

ITTS Midwinter Report to ITAC

1.0 Strategic Planning

1.1 2018 ALA Technology Investment Plan

The [2018 ALA Technology Investment Plan](#) contains both background on ALA's "technology debt" and a proposed pathway forward to implementation of a stable, flexible platform that will support ALA's membership and programs into the future. The plan calls for a multi-year, phased approach. In addition to the baseline systems addressed in the plan, the increased capacity allows ALA ITTS, working with program units, to realistically explore implementation of targeted products to address specific volunteer and staff productivity needs. These include a CRM system to support advocacy nation-wide and a data dashboard to enable staff to serve members more efficiently and effectively.

FY2019 budget discussions have focused strongly on reinvestment in the Association's future. These discussions continue to explore these parallel strategies: (1) improve core resources and baseline systems and (2) make spot investments in carefully targeted productivity products. Planning assumes a multiyear strategy. It should also be noted that the plan aligns with other major ongoing activities, notably the Board-led conversation about simplifying and reinvigorating ALA. The plan document repeatedly notes the negative impact of excessive complexity, combined with siloed structure. To the extent these issues can be addressed in both ALA's member-facing structure and internal organization, it is reasonable to expect corresponding gains in ALA IT effectiveness.

2.0 ALA Web-Related

2.1 eCommerce for Join/Renew/Rejoin/Donate

The site processed more than 24,000 joins and renewals (including 72,000 section selections) and more than 3000 donations during 2017. We've introduced a more agile approach to versioning that includes complete regression testing while working with our vendor to wrap the last of the phase 1 issues, which include improvements to accessibility.

We're now holding stakeholder meetings to prioritize phase 2 development objectives, which include student chapter renewals, life members, corporate members, pledges, and more.

2.2 New eStore & eLearning Ecommerce System

In early December, ITTS and ALA Publishing successfully soft launched Phase 1 of the completely redesigned ALA Store. Featuring numerous improvements, including a much better search function and a responsive design for mobile users, it offers all the products that were sold in the old store and new integrations with our fulfillment vendor (PBD). Since the launch, we have rolled out two rounds of further improvements to the site and are working on a third. We plan on releasing incremental enhancements to the new site on an ongoing basis.

We're now starting phase 2 of the ALA Store/eLearning project, which includes incorporating ALA-wide eLearning into the new ALA Store. The goal of the project is to have a single interface to discover and purchase all eLearning from ALA units, while tracking all registrations on member records in iMIS. This will allow us to build professional development histories for ALA members on their member profiles in ALA Connect in the future. We anticipate phase 2 will take at least six months to complete.

Including small face-to-face events in the store will be accomplished as phase 3 of this project later this year.

2.3 Responsive Theme for ALA.ORG and Division Websites

We're almost finished converting ala.org microsites to the responsive redesign, which makes the site mobile-friendly. The ALA home page has been converted and its shortcut navigation menu displays the new global navigation.

2.4 Search Engine

Following the retheming of ala.org, we will change out the search box on each site to use the Google Search Appliance. The GSA will provide federated and faceted search results, when applicable.

2.5 Accessibility Testing Protocols

As usual, ITTS has been accessibility testing projects under development and providing feedback to our vendors. We also worked with a select group of members organized by Mike Marlin to accessibility test Zoom at the participant and moderator levels for members who use visual and/or auditory assistive devices. Participants think that it has potential for being ALA's enterprise level, accessible meeting platform, and the Governance Office has begun to use it for online meetings.

2.6 ALA Connect

The new ALA Connect migration project is making positive progress and is on task. In July, we were challenged with the discovery of a launch stopping bug along with serious data migration issues that forced a delay of the launch. We have overcome these issues. After a series of test migrations, Higher Logic was able to work out the bugs in their process as well as fix the issues found. Due to the complex hierarchical relationships required to provide each member with his or her communities and committees, we had to provide a new test site integrated with our iMIS Test database. The latter is near completion. We are planning for future functionalities while we continue with the initial launch.

