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SWAN Strategic Plan

SWAN board Objectives for 2019 – 2023 with tactical plan for 2019 & LONG-RANGE goals

DRAFT FOR SWAN BOARD DISCUSSION

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Contents

[Introduction 2](#_Toc529895821)

[Identity, Mission, and Vision 2](#_Toc529895822)

[SWAN Software Platform: 2019 Visual Map 3](#_Toc529895823)

[Objective 1: Develop a shared and accurate diagnosis of member dissatisfaction around the existing SWAN software platform 4](#_Toc529895824)

[Objective 1: Tactical Plan 2019 5](#_Toc529895825)

[Objective 1: Long Range Plan 6](#_Toc529895826)

[Objective 2: Deliver on the solutions that are under SWAN control – and decide about the ILS itself 6](#_Toc529895827)

[Objective 2: Tactical Plan 2019 7](#_Toc529895828)

[Objective 2: Long Range Plan 8](#_Toc529895829)

[Objective 3: Reconstitute as a mission driven 501c3 with clear representative governance practices 9](#_Toc529895830)

[Objective 3: Tactical Plan 2019 10](#_Toc529895831)

[Objective 3: Long Range Plan 10](#_Toc529895832)

[Objective 4: Increase presence of the patron perspective 11](#_Toc529895833)

[Objective 4: Tactical Plan 2019 11](#_Toc529895834)

[Objective 4: Long Range Plan 12](#_Toc529895835)

[Objective 5: Strengthen the collective identity 12](#_Toc529895836)

[Objective 5: Tactical Plan 2019 13](#_Toc529895837)

[Objective 5: Long Range Plan 13](#_Toc529895838)

[Objective 6: Raise grant funding for non-ILS initiatives 14](#_Toc529895839)

[Objective 6: Tactical Plan 2019 14](#_Toc529895840)

[Objective 6: Long Range Plan 14](#_Toc529895841)

[Tactical Plan 2019 16](#_Toc529895842)

[Long Range Plan 2020-2023 16](#_Toc529895843)

SWAN Strategic Plan

# Introduction

This document is intended as a guide for the SWAN Board and Executive Director over the five years between 2019 – 2023. The tactical plan will be updated each year.

Identity: Defines how decisions are made

Mission: Defines the problem in society the organization is trying to solve

Vision: What is the organization’s solution?

Purposes of this Strategic Plan

1. Sets high level strategic **objectives** (*where* you are trying to go)
2. Articulates the underlying **rationale** (*why* you are trying to go there)
3. Establishes agreed upon **markers** (*how* you will know you are making progress)
4. Provides **guiding principles** for execution (*what* is the right path)

The tactical plan outlines the year’s work under each objective.

# Identity, Mission, and Vision

**Identity**

SWAN provides resources and services to member libraries and the constituencies they serve and is governed as a representative democracy of elected Board members who represent the entire membership.

**Mission Statement**

SWAN seeks to improve patron ease of access to information, resources, and services through serving our member libraries. SWAN is dedicated to supporting our community of member libraries by sharing resources, technology, and encouraging individual and collective growth.

