

CASE STUDY: University of Warwick

Raising the profile of library collections through CONTENTdm

The University of Warwick is one of the UK's leading universities, with an acknowledged reputation for excellence in research and teaching for innovation and for links with business and industry.

The university serves 16,647 students from one main and three satellite libraries.

Situation

The University of Warwick's Marandet collection of late 18th and early 19th century French plays, is a unique resource and one of the most significant collections of its kind in the country. The whole collection comprises over 4000 French language plays covering the period 1700 to 1900.

The University decided that this unique material, some of which is not even available digitally from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, needed to be digitised in order to preserve, improve usability and widen access to create a truly international collection.

Solution

After an assessment of four digital collection management solutions on the market, the University chose, and implemented, CONTENTdm. CONTENTdm is a complete solution for storing, managing and delivering a library's digital collections to the Web. Stuart Hunt, Data Services Manager at the University explains,

“We selected CONTENTdm for its versatility in the types of media that it could handle, the speed at which a collection could be built up and its value for money. Value for money was an important factor as it meant that the library could carry out more digitisation work within the budget we had without sacrificing functionality.”

The first batch of 18th century Revolutionary drama was digitised between November 2005 and January 2006. Text from the scanned images was re-keyed into text files and added to CONTENTdm compound objects in spring 2006, allowing the contents of the plays to be fully text-searchable.

Stuart continues,

“This full-text search access enabled a new kind of scholarship to be carried out on these texts. For instance an academic can now search the full text of the plays for a particular word of relevance to their research and find all instances within the scripts. They can also see the word as it appeared on the original manuscript as well as the ‘clean’ transcribed copy of all the text from that page. This had never been previously possible.”

Once all of the images and text files had been prepared and CONTENTdm was added to the library server, the collection building began. By October 2006 17,726 pages were built into 301 compound objects within CONTENTdm and available to view and use under the Revolutionary Drama Collection

AT A GLANCE

- Serving 16,647 students
- 1 main and 3 satellite libraries
- Marandet Collection of French plays
 - 339 French scripts from the Revolutionary dramas of French history
 - 123 French language plays from Empire period of French history
- CONTENTdm® selected as the preferred digital management solution



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Further funding was secured in 2006 and the library was able to digitise two further batches of materials over a two-year period.

The students played an active part in this second phase by selecting which plays they wanted to digitise, scripts from the French Empire Period, and uploading and building the Empire Period collection themselves under library supervision.

By 2007 the collection had been digitised and made available through CONTENTdm.

The library has also added the collection to WorldCat®, the world's most comprehensive bibliographic database with more than 100 million records, through CONTENTdm. Through WorldCat.org, WorldCat's online catalogue records and holdings information are discoverable by Web users globally, enabling Warwick University to share these collections with other libraries and make them more visible on the Web.

Result

Where once academics and researchers had to leaf through very old and fragile copies of the scripts, they now have online access to fully searchable digital copies. The collection has also become more widely accessible outside of the physical library.

To view The University of Warwick's collection visit:
<http://contentdm.warwick.ac.uk>

or for further details of the project visit:
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/french/marandet>

For more information on CONTENTdm visit
www.oclc.org or email