

Connexion client functionality speeds catalogers' work

Columbus Metropolitan Library users gain quick access to new acquisitions



Situation

Efficiency is key to the success of a busy metropolitan library system like the Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML). In 2004, its users borrowed more than 16 million items from its main and branch locations.

All of that activity means a lot of work for the cataloging staff of four professionals and eight paraprofessionals at CML's Operations Center.

The cataloging team had used OCLC's Passport software for a long time—and they relied heavily on the macros they had created in Passport to automate some of their routine cataloging tasks. According to Jeff Patrick, Support Services Library Technical Assistant, they knew they'd eventually have to migrate to OCLC's new cataloging platform, but they wanted to wait until the platform accommodated macros.

Solution

In 2002 OCLC introduced a browser version of its Connexion platform. CML considered migrating then and even looked at the browser's functionality. **“But the ability to create our own macros was really important to our cataloging staff,”** says Patrick, “so we waited to migrate until May of 2004 when the client version was available.”

Preparation at the library helped ensure a smooth migration, according to Patrick. “Prior to our official migration, we worked closely with a staff member in our Information Systems department to ensure a smooth transition.” The library conducted several tests to ensure that records would export successfully to the library's local system. “All staff in our cataloging department participated in the test,” explains Patrick, “which also allowed everyone

AT A GLANCE

Columbus Metropolitan Library Columbus, Ohio

- Serves a population of nearly 815,000 in the greater Columbus area
- Library system includes a main library, an Outreach Services Division and 20 branches located across Franklin County, in Central Ohio

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to get a degree of hands-on experience in using the Connexion client.”

A variety of training experiences also helped the staff gain confidence with the Connexion client software. Three CML staff took training offered by OHIONET, the OCLC regional service provider that serves Ohio libraries, and use the client for live cataloging to gain experience.

“We then put together two internal training sessions based on the OHIONET training, our actual experience and the Connexion tutorial for the rest of our cataloging staff and our materials acquisitions staff,” says Patrick. “We also invited our colleagues from our local partner libraries, Worthington Public Library and Southwest Public Libraries, to join our internal training.”

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Results

With a collection of over 3 million items and more than 8.2 million library visits in 2004, having new acquisitions available for library users promptly is very important at CML. In early 2004, Patrick Losinski, CML Executive Director, asked the entire technical services team to strive for 48-hour turnaround for materials they process. And according to Jeff Patrick, Connexion helps his cataloging team achieve that goal consistently. “The introduction of the Connexion client was perfect timing for us,” he notes. “Connexion has functionality, such as controlling headings, that allows us to do our work faster and more accurately,” he says. “This helps us put materials in our users’ hands that much sooner, with the best possible records to match.”

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For more information about Connexion,
visit www.oclc.org/connexion/, call 1-800-848-5878,
ext. 6251 or send e-mail to **libservices@oclc.org**.