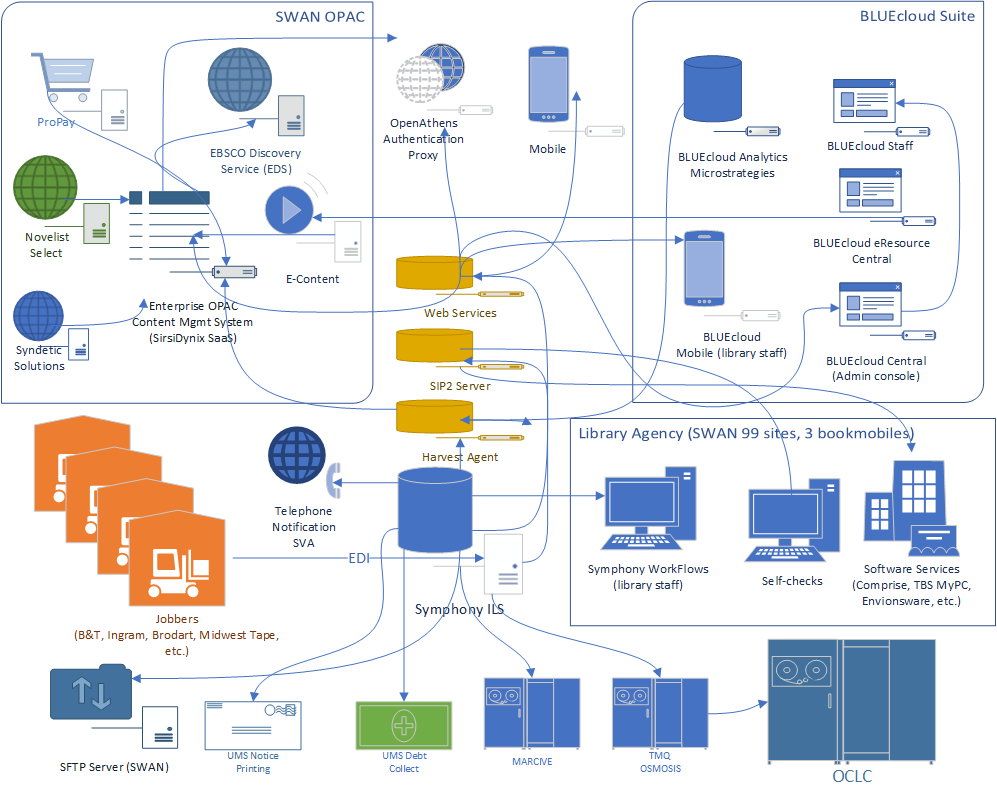
**Vision Statement**

SWAN sets the standard of excellence for member experience. We are the catalyst in creating and nurturing an ecosystem of ingenuity and collaboration. We engage in open dialogue with our membership and use purposeful communication in our community. We utilize careful planning of our key resources and are ready to seize opportunities as they arise.

# SWAN Software Platform: 2019 Visual Map

The software platform SWAN has built utilizes interconnected services from multiple vendors. The list and chart below is intended as a guide throughout the strategic plan.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Library Software: Staff | Library software: Public |
| 1. Integrated Library System: SirsiDynix Symphony 2. Staff client: SirsiDynix Symphony WorkFlows & (new) BLUEcloud Staff 3. Collection Analytics & Statistics: SirsiDynix BLUEcloud Analytics (MicroStrategy) 4. Notice Printing: Unique Management Services 5. Debt Collection: Unique Management Services 6. Statewide Resource Sharing: OCLC WorldShare ILL 7. Cataloging Bibliographic Utility: OCLC WorldCat 8. Catalog Maintenance: MARCIVE 9. Purchasing: SirsiDynix Acquisitions with EDI interface with multiple vendors | 1. Catalog: SirsiDynix Enterprise 2. Mobile App: SirsiDynix BookMyne & (new) BLUEcloud Mobile 3. E-Commerce: SirsiDynix BLUEcloud Commerce with ProPay 4. Enhanced Catalog Content: ProQuest Syndetic Solutions 5. Catalog Reader’s Advisory: EBSCO Novelist Select 6. E-Content Integration: SirsiDynix BLUEcloud eResource Central 7. E-Content Discovery: EBSCO Discovery Service 8. E-Content Authentication & Access: OpenAthens (EBSCO reseller) 9. Text Notification: SirsiDynix SMS 10. Phone Notification: SirsiDynix Voice Automation 11. Email Notification: SirsiDynix Symphony |



# Objective 1: Develop a shared and accurate diagnosis of member dissatisfaction around the existing SWAN software platform

**Rationale**

The SWAN software platform is at the center of the chosen mission for the SWAN organization. The membership survey and interviews conducted as part of the assessment and analysis revealed member dissatisfaction exists at a meaningful enough level.

Satisfactory solutions depend on proper diagnosis: “What are the contributors for member dissatisfaction?”

There are three possible contributors to the problem:

1. **SWAN staff** (i.e. don’t perform enough training, are not providing adequate documentation, etc.)
2. **SWAN member libraries** (i.e. have different opinions on how software should work, don’t share common practice, don’t own their role in developing solutions, etc.)
3. **SirsiDynix** (i.e. not investing enough resources in product software development, don’t meet timelines, etc.)

SWAN is missing a ***shared*** diagnosis. The below actions will lead to a clearer understanding of where SWAN’s member dissatisfaction stems from and will allow us to develop adequate solutions to counter it.

**Markers**

* A prioritized list of SWAN software platform related problems has been developed with input from member libraries and patrons (see Objective 4).
* SWAN Executive Director and the board systematically work through the list and develop initial diagnostic hypotheses that considers the role of all three potential contributors (staff, member libraries, SirsiDynix).
* Where there is disagreement or uncertainty, SWAN Executive Director proposes short term “triangulation” experiments to obtain more accurate data. Each experiment should intentionally modify one of the three potential contributors to discern what moves the meter on which problems.
* The experiments are agreed to by the board. Results are tracked and reported.
* At the end of this process, the Board and Executive Director agree on properly nuanced diagnoses of the major problems of the ILS and connected platforms.
* These findings are shared with the broader membership.

