

A small specialty library discovers how to increase the value of its collections

WorldCat brings their collection to more users faster

Situation

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) library has a mission of preserving the story of Wisconsin veterans. Having collected materials dating back more than 100 years, they wanted to bring their collection to a broader national audience.

The WVM Research Center owns a 20,000 volume library collection with material dating back to the Civil War. The archival collection consists of the personal papers of Wisconsin service men and women and the records of veterans' organizations. The WVM is home to one of the world's largest collections of military related-periodicals with more than 1,500 titles. They have nearly 1,000 oral history interviews with veterans (from WWI to the present conflict).

Conveniently located in a university city, the library sought to attract those doing scholarly research and more broadly to reach national military history researchers. The ability to display call numbers was something library staff had long advocated. Call numbers were displayed in their local cataloging system, but did not provide timely control over their new and existing materials.

Solution

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum has been cataloging published materials for some time. In 2000, with the hiring of its first professional archivist their cataloging was expanded to include manuscript, oral history, and periodical collections. The decision to move to WorldCat was made for two main reasons. First, the library needed to establish internal control over their holdings. Second, the WVM library has many unique items and they sought the exposure WorldCat would provide for these items.

AT A GLANCE

Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM), Madison, Wisconsin
<http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/>

- An educational activity of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
- Serves approximately 100,000 visitors annually from educational outreach to archival preservation
- 20,000 volumes of published material dating back to the Civil War
- Nearly 1,000 oral history interviews

“When users look for materials, they first see those available in our museum library. It’s a great way to increase visibility.”

WorldCat updates holdings records daily. With its advanced searching capabilities, WorldCat saves time locating an item in the library's collection. WVM library staff discovered that the features and functionality of WorldCat would serve their cataloging needs bringing their collection to more users faster.

Results

WorldCat is ideal for a smaller library like the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, or a larger library. It means that staff time and resources are not being devoted to creating and maintaining their own library catalog. Whether a collection is small or large, WorldCat helps fill in the gaps by drawing on the collections of other libraries. “When users look for materials, they first see those available in our museum library. It’s a great way to increase visibility,” says Abbie Norderhaug, Reference Archivist at the WVM.

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WVM also uses WorldCat for interlibrary loan through FirstSearch which has expanded the use of the library's collection. WorldCat records are enriched with descriptive information and have library holdings information attached. Users quickly evaluate relevance, decide if it's the correct resource and see where they can access it. For WVM, their periodical collection has become much more widely used since people who research veteran and military history know they can request photocopies of the materials. For the WVM library, WorldCat has become their primary catalog for all new and existing collection materials.

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