

Campus initiative poses multilanguage challenge for university library

OCLC Custom Cataloging service processes new language materials in a hurry to meet curriculum and budget requirements



Situation

In Knoxville, Tennessee, you'll find the nation's largest college football stadium. It seats more than 105,000 on game day. But not far away is another campus icon. One that's even older than Neyland Stadium, and it houses more than 3 million every day of the week. Three million titles that is. It's the University of Tennessee main library, and it's been a campus fixture since 1911.

In 2006, the library faced one of its biggest challenges to date. The university administrators announced a five-year plan to better prepare the student body for the ever-shrinking world community. The initiative, "Ready for the World," sought to globalize the curriculum. The library's role would be to support the effort with new non-English language materials. So, it was given a one-time budget and instructed to start adding materials. Only thing was the non-English language materials they would be adding were in languages that no library staff understood. "It's a broad list of languages we're supporting," says Deborah Thomas, Technical Services Librarian.

Solution

Thomas considered a cataloging service to help. Though she had examined this option for past projects, she had never used a third party to catalog library materials. "This was new to us," she says. She was concerned about quality of the records, how the process would run and how easy it would be to work with an outside group. "And on top of that, we had a short time to get the work accomplished." The project received the go-ahead in the spring of 2006, but it had to be finished by July 1, the end of the library's fiscal year.

AT A GLANCE

- Services more than 26,000 students and 1,350 faculty
- Supports 110 undergraduate and 79 graduate programs
- 3 million library volumes, periodicals, computer resources
- Among top U.S. libraries in Chronicle of Higher Education rankings

"What appealed to us were all the languages OCLC could catalog in."

OCLC Custom Cataloging was one of the options Thomas reviewed, and the closer she examined the service, the more she liked it. "What appealed to us were all the languages OCLC could catalog in," says Thomas. "We had a good back and forth about the project, and they thoroughly explained all of our options." So when decision time came, the clear choice was OCLC.

Results

More than 200 titles had to be cataloged in a very short time, and the mix of materials included books, DVDs, CDs and VHS tapes. The materials were also in several languages: German, French, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese and Spanish to name a few. "We were worried about making the deadline," admits Thomas, but to her pleasant surprise, everything was accomplished by July 1.

Campus initiative poses multilanguage challenge for university library

Continued



She was also delighted in the quality of the bibliographic records and the special requests OCLC supported. For example, says Thomas, “We knew we’d have challenges with the non-Roman languages, so we asked them to write the record number on the back of the title page. And they did so with no problems.”

“OCLC was easy to work with, and they were more than accommodating to our needs,” adds Thomas. “They really helped us handle this new initiative, especially with a very fast turnaround.”

So pleased is Thomas that she’s ready for the next project to begin. “We’re now talking to OCLC about cataloging 166 Arabic audio CDs to support a new musicology course, Music and Culture of the Arab-speaking World.”

For more information about Custom Cataloging, visit www.oclc.org/customcataloging/, call 1-800-848-5878 or send e-mail to libservices@oclc.org.