**Guiding Principles**

This process presents the first concrete opportunity for SWAN to build in the patron perspective (Objective 4). In developing the list, the priority should be on: “What software platform related problems does the end patron want addressed?”

SWAN leadership must embrace the reality that what is best for the patron may not always equate to what is best for library line staff. SWAN must design the process for direct patron input accordingly (see Objective 4 below). SWAN will concentrate especially on improving electronic content access and overall discovery.

At this stage, the primary goals are gaining insight and developing a culture of collective ownership of problems (versus blame shifting).

## Objective 1: Tactical Plan 2019

Form operational think tank of 6-7 members who are front-line and cover a wide range of expertise who collectively can help us in evaluating SirsiDynix related software/services and how they are implemented (pull from active members of our Advisory Groups). The group will be cross-functional and will evaluate:

* Workflows (10-20 one-on-one interviews with onsite shadowing of Circulation, Acquisitions, and Cataloging staff from various libraries)
* Enterprise (data collection from DUX member libraries tracking patron questions/issues)
* Enterprise (usability study at 5 libraries with novice level patrons)

SWAN staff will issue assessment report to the Board and membership.

Until the assessment report is complete and the defined areas for improvement are understood, SWAN should freeze adding new libraries after Green Hills Public Library District goes live in February 2019. The SWAN Board will need to make a decision on recent public library inquiries regarding full membership in SWAN. The Executive Director should also provide a recommendation on membership conditions and criteria for academic, school, and special libraries. This decision should include whether to continue Internet Access membership.

The SWAN software platform for library staff and patrons will undergo interface changes in 2019. The public catalog will have a software release that is responsive to mobile devices, and the BLUEcloud Staff web interface will begin to replace the use of WorkFlows. The Symphony ILS configuration will be reviewed for holds management, lending, and record loading within the Acquisitions workflow.

Objective 1 Priority Projects for the 2019 year:

* BLUEcloud Mobile – offer individual library branding (called Mobile templates) for all SWAN libraries. We would approve the use of reserve funds for the first year of one-time costs and maintenance.
* Perform a Symphony holds configuration review and analysis of our settings.
* Perform research/evaluation/usability testing on the new web-based Symphony interface BLUEcloud Staff.
* Consolidate the Symphony ILS circulation map based on version 3.5.3 capabilities and create room for flexibility. Previous limits were largely driven by inflexibility of Symphony ILS circulation map and reliance of circulation rule driving patron notices.
* SWAN create central vendor accounts with Midwest Tape, Ingram, B&T to assist with research and recommendations on consistent Symphony Acquisitions configuration and practice.

## Objective 1: Long Range Plan

Research and performance enhancements SWAN completed within Objective 1 should not lose sight of finding ways to improve the patron experience as part of objective 4.

# Objective 2: Deliver on the solutions that are under SWAN control – and decide about the ILS itself

**Rationale**

With the (a) prioritized list of problems and (b) the shared and accurate diagnoses, SWAN should then be better positioned to execute solutions. The solutions that have the greatest degree of possibility will be ones that depend disproportionately on SWAN staff and member libraries. These solutions should have a measurable positive impact on member library staff.

But a remaining question will be: “What about those that depend on SirsiDynix changing its performance?” (or OCLC, or EBSCO for that matter).

Some of SWAN’s experiments should aim at gaining more insight on just how much SirsiDynix performance can be influenced (i.e. perhaps via stronger engagement from staff and member libraries).

As SWAN more accurately identifies this problem set, it should decide what it wants to do long term:

* Accept this constraint and modify expectations accordingly

Or

* Chart an explorative path towards library community driven software, i.e. commonly referred to as “open source”

SWAN should investigate community created open source solutions not just to potentially solve software problems that vendors cannot, but also to cultivate cultural attributes needed by libraries in a consortium to thrive. One such attribute is the aforementioned collective ownership of problems. Community driven solutions depend on and encourage this collective approach.

