



“With WorldCat Local, we’re able to do more searching and less explaining with our patrons”

WorldCat Local “quick start” helps university library better connect with students and faculty

Situation

Briar Cliff University is located at the edge of downtown Sioux City, Iowa, where Nebraska, South Dakota and Iowa meet. Originally a women’s college founded by the Sisters of Saint Francis in 1930, the university is now co-educational with more than 1,150 students from 29 states and 11 other countries. Students are educated in the Franciscan tradition of excellence in the liberal arts and career preparation that emphasizes care, compassion and service.

Getting the right library resources to those students, though, had become complicated and frustrating. According to Sara Thompson, Reference & Instruction Librarian at Briar Cliff’s Bishop Mueller Library, “Our previous OPAC did not have the functionality or user experience that we wanted for our patrons. And the configuration also required time-consuming staff training.”

Solution

In the summer of 2009, Briar Cliff’s library had the goal of getting an improved OPAC into place in time for the fall semester. It’s a critical time of year for the library, and staff wanted a solution that would improve the search and discovery experience for students and faculty. One, though, that wouldn’t overwhelm staff with set-up requirements.

The library chose WorldCat® Local “quick start,” Sara says, because it offered, “...a much more intuitive search interface with extras like Google Preview, reviews, tagging and citations.”

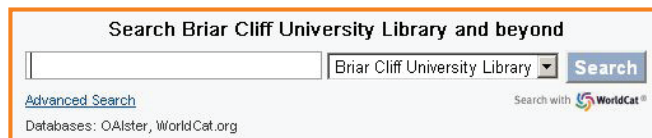
She explains that configuration was easy. “It took a week, at most, for us to go live with WorldCat Local. The configuration tools are so easy to use, we find ourselves continuing to tweak the settings—this kind of experimentation is far more difficult with our existing OPAC.”

Results

With a small staff, Briar Cliff’s Bishop Mueller Library was able to do training for the new service in one conference room, all at the same time. Running comparative searches against their previous service, the staff found that WorldCat Local “quick start” provided much better relevancy rankings, and

AT A GLANCE

- Briar Cliff University is a private, Catholic Franciscan institution in Sioux City, Iowa.
- The library serves more than 1,150 students across 40+ areas of study.
- The library was most recently renovated in 1993, and is a member of the Sioux City Library Cooperative and the Iowa Open Access program.
- Visit Briar Cliff online at www.briarcliff.edu



“If anyone at your institution is skeptical about using WorldCat Local, just sign up for ‘quick start’ and show them the WorldCat interface beside your current OPAC.”

*Sara Thompson, Reference & Instruction Librarian
Briar Cliff University’s Bishop Mueller Library*

was better at finding related materials using tools like lists, tags and reviews.

Sara concludes, “Our students are actually saying ‘Cool!’ during library instruction sessions—especially when we show them how easy it is to get APA or MLA citations for any item directly from an item’s record page.

“WorldCat Local has also made our instruction sessions dynamic and better equipped to explain both searching and evaluating sources. Students and I look at reviews from Amazon and GoodReads, user-created lists, and then go directly inside the book with Google Preview to see if it has a bibliography section. All in one fell swoop, I’m able to give them several information literacy lessons.”