

Implementing Polaris® Community Profiles at Your Library



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Why Offer Community Profiles?



Engage, Collaborate, Be Visible

With Polaris Community Profiles, your library confirms and enhances its presence in the community by providing a web-based platform for community engagement and networking. Community Profiles is not just a database of community organizations. It is a collaborative tool that empowers individuals and organizations within your community to build their presence at the library and in the community at large. In every community, there are individuals, businesses, clubs, and organizations that have no way to improve their visibility except through the increasingly crowded tangle of the Internet. And since the library has the largest installed database of actively involved citizens in any given community – most of whom visit the online catalog at some point – librarians possess a golden opportunity for establishing a mechanism of discovery for these unique local resources. Community Profiles helps people to untangle the web and discover the full breadth of what their local community has to offer.

Encourage Discovery

In addition to providing a platform for discovery of community activity within the context of the catalog, Community Profiles provides an “exportable library” for encouraging discovery of library resources within the context of organizational web sites (ContentXChange). Profile administrators can export a carousel of books, an events calendar, an expandable drawer of the library's web links/ databases, or a library search box to their own web sites, blogs, and other web-based applications. For organizations or individuals without a web presence, the profile administrator can even create a personalized web page. The organization can then submit the generated URL to Google™, Yahoo!®, and Bing™ for indexing so that it is searchable and accessible through the web.

Spend Less Time on Data Entry, More on Strategic Partnerships

With Community Profiles, library staff time spent entering data and maintaining records is reduced, while a focus on strategic partnerships and community relationships is emphasized. Library staff members can create community records within seconds using the Community Record workflow in the Polaris staff client. In its most efficient and user-friendly implementation, library staff appoint an organizational representative to manage the record by modifying the record, adding events, and so forth, through PAC. (However, the librarian, the organizational representative, or both can take on the responsibility for administering the record).

Cross-Promote and Affirm the Library's Place in the Community

Moreover, this system of cross-promotion between community organizations and the library generates meaningful political and financial support for the library at referendum time, extending the library's reach and affirming it as an indelible social institution alongside other local agencies such as fire, police, and schools.

This guide offers some suggestions for implementing Community Profiles in ways that maximize the benefits to the library, community organizations, and the public, while minimizing the library's staff-time costs.

Detailed features and step-by-step instructions for creating and editing organization and event records are available in the *Polaris Community Profiles Guide*, available to Polaris customers at www.polaristown.com. See "[Resources](#)" on page 13 for more information resources and examples.

Publicity, Recruitment, and Training



Community Profiles is uniquely designed to provide a basis for strategic alignment between the library and participating organizations or individuals. The library reinforces its integral presence in the community, community organizations see greater participation and event attendance, small businesses enjoy an increase in customer traffic, and the community as a whole benefits. In order to ensure that these benefits are realized as efficiently and effectively as possible, this section outlines some recommended best practices for beginning your implementation of Community Profiles.

Identifying Your First Profiles

Every library has a group of individuals and organizations with whom it already works closely and has a well-developed relationship (for example, the Friends of the Library, book/author clubs, a local literacy coalition, to name a few). The simplest way to get started with Community Profiles is to identify a subset of these key organizations who would benefit from the ability to gain visibility for their organizations and services at the library and/or who in turn might also benefit from sharing library resources on their own web pages (books, databases, etc.). In some cases, the library may want to start with an even more controlled environment, assigning profiles only to specified library staff such as your reader's advisory, reference, genealogy, or business librarians. While you experiment and learn about using the open architecture that Community Profiles provides, you can note what works and what doesn't. Every community is different and has its own set of needs, so starting the service with a limited scope of known and trusted community members provides familiarity with the processes involved as well as a manageable mechanism for quick feedback.



Introduce Service from Inside Out

1-2-3: Sample Workflow

When done collaboratively, the process of creating the profile and featuring it in the catalog should take roughly 2-3 minutes for the librarian and about 10-15 minutes for the organization:

1. A staff member sets up a “stub” profile and assigns an organizational representative in the Polaris staff client. Only three fields are required – the organization name, a primary address, and a description. See the figure below.

2. From the PAC editor, the organization’s representative logs in to My Account, replaces “coming soon” with the appropriate address and description information, and adds any remaining profile information/ events.
3. The organization’s representative or librarian (or both) indicate which catalog search terms should display the organization’s profile and/or events using Feature It.