**Markers**

* SWAN board and staff agree on the prioritized list of solutions to be executed (emphasizing ones that are most under SWAN control). This agreement is communicated to the broad membership.
* SWAN staff executes on the list.
* Member satisfaction shows improvement (i.e. compared to most recent net promoter scores).
* SWAN staff increases its engagement of SirsiDynix to ascertain the vendor’s capacity for performance improvement.
* Current contract with SirsiDynix is renewed because SWAN needs more time with the current vendor.
* SWAN explores other community driven software solutions that can be implemented on top of the SirsiDynix Symphony ILS.
* A feasibility study is conducted about alternate software
* Board and Executive Director make a long-term decision about the ILS, catalog, or other components of SWAN’s platform: accept the constraints of commercial vendor or more aggressively pursue the community driven, open source options.

**Guiding Principles**

The long term, better functionality can be obtained via difficult, yet strategic choices. There very well could be short term transition pain and loss. SWAN membership must be ready to embrace this.

The consortium as a whole must be motivated by the long-term gain of cultivating the cultural attributes that will be critical for SWAN libraries to thrive.

In general, SWAN board and members must eventually grasp that software solutions require embracing a new mentality and building an ecosystem within the consortium to steadily improve SWAN’s software platform.

## Objective 2: Tactical Plan 2019

SWAN Executive Director will negotiate renewal options for SirsiDynix vendor and present a recommendation to SWAN Board for approval.

SWAN Executive Director will create an organization membership survey to set a baseline and ongoing evaluation of the performance and value of SWAN through a “net promoter score.” This will require outside consulting for survey design that can be used consistently for the 5-year duration of this plan’s objective.

The SWAN support website will be launched in December 2018. There will be continued focus on writing documentation for library staff. The documentation should focus on the steps all library staff should follow and will become a reference guide for regular training SWAN staff will provide. The training would cover essentials for performing optimally in WorkFlows, BLUEcloud Analytics, among others. The SWAN Assistant Director would work with our advisory groups and SWAN department managers to create a curriculum of training for member library staff. This training will be provided as ongoing and promoted monthly. On-demand training options will be provided from a pre-selected set of courses.

The membership indicated a high level of interest in a group purchase for online subscriptions and e-content. The SWAN Electronic Resources Consultant should complete an e-content subscription offering to libraries based on type. For example, public libraries could benefit from e-content focused on popular material.

The long-standing arrangement of updating OCLC through The MARC of Quality (TMQ) will come to an end in 2019. SWAN should replace the process for updating OCLC holdings with an “TMQ-Lite” version to develop a collaborative arrangement amongst our consortia peers (Illinois and SirsiDynix consortia) to co-develop and share solutions. SWAN will benefit in developing this co-laboratory of peers which will puts us in a strategic position for additional funding and priority setting.

Following the marker in this objective of finding solutions and “emphasizing ones that are most under SWAN control,” we will dedicate more staff time towards software development. Recent success in this area has allowed SWAN to provide solutions that are not native to the ILS or catalog. The SWAN patron lookup webpage and the automated delivery label are examples of how we can create solutions using our proprietary vendor’s tools.

Objective 2 Priority Projects:

* Relaunch the SWAN Support Site with expanded documentation.
* SWAN staff create an automated In Transit Delivery Label using the software development skills currently in-house.

## Objective 2: Long Range Plan

Once the SirsiDynix agreement is in place, the two other major vendors that comprise the SWAN software platform should be evaluated for long term agreements with a goal of cost control and to set costs for licensing new member libraries. Approach EBSCO and OCLC for multiyear contracts. The EBSCO role is in SWAN’s e-content platform with EBSCO for Discovery Service, Novelist Select, and OpenAthens. The OCLC role for cataloging and statewide resource sharing could include negotiations bibliographic, ILL, and WorldCat access, with additional features outside of the statewide group services contract.

Allocate SWAN staff to study community driven software initiatives which include Evergreen, VuFind, PIKA, and Koha.

# Objective 3: Reconstitute as a mission driven 501c3 with clear representative governance practices

**Rationale**

A 501c3 organization will more clearly expresses a mission-centric identity than an “intergovernmental instrumentality.” For the 501c3, a mission statement around an overarching “public good” is definitional. For an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality, the “governmental” identities are definitional.

The “public good” requirement of a 501c3 reinforces the explicit inclusion of patron experience into a new mission statement. Use this reorganization to solidify the commitment of the board to lead in representative governance and avoid the confusing drift back into direct democracy.

Practically speaking, becoming a 501c3 removes burdens hampering current governance such as insufficient quorums and barriers to participation (i.e. requirement to be physically present at meeting; prohibition of email as vehicle of decision-making).

Another practical advantage will be to support grant seeking (Objective 6) as 501c3 is a more natural and understandable fundraising vehicle.

