

# Modernizing the library experience at Rochester Hills Public Library

## Modern library transformation with Polaris and the Vega LX platform

Rochester Hills Public Library (RHPL) has taken a deliberate, long-term approach to modernizing both staff workflows and the patron experience. By combining Polaris ILS with the Vega LX, and extending this foundation through cloud, AI, and security innovation, the library has created a highly integrated, flexible, and future-ready environment.

What distinguishes RHPL is not the adoption of a single product, but a holistic transformation strategy, one that prioritizes:

- Security and infrastructure resilience
- Seamless, unified user experiences
- Staff efficiency and innovation
- Ongoing collaboration with Clarivate and the broader library community

RHPL is a leading example of how libraries can evolve beyond traditional systems to deliver modern, connected services.

**“We’ve been with Polaris for a long time,  
and we’re very passionate about how we use it...  
The implementation teams, the support teams,  
the security teams — those are the secret sauce.”**

**Derek Brown**, Director of Information Technology at Rochester Hills Public Library.

## From fragmented systems to a unified ecosystem

Like many libraries, RHPL initially faced a fragmented digital environment where different systems powered the catalog, website, patron communication, and internal workflows. The goal was clear: create a **consistent, seamless experience across every patron touchpoint**.

To achieve this, the library built its strategy around:

- Polaris ILS as the operational backbone
- Vega LX modules to unify discovery, engagement, and communication
- A broader cloud-first infrastructure to support scalability and security

By aligning these systems, RHPL moved toward a **connected ecosystem**, reducing complexity for both staff and patrons while enabling continuous improvement.

## Strengthening operations with Polaris

Polaris has remained a foundational system for RHPL, supporting core operations while enabling new layers of innovation.

The library’s approach goes beyond standard usage:

- Leveraging Polaris web client for simplified, web-based staff workflows
- Building extensions that connect Polaris data directly into new workflows, including email and AI-driven tools

By embedding Polaris into a broader ecosystem, RHPL has ensured that operational tasks remain efficient while enabling new capabilities without disrupting core workflows.

## Enhancing discovery and engagement with Vega LX

A key part of RHPL’s transformation has been the adoption and expansion of the Vega LX platform, particularly in discovery and patron-facing experiences.

The library used Vega Discover not only as a tool, but as a foundation for customization and innovation:

- Development of their **Kids Catalog**, tailored for early literacy and youth engagement
- Exploration of non-traditional collections, such as toolkits and local resources, through curated discovery experiences
- Continuous user testing and feedback loops to refine the experience

This approach enabled RHPL to move beyond a traditional catalog toward a dynamic discovery environment aligned with community needs.

“We didn’t want to go to another vendor — we wanted it tied to ours... now we’re finally getting it into our Vega LX ecosystem.” Derek Brown.

The result is a system where discovery:

- Reflects local priorities and collections
- Supports targeted browsing and engagement
- Evolves based on real user behavior



**“Moving to hosted infrastructure helped with uptime, security, and protecting patron data.”**

Derek Brown

## Driving innovation through extensibility and AI

RHPL has extended its platform through a strong focus on practical, staff-driven innovation. One key area has been the use of AI to improve staff productivity:

- Deployment of a secure, local AI environment
- Integration of internal policies, procedures, and documentation for instant retrieval
- Development of tools to assist with Polaris SQL queries, reducing technical barriers for staff

### **This enables staff to:**

- Access information instantly without searching multiple systems
- Automate complex tasks
- Reduce reliance on manual processes

At the same time, RHPL is actively building new features and capabilities directly within the Vega environment.

“We’re building applications using AI coding agents — even inside Vega LX.” Derek Brown.

This demonstrates the flexibility of the platform as not just a product suite, but a development environment for ongoing innovation.

## Security-first, cloud-driven transformation

Security has been a central driver of RHPL’s transformation strategy. Rather than treating security as a single initiative, the library adopted a multi-layered, long-term approach, including:

- Migration to hosted infrastructure managed by Clarivate
- Implementation of multi-factor authentication and identity protection
- Transition to a cloud-first architecture integrated with Google

This strategy reflects both operational needs and evolving threats across the library landscape.

By shifting away from self-hosted environments and consolidating infrastructure under a secure, managed platform, RHPL significantly reduced risk while improving system reliability.

## Accelerating implementation with strong partnership

A recurring theme throughout RHPL’s experience is the importance of collaboration with Clarivate teams.

From implementation to ongoing development, the library emphasizes:

- Fast, responsive deployment processes
- Close collaboration during product development
- A strong sense of shared ownership

This level of responsiveness enables RHPL to:

- Adopt new capabilities quickly
- Experiment with new ideas
- Continuously improve services without disruption

**“The Vega Interact  
implementation was  
one of the easiest  
launches we’ve ever  
done — we went  
from build to testing  
to deployment  
in 48 hours.”**

Derek Brown

## Outcomes and strategic impact

By aligning Polaris, Vega LX, cloud infrastructure, and innovation, RHPL has achieved:

### For patrons

- More intuitive, engaging discovery experiences
- Consistent interactions across catalog, website, and communications
- Easier access to both traditional and non-traditional collections

### For staff

- Simplified workflows through integrated systems
- Faster access to information via AI tools
- Reduced training complexity with web-based interfaces

### For the Library

Stronger security posture and reduced operational risk

- Faster implementation and adoption of new technologies
- A scalable foundation for future innovation

## A model for modern library transformation

Rochester Hills Public Library demonstrates that meaningful transformation is not about adopting a single system, but about rethinking how systems work together.

By combining the operational strength of Polaris and the flexibility of Vega LX, a cloud-first, security-driven infrastructure and a culture of innovation and collaboration — RHPL has created a model for libraries looking to modernize in a practical, sustainable way.

“It truly is a partnership — not just, ‘We pay for a product and that’s what you get.’” Derek Brown.

This partnership-driven approach, supported by continuous development, strong customer collaboration, and shared innovation, positions Rochester Hills Public Library to adapt and evolve alongside the needs of its community.

## One powerful platform.

Explore the Vega LX experience today.

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