds)
Custom integration	None	\$250 (library responsible for fee)
Self-checkout	None	\$500 (library responsible for fee)