Reconstituting as a 501c3 provides a context for figuring out new governance policies and practices that strengthen representation:

* Designated board seats by type, geography, size
* Term limits by libraries (not just by individuals)
* Expanding the number of seats

Note: representative democracy sometimes means a board member has to hold the proper tension of representing some defined constituency AND the greater public good – like an U.S. Senator.

**Markers**

* Board committee is formed to draft a new set of bylaws for 501c3 incorporation that addresses the representation issues.
* Executive Director completes study investigating all relevant implications (i.e. for staff school loan forgiveness eligibility) and proposes an execution plan.
* Vote (by entire membership or by board?) is taken.
* Plan is executed.
* Process is developed for SWAN staff to spend more time onsite at member libraries to serve as “eyes and ears” on behalf of the board, giving members greater confidence that their interests are being represented.
* New board is constituted. There could be overlap with current composition, but there is a true “reboot.”
* Purpose and structure of all member meetings (whether quarterly or some other frequency) is clarified and communicated.

**Guiding Principles**

This objective should underline the collective mentality required of the new board members: that when they enter that role, they are acting as a representative of the interests of all the members *and their patrons –* not representing their own library.

Thinking, decision making, and any cultural practices by the board that do not reflect this collective mentality must be identified and resisted.

The board must also commit to owning their authority and resist temptation to push things to mass member decision making. However, opening more channels to gain informative input from members should be done.

Current board and Executive Director should increase their investing effort in identifying and recruiting strong candidates for new board members.

Use the reconstitution of the new board as an opportunity to define (in writing) with even greater clarity the roles and responsibilities of a board member. Invest in board development and training, especially in this transition process.

## Objective 3: Tactical Plan 2019

SWAN has experimented with its governance structure and representation over the 44 years of its existence. The membership in 2006 formed a Governance Study Group comprised of member library directors/administrators and provided recommendations that were enacted. Based on the success of that approach, the SWAN Board should form an official committee with board and membership representation.

Objective 3 Priority Projects:

* Executive Director will work with legal counsel on 501c3 implications to organization, employees, membership, services
* Findings of conversion from Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality presented to SWAN Board
* SWAN Board creates Governance Study Group with written charge with a goal to provide recommendation on organization governance and leadership
* Executive Director implements changes in SWAN operations for accounts payable/accounts receivable.

## Objective 3: Long Range Plan

The FY18 audit management letter recommends SWAN create accounting funds in addition to the operating budget fund. Once the governance and legal entity of SWAN is set, the SWAN Executive Director should create a budget fund structure with goals of segregated operations, grants, capital improvements, and collections. Each fund could require its own budget structure or use a common structure.

# Objective 4: Increase presence of the patron perspective

**Rationale**

Regularly receiving input from the patron as “end user” will be especially important as SWAN moves into product design of the open source ILS. Simply inserting the words “patron experience” into the mission statement is not enough; this must be translated into practices that inject the patron perspective into decision making.

The patron perspective is the best way to achieve more standardization of the ILS (that will be critical for Open Source), and act as a counterweight against (note: “counterweight” not “complete erasure of”) the tendency towards library by library customization.

**Markers**

* SWAN board and membership embrace that patron perspective should serve a determinative role in ILS design.
* SWAN has a defined structure and strategy to regularly convene patrons and access their input.
* SWAN staff can cite data in their claims about patron desires, and not solely rely on anecdotal/subjective impressions from library staff.
* The practice of testing potential new features or ideas with patrons directly is built into the roll out process.

**Guiding Principles**

Care must be taken to ensure that patron input is not too narrowly concentrated on a small number of “power users.” In fact, the input of residents who have stopped using libraries - especially because of frustration with the catalog (i.e. with e-content) – will be especially valuable.

SWAN staff must spend more time onsite at member library and do so in a way that gives them direct exposure to patrons.

## Objective 4: Tactical Plan 2019

SWAN User Experience Manager will complete catalog and discovery interface studies every 6 months (Q2, Q4). Discovery & User Experience members will be trained on user interface testing, and encouraged to conduct usability studies based on targeted areas of inquiry and improvement (Q1, Q3)

## Objective 4: Long Range Plan

The membership survey showed high interest in patron driven acquisitions. Patron driven acquisitions is a process through which patrons trigger the request for purchase of an item found in the library catalog. The 2019 SWAN software platform cannot support individual library efforts for a “local patron driven acquisitions.” However, a consortia-wide or subset of libraries in SWAN could participate in a centralized collection with material budget funds allocated towards the patron driven acquisitions activity.

