

WorldCat Local provides a branded, more intuitive interface for students

Tired of their outdated OPAC, the CSB/SJU Libraries needed a modern, economical discovery tool

Situation

The College of Saint Benedict, for women, and Saint John's University, for men, are nationally recognized Catholic liberal arts colleges and ranked as two of the top three Catholic colleges in the nation. They share one academic program, and students attend classes together on both campuses.

Staff at the university's CSB/SJU Libraries were fielding more and more complaints about the usability of their ILS's outdated OPAC. Students were coming to the table with expectations of what a modern search experience should be like, and the existing software was not making the grade.

"For us, the move was largely a response to deficiencies in our ILS that were creating problems for our users," explains David Wuolu, Science Librarian at CSB/SJU Libraries.

Solution

Library Director Kathy Parker created an ILS task force that looked at the future of its systems and concluded that switching the entire ILS wasn't going to be feasible. "We realized we could solve many of our problems by going with an economical discovery tool, such as WorldCat® Local," Wuolu said. "Our goal was to create a better user experience for our students, more in line with what their expectations would be."

After a configuration period of about two months, the staff rolled out WorldCat Local with e-mail notifications, presentations in meetings, through their weekly newsletter and in one-on-one sessions. During that time, Wuolu emphasized that the change was being made not because librarians wanted WorldCat Local, but because it was a discovery interface designed for users.

AT A GLANCE

The libraries for the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University needed:

- A discovery experience that improved significantly on that provided by their outdated OPAC;
- An intuitive search experience similar to those that students experience on the Web every day;
- Cost-effective options;
- Fast, easy implementation;
- A service that would work with their current ILS.

"In many ways, WorldCat Local is becoming a Google-type interface to quality information resources."

David Wuolu, Science Librarian, CSB/SJU Libraries

Results

Requests for books through interlibrary loan have increased and user satisfaction has risen dramatically. Wuolu describes the result this way: "We want our service to 'just work,' much like when you turn on a faucet, you expect water to come out. It should be the same with looking for information—it should feel natural and intuitive, and not present any hardships or barriers to successful exploration of resources."

"Your users will probably be going to WorldCat® for research even before you implement WorldCat Local," he continues. "With WorldCat Local, though, you can brand the service, integrate it with your ILS, enhance and customize the experience to make it even better."

For more information about WorldCat Local, please visit www.oclc.org/worldcatlocal/ or contact OCLC® at libservices@oclc.org. To download the WorldCat Local brochure, please visit www.oclc.org/services/brochures.