

Delivering and Improving Library Services with Vubis Smart



Library Overview

Croydon College, located in Greater London, UK, has approximately 25,000 students ranging from 14-16 year olds, who come to the college to study vocational courses that their schools cannot offer, through general 16-19 "Further" education students, to those studying on Degree and Post-Graduate courses. The college library is tasked with ensuring delivery of a high quality, and personalized, service to this diverse range of learners.

The college is the largest provider of Further Education and the sole provider of Higher Education in the London Borough of Croydon.

The college library has around 60,000 items in stock including nearly 5,000 audio-visual items and 250 journal subscriptions. In addition the library subscribes to over 50 on-line resources of which several of the key ones are searchable

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through the catalogue using Infor's V-spaces federated search software.

The college can trace its roots back to the creation of a school of art in 1868 and has always had a strong focus on the arts. A significant proportion of the university level courses are in art, design, theatre and the visual arts. Consequently the library has a large art collection which accounts for over a sixth of the entire book stock. Previous students of the college have included David Bowie and fashion designer John Rocha.

The library implemented a full self-service system at the end of July 2008, and will move to RFID as part of a new library, due to open in 2010.

The Need for Scalability, Analysis, Self-Service and a Robust Workflow

In the beginning of 2008 the college opened a new campus. The time-frame from initial planning to the opening of the campus was less than 4 months. The library from its side had only five weeks notice that a new library location had to be opened.

With the tight time-frame, Infor's integrated library system, Vubis Smart, would be put to test. The system had to easily accommodate an additional location in virtually no-time.

Another important need that had always been a requirement for the library was detailed analysis of transactions in the system. Having knowledge about system usage, both from a staff and end-user perspective, is key as the library continuously seeks to improve services.

For students, of course, self-service was a major need. The library implemented AquaBrowser™ in 2006 as the catalogue front-end. Yet, providing students the ability to easily manage their own

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accounts, for example, remained an imperative requirement.

For staff, finally, the system had to offer improved workflows. Eliminating redundancy and saving time are of major importance to improving the efficiency of library operations.

Quality Service First

The opening of a new library location necessitated quick action on part of Infor's Professional Services Team. Vubis Smart had to accommodate new parameters and be up and running from day one.

Says Thomas Butler, Library Operations Manager for Croydon College Library: "The team at Infor was able, very quickly, to change our system over to create the second site and to set up all the parameters to be able to transfer stock between sites.

From putting the initial request into Infor the new library was up and running, on the system at least, within a couple of hours and we were able to make the very tight timeframe of opening the new library with all the stock on the shelves at the right location."

It's About Knowledge, Staff Workflow and Student Needs

Thomas Butler continues:

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statistics that previously wouldn't have been available.

We can now produce quarterly audits of our holdings, which have proved to be useful not only with auditors but also with inspectors from the various funding bodies.

The system can automate the reports to run overnight and consequently when I log onto my PC in the morning I have a full report on the previous days transactions, number of loans, number of reservations, online transactions, times of transactions etc.

This has enabled us to demonstrate continued and significant improvements to the service. The launch of Aquabrowser created an over 400% increase in online usage, figures that were quickly extracted from the SSP functionality in Vubis Smart.

The system is very good at keeping a traceable history of transactions. This is useful when a team member has a query and can be used as a training aid.

When the same type of error occurs regularly we can check to see if it is a general issue that many

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staff are making, or a training issue with an individual team member.

The ability to produce receipts for returns and renewals of items from the system has dramatically reduced the number of claims returned and disputed returns that we previously had.

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The ability to assign access rights on a person by person basis has ensured full accountability of team members actions and makes sure that mistakes aren't made by someone accessing a part of the system they shouldn't be.

Since 2006 we have been using Aquabrowser as our front end, with Vubis Smart running in the background. However, even before this the in-built Web-OPAC was easy to use and clear, which students and lecturers found beneficial.

The on-line account management functions have helped to reduce the pressure of work on front-line staff. During the final term of the 2007/8 academic year our on-line reservation requests accounted for over 50% of all requests for the first time.

In trials the "users who borrowed this also borrowed..." function of the Web OPAC proved to be very popular and this is something that we would like to bring through into Aquabrowser as well."