For more options for entering community profile information in the Polaris staff client, see the *Polaris Community Profiles Guide*, available at www.polaristown.com (select **Documentation, Polaris 4.1**). This guide also covers step-by-step information that you can distribute to the organization representatives who will use Polaris PowerPAC to manage their organization’s information and events. You may freely adapt the information to suit your library.

Broadening the Circle

Once you've started Community Profiles with your initial group of organizations, you can institute a simple process for signing up new organizations. For example, if you already book rooms or host events at the library for other organizations, you can publicize the benefits of a community profile to the organizations that already use your services, and collect the required profile information from them when they book a room. Alternatively, you might use a simple online application form. For a sample online application form, go to http://pls-demoapp.polarislibrary.com/polaris/custom/redrock/pages/profile_application.aspx

You can also adapt the form for print and collect the information in person, when a room or library service is booked for an organization.

Although the library's policies regarding who may create and maintain a community profile may evolve over time, you can initially apply your existing room-booking policies to community profile sign-up.

Libraries Without Existing Community Records or Events

You may want to turn off Community Keyword and Browse searches in PAC until you reach a "critical mass" of community records. Polaris Administration settings allow organizational representatives to continue to manage their profiles through PAC even when community searching is turned off. Library members at large will discover the initial community profiles and events through Feature It results displayed as part of a regular PAC search. Note that the best way to increase visibility for these initial profiles is to feature them using high-frequency search terms. These terms can be identified using PAC search transactions tables or Google Analytics. For more information about these features, see the following:

- **Feature It** - "Feature It Promotions" in the *Polaris Public Access Administration Guide* or the equivalent topic in staff client online Help.
- **Google Analytics** - "Analyzing PowerPAC Use" in the *Polaris Public Access Administration Guide* or the equivalent topic in staff client online Help.
- **Logging transactions** - "Collecting Transaction Statistics" in the *Polaris Administration Guide* or the equivalent topic in staff client online Help.

Once you have a large enough set of profiles, turn Community keyword/browse searching on in your online catalog. You can encourage community information searches in Polaris PowerPAC through Featured results on regular PAC searches, by posting quick help instructions on the library home page or PowerPAC dashboard, and by placing a card by library catalog computers. See "[Appendix B: Quick Help for Community Information Searches](#)" on page 19 for an example you can adapt for your library.

Setting Goals



Creating a set of goals for the Community Profiles service provides a trajectory for a successful and sustainable implementation.

Here are some possible goals:

- Establish the library as a central hub for community networking and local information. (The library is not just about books.)
- Generate political and/or financial support for both the library and participating organizations.
- Enable participating individuals and community organizations to learn essential digital literacy and social networking skills.
- Improve collaborative relationships with the community and ensure the library's inclusion in external social networks.
- Preserve and provide access to community information that community members would otherwise not be able to discover.
- Increase availability of web development and IT resources at the library by empowering organizations to manage their own web presence, rather than managing it through the library's web site.
- Increase visibility and participation in under-utilized county services through their exposure at the library.

Your library may establish some specific goals as well. Perhaps many in your community are suffering economic distress. One specific goal may be to increase awareness of local services, job fairs, and other relevant programs. Once the appropriate organizations are entered in the Community Profiles program, remote users and those in the library can search and discover community information on such subjects as employment, day care, or continuing education when they search for books. They can also search directly for community information if the library chooses to turn on community keyword and/or browse searching.

Reaching Out

Your list of potential participants will depend on your specific goals, but here are some ideas:

- Organizations that already use the library (see [“Identifying Your First Profiles”](#) on page 3)
- Your library friends organization
- Local government agencies
- Prominent individuals in the community (government officials, professors, etc.)
- Cultural arts institutions, local musicians, artists, writers, etc.

- Local clubs (books, gardening, parenting, etc.)
- Schools and parent organizations
- Sports leagues
- Veterans organizations
- Non-profit service agencies
- Small museums and local history organizations

For an example online “recruitment” page, go to http://pls-demoapp.polarislibrary.com/polaris/custom/redrock/pages/promote_your_org.aspx

As the program gathers participants, you may want to do some assessment to see how well your goals are being met. See “[Assessment](#)” on page 8. You can report positive results to recruit even more participants. The end result will be a rich, positive experience for those who use the library catalog, greater awareness of the library and its role, increased vitality and awareness of community organizations, and ultimately a better community.