As promised, ITTS and LLAMA have successfully launched a single site, LLAMA, which went LIVE on Wednesday, January 31, 2018. This pilot launch will help us gather feedback to improve the subsequent launch of the ALA, round table and the other division sites in late April 2018.

Information sessions, including demos and how-to for search, file uploads and profile account management will be offered during Midwinter. Remote sessions for members are scheduled and available for registration at <http://www.ala.org/support/schedule-training>.

Details about the full launch of the new ALA Connect can be found on the ITTS News blog at <http://itts.ala.org/news/2018/01/11/new-ala-connect-pilot-launch-sessions-at-midwinter/>. This post includes a live link to the project plan for details on the upcoming milestones of the launch.

2.7 Moodle

In December 2017, 6437 unique users logged into the almost 500 courses currently listed and available by ALA eLearning or in the ALA Store. The site was upgraded to Moodle 3.3 in December 2017.

2.8 Shibboleth

Several Shibboleth installations have taken place, including 9 related to ecommerce and the ALA Store. Each iteration includes dev, quality assurance and production environments.

2.9 Sympa

Spam detection has improved dramatically. The current concern is MailChannel's heavy handed response to suspected spam. Instead of simply bouncing it, they will often temporarily block all email for the server. We researched alternatives for other hosts. The best option has no spam detection whatsoever, so we would need to provide an in-house solution. More to come.

2.10 Blogs & Wikis

After several blogs being compromised with the injection of malicious scripts, we developed a script that will automatically update all WordPress core code and plugins to the most recent version. It also has the ability to update themes—but that runs the risk of erasing custom themes that were not developed correctly. Before we automate this script, it must be tested further to ensure that it does not cause undesirable side effects.

3.0 Hardware & Software

3.1 New Telephone System

The implementation of the new telephone system is on hold while we look at our options, especially those related to being more mobile rather than desk-bound.

3.2 PC & Laptop Rollout

We rolled out new equipment to approximately one-third of our staff. This cycle repeats annually.

3.3 Citrix Farm

We are replacing our Citrix farm with the current version and are currently in the testing phase prior to rollout. This will improve external access to some of our applications and stabilize our internal financial system.

3.4 Virtual Servers

We rolled out virtual servers (development, quality assurance, and production) for the new ALA Store.

3.5 New Firewall

We installed a new firewall to meet standards for PCI compliance.

3.6 Backup to Disc Servers

We upgraded all of our backup to disc servers to the latest technology since the previous equipment was at end of life and no longer supported.

4.0 ITTS Organizational Changes

4.1 Staffing

ITTS is proud to announce that we have added a Quality Assurance Specialist. This temporary part-time position is responsible for creating test plans, writing and executing manual and automated tests, and clearly documenting defects. This work will help ensure that both new software and fixes meet business requirements. Omar will work closely with existing team members to create a sustainable plan for ensuring our stakeholders are all served well by the technology we provide.

4.2 ALA IT Advisory Committee Approved

At Annual 2017, the Committee on Organization (COO) approved the expanded role and name change of the ALA Website Advisory Committee to the ALA Information Technology Advisory Committee. The new charge broadens the scope to expand oversight from web-based to all of IT's products and services.

Charge: To develop, review and recommend to Council policies for the ALA application of information technology products and services. To provide advice to the ALA Executive Director responsible for implementing such policies and guidelines. To recommend editorial or structural guidelines for the ALA website. To recommend guidelines for best practices for software used by ALA. To provide an ongoing channel for member communication by working closely with other units, committees and offices of the association. To make recommendations concerning technical issues or changes to ALA's ITTS infrastructure, including evaluating, testing and implementing technology products and services used by Association members or by the public.

To make recommendations on the reconciliation of differing strategic plans from ALA and its divisions. To advise the Association on priorities and strategies that promote utilization and continued development of ALA technology products and services, including the ALA website. To advise on priority setting for competing projects. To make recommendations on how the divisions can work together under a more cohesive umbrella and share technology solutions that are vital to each division. To perform testing and evaluations of technology implementations to provide input on the user interface, designs, and best practices.