# Objective 5: Strengthen the collective identity

**Rationale**

As noted already, several of the other strategic objectives depend on a strong SWAN collective identity (See Objective 2)

There is a desire among some (albeit not all) members for more opportunities to share expertise and provide other kinds of support.

Even though SWAN is not taking on broader, non-software platform specific issues (like those related to “Climate Change”) right now, it may wish to do so in the future. Doing so will invariably require collective effort, strengthening the collective identity.

**Markers**

* Vision and rationale for SWAN events like the recent member conference are communicated explicitly and grasped.
* SWAN staff adopts more peer learning and peer support responses, such that staff are not just always the ones solving problems but helping to connect members to the knowledge resident in the collective.
* More stories of members proactively reaching out to other members and receiving the help they need.
* Survey feedback from collective identity building events show high levels of appreciation.

**Guiding Principles**

Explore grant funding for these initiatives (see Objective 6 for rationale). Choose topics and design collective events so as to reinforce other strategic objectives: i.e. events that anchor everyone more in patron perspectives. SWAN must consistently and repeatedly provide the rationale for building collective identity. Note that events are just one tool for culture change – leadership practices, organizational routines, messaging, etc. all are tools that should be used.

## Objective 5: Tactical Plan 2019

SWAN provides library staff networking and advisory opportunities. The role of these should be clarified for the membership in 2019.

Objective 5 Priority Projects:

* Identify methods of member-to-member networking such as online forums.
* The annual user group SWANx19 theme will be led by SWAN IT who will work with a membership planning group.
* Within the existing advisory groups, review the SirsiDynix Support Center software enhancements forum, which utilizes polling and voting.

The BLUEcloud Analytics platform has a lot of capabilities for revealing consortia-wide resource sharing as well as the individual library performance. We will create a uniform “Your Library Statistics” showing performance and activity of the collective, as well as individual library contribution to the whole. Sharing this data monthly and/or quarterly will help strengthen the collective identity.

## Objective 5: Long Range Plan

Use the objective 6 funds to create a “Shark Tank” for member library staff ideas that require funding and benefit the SWAN community. These could entail regional programs for patrons in areas of technology that match the SWAN needs in Objective 1 and Objective 2.

# Objective 6: Raise grant funding for non-ILS initiatives

**Rationale**

Financial concerns contribute to why SWAN members are resistant to expanding beyond core ILS issues. Members want their fees to go towards their most immediate needs. Until those needs are met, they will be suspicious of any other pursuit funded by their fees.

SWAN staff must aim to satisfy their needs (hence Objective 1). To the extent that SWAN wishes to do more, it will be much easier to obtain permission and appreciation if those expansive efforts are funded by sources other than member fees – at least initially.

**Markers**

* A grant writing capacity is either developed in house (i.e. freeing up some portion of Executive Director or Assistant Director time) or outsourced.
* X% of research & development and collective identity building efforts are funded from grants.
* An experiment is run with corporate sponsorship and cross-network branding, testing the hypothesis that SWAN can leverage its geographic and numerical scope to attract sponsors.

**Guiding Principles**

Start small and experiment in this effort. Don’t invest in permanent capacity (i.e. hiring an in-house grant writer) until the potential is real.

Be careful about the “tail wagging dog” effect in grant seeking, where one starts programs because there is funding available. Stay true to the strategic plan.

Starting out, look especially for funding that is ILS related. This will be appreciated by membership. Also, the technology angle could appeal to certain kinds of funders that are not in the library space (which is rather limited).

## Objective 6: Tactical Plan 2019

This objective is dependent on Objective 3’s goal of SWAN becoming a 501c3. SWAN will continue to utilize grants to help with funding projects and operations.

Objective 6 Priority Projects:

* Apply for RAILS Continuing Education Grant Funding for SWAN’s annual user event (SWANx)
* Structure budget funds based on 501c3 determination to segregate operations, grants, reserves, and capital plans.

## Objective 6: Long Range Plan

Some ideas for grant funded initiatives include:

* Seek out grants for digital collections or partnership with the Chicago Collections Consortium.
* Seek out grants for consortia wide summer reading program with promotion and optimization within the SWAN catalog.
* Seek out grants for centrally acquired popular materials with unrestricted use within the SWAN resource sharing platform.

# Tactical Plan 2019

The tactical plan items under 6 objectives in the plan are listed below.

**Q1**

**Q2**

**Q3**

**Q4**

# Long Range Plan 2020-2023

The tactical plan items considered long range are listed below.