Assessment



Assessment of your implementation of Community Profiles will help you prove the worth of the service and recruit more participants. Are you meeting the library's goals and those of community members? How can you improve the program?

Assessment need not be expensive. You can easily collect both qualitative feedback and quantitative data.

Qualitative Feedback Methods

Direct Contact - Nothing beats personal contact for feedback. Consider follow-up phone calls or e-mail messages to your "early adopters," perhaps those organizations you have signed up when they booked events at the library. Your questions might cover the following points as appropriate:

- Has the organization's event attendance grown?
- Have the number of volunteers grown?
- Have donations increased?
- Do more people use the organization's services?
- For a small business, has foot traffic increased in the business's physical space, or has the business's web traffic increased?

Attend an organization meeting - Get out of the library, attend a meeting of a participating organization, and listen for feedback. If possible, review their information online with them. Do they understand the benefits? Do they see this working for their organization? Do they have suggestions for change? How can the library and the organization work together? For information about "embedding" librarians in the community, see "Community Reference: Making Libraries Indispensable in a New Way," *American Libraries*, posted 06/13/2012.

<http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/features/06132012/community-reference-making-libraries-indispensable-new-way>

Surveys - You can post a series of single-question surveys on the library web site aimed at organization representatives who edit their organization information in PAC, and PAC users searching for community information. For samples, see "[Appendix A: Sample Online Surveys](#)" on page 14. You might also consider comment cards at the library, and alternative means for sending comments such as a hot line or library e-mail address.

Quick Metrics for Quantitative Assessment

Here are some suggested outcomes for quantitative assessment. Remember that these are only suggestions. Your library may need to change the wording or create its own assessment outcomes so that they tie to your specific goals.

Outcome 1: [X - goal number] of community organizations participate in the first year and the number increases by [X]% in the second year

Methods and Tools - Count the number of community profile records entered and saved in the Polaris database. These can be recorded manually as they are created, or tallied periodically with the Polaris Find Tool (see below).

Timeline - In the Polaris Find Tool, do a count-only search for community records each month and record the number. Do the same for the second year, and compare.

Reporting

- Internal reports to library staff, administration, and board
- Annual performance reports
- Direct e-mail or print communication to participating organizations (may encourage more use)
- Library newsletter (may encourage more use)
- Information on library web site (may encourage more use)
- Part of press release (may encourage more use)

Outcome 2: The total number of clicks on promoted profile pages/events is [X] during first year, and increases [X]% in the second year.

Methods and Tools - Polaris supports Google™ Analytics, a free tool from Google that will allow you to see statistics regarding exactly which promotions are being clicked and how many times. To enable this feature, set the Polaris Administration PowerPAC profile **PowerPAC Analytics**. Alternatively, you can use your own JavaScript for site analysis. For more information on Polaris and Google analytics, see the 2009 PUG presentation “Using Google Analytics for PAC Statistics,” “Analyzing PowerPAC Use” in the *Polaris Public Access Administration Guide*, or the equivalent topic in staff client online Help.

Timeline - Record first-year statistics month by month, do the same for the second year, and compare.

Reporting

- Internal reports to library staff, administration, and board
- Annual performance reports
- Direct e-mail or print communication to participating organizations (may encourage more use)
- Library newsletter (may encourage more use)
- Information on library web site (may encourage more use)
- Part of press release (may encourage more use)

Outcome 3: The total number of visits to Community Profiles pages is [X] during first year, and increases [X]% in the second year.

Methods and Tools - Google™ Analytics (see Outcome 2 above).

Timeline - Record first-year statistics month by month, do the same for the second year, and compare.

Reporting

- Internal reports to library staff, administration, and board
- Annual performance reports
- Direct e-mail or print communication to participating organizations (may encourage more use)
- Library newsletter (may encourage more use)
- Information on library web site (may encourage more use)
- Part of press release (may encourage more use)

Outcome 4: The total number of PAC community information catalog searches is [X] during the first year and increases [X]% in the second year.

Methods and Tools - PowerPAC community information search statistics are available for logging and reporting. For details, see “Community Information Search Statistics” in the *Polaris Community Profiles Guide*, “Collecting Transaction Statistics” in the *Polaris Administration Guide*, or the equivalent topics in staff client online Help.

Timeline - Record first-year statistics month by month, do the same for the second year, and compare.

Reporting

- Internal reports to library staff, administration, and board
- Annual performance reports
- Direct e-mail or print communication to participating organizations (may encourage more use)
- Library newsletter (may encourage more use)
- Information on library web site (may encourage more use)
- Part of press release (may encourage more use)

Outcome 5: Attendance at community events hosted by participating organizations increases [X]% during 1st year

Methods and Tools - Participating organizations can take note of their attendance anecdotally; for organizations that collect event attendance numbers, the library can solicit them for attendance trends or the data itself. Collect these statistics with a quick feedback survey that includes questions covering the impact of the Community Profiles on community participation, including numbers in attendance at events hosted by the organizations since joining the program, and whether they think the program is having a positive impact. Alternatively, collect the information by phone or e-mail.

Timeline - Collect end-of-year feedback from participating organizations.

Reporting

- Internal reports to library staff, administration, and board
- Recruitment communications to community organizations
- Follow-up communication to participating organizations
- Library newsletter (may encourage more use)
- Part of press release (may encourage more use)
- Information on library web site (may encourage more use)

Outcome 6: The number of volunteers or funding for participating non-profit organizations increases during the first year

Methods and Tools - Similar to Outcome 5, above.

Timeline - Similar to Outcome 5, above.

Reporting - Similar to Outcome 5, above.

Outcome 7: Customer flow at participating small businesses increases during the first year

Methods and Tools - Similar to Outcome 5, above.

Timeline - Similar to Outcome 5, above.

Reporting - Similar to Outcome 5, above.

Resources



Community information in Polaris PowerPAC - For an example, go to the Polaris PowerPAC demonstration web site at <http://pls-demoapp.gisinfosystems.com/Polaris>. Select **Community** and search for **cycling**. In the brief search results, you'll see entries for Polaris Cycling Club and related events. Click **Polaris Cycling Club** to see the sample full display for this organization.

Online recruitment example - For a sample page inviting community organizations to participate, go to http://pls-demoapp.polarislibrary.com/polaris/custom/redrock/pages/promote_your_org.aspx

Sample online application - You can offer an online application form for community organizations. The library then reviews the application, and if it is approved, creates a record for the organization in the Polaris staff client. For a sample form, go to http://pls-demoapp.polarislibrary.com/polaris/custom/redrock/pages/profile_application.aspx

Setting up and maintaining Community Profiles in Polaris - See the *Polaris Community Profiles Guide*, available at www.polaristown.com (select **Documentation, Polaris 4.1**). This guide covers Polaris staff client procedures as well as step-by-step information that you can distribute to organization representatives who will use Polaris PowerPAC to manage their organization's information and events.

Librarians in the community - See Galston, C., Kelsen Huber, E., Johnson, K., & Long, A. "Community Reference: Making Libraries Indispensable in a New Way," *American Libraries*, posted 06/13/2012. <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/features/06132012/community-reference-making-libraries-indispensable-new-way>

Appendix A: Sample Online Surveys



Consider placing quick survey links on your library home page, or sending out one to two-question e-mail surveys (think Netflix). Some possible questions to include are listed below:

Sample Questions for Organization Representatives

- How frequently do you edit your organization's profile?
 - o Often (at least once a week)
 - o Occasionally (once a month or more)
 - o Rarely (less than 10 times a year)
 - o Never (less than twice a year)
 - o No comment
 - o This is my first or second time

- What changes do you typically make to your organization's information? (Check all that apply)
 - o Change my organization's basic profile (name, logo, address or contact information, location, schedule, description)
 - o Change my organization's background information ("more info")
 - o Add an event
 - o Share a title list
 - o Add social media features (Facebook Like button, links to Facebook, etc.)
 - o Add web links
 - o Edit Services information
 - o Add Subject entries to help people find my organization information
 - o Use ContentXChange to add features to my organization's web site
 - o Set up an organization page so people can find my organization when they search the web
 - o Don't typically make changes

- Is it easy to edit your organization's information using the library catalog?
 - o Yes
 - o No

- If you answered No, please explain.
[Insert Comment Box Here]

- What is the most valuable aspect of your collaboration with the library?
[Insert Comment Box Here]

- Please rate your overall experience with the Community Profiles program, from 5 (the best) to 1 (the worst):
 - o 5
 - o 4
 - o 3
 - o 2
 - o 1

- How would you like to see the Community Profiles program improved?
[Insert Comment Box Here]

- How frequently do you visit the physical library?
 - o Often (at least once a week)
 - o Occasionally (once a month or more)
 - o Rarely (less than 10 times a year)
 - o Never (less than twice a year)

- How frequently do you visit the library web site or online catalog?
 - o Often (at least once a week)
 - o Occasionally (once a month or more)
 - o Rarely (less than 10 times a year)
 - o Never (less than twice a year)

Sample Questions for Community Information Searchers

- Did you know that you can search for information about the community using the library catalog?
 - o Yes
 - o No

- What kind of community information is most useful to you?
 - o Local community events
 - o Local clubs, groups
 - o Services offered in our community
 - o Information on local small businesses
 - o I'm interested in all kinds of community information
 - o Other

- Are you typically able to find the community information you are looking for?
 - o Yes
 - o No

- If you did not find the community information you were looking for, please explain.
[Insert Comment Box Here]

- Was it easy to search for community information and navigate the results?
 - o Yes
 - o No

- If you answered No, please explain the difficulties in a few short sentences.
[Insert Comment Box Here]

- How frequently do you search the library catalog for community information?
 - o Often (at least once a week)
 - o Occasionally (once a month or more)
 - o Rarely (less than 10 times a year)
 - o Never (less than twice a year)
 - o This is my first visit or second visit

- What is the best thing about being able to find community information in the library catalog?

[Insert Comment Box Here]

- How can we improve your ability to find community information at the library?

[Insert Comment Box Here]

- Please rate your experience with searching for community information in the library catalog, from 5 (the best) to 1 (the worst):
 - o 5
 - o 4
 - o 3
 - o 2
 - o 1

- Any last comments on this program? How would you like to see this program improved?

[Insert Comment Box Here]

- How frequently do you visit the physical library?
 - o Often (at least once a week)
 - o Occasionally (once a month or more)
 - o Rarely (less than 10 times a year)
 - o Never (less than twice a year)

- How frequently do you visit the library web site or online catalog?
 - o Often (at least once a week)
 - o Occasionally (once a month or more)
 - o Rarely (less than 10 times a year)
 - o Never (less than twice a year)

Appendix B: Quick Help for Community Information Searches



The following information is taken from the Polaris PowerPAC help page. You can adapt the information for a reference card at library public-access workstations. The same information is displayed when the PAC user clicks the help link on the community information search page.

Community Library (Cobleskill)

LIBRARY INFO ▾ SEARCH ▾ COMMUNITY ▾ MY ACCOUNT ▾ HELP ▾

Search my community for:

Search by: Any Field Limit by: All types

Need help searching? [Click here for tips and instructions](#)

Searching for Community Information

Your library catalog may include profile information about community organizations, events, and services, and you can search for community information just as you search for books and other materials.

Do a community keyword search

A community keyword search looks in the community profiles database for matches to your word or words (in any order).

1. Click **Community Keyword** on the **Community** menu.
2. Type the text to search for in the **Search my community for** box.
You can type a part of a word and use a wildcard character. The wildcard character asterisk (*) represents the rest of the word. For example, if you type **boy***, you might find **boy scouts** and **boys and girls clubs**.
3. Select a search field from the **Search by** list:
 - **Any Field** - All the community profile information fields
 - **Organization Name**
 - **Event Name**
 - **Services**
 - **Address and contact person**
 - **Postal code**
 - **Subject**
 - **Notes**
4. To limit your search, click an option in the **Limit by** list. For example, you may be able to limit your search to events or people.

5. Click **Go**. The search results list shows all the community organizations and events that matched your search. You can hover the cursor over the community icon to see more information, or click the record name to see more details.

Related Information

Map It - When you click an organization or event in your search results, the detailed information may include a Map It option. Click this option to see a map showing the location of the organization or event.

Do a community browse search

You can browse a community information index for items of interest. For example, you can type just the first few letters of an organization's name and then browse the organization index.

1. Click **Community Browse** on the **Community** menu.
2. Select an index to browse in the **Browse search for** box (**Organization Name, Event Name, Services, Subject**).
3. Type a word or the first few letters of the word in the **that begins with** box.
4. Click **Go**.

The results list displays the index headings. Click **<<Previous 10 Listings** or **Next 10 Listings>>** to browse through the index.

5. Click a heading to see the organizations and events connected with the heading. To return to the headings list, click **Return to list** at the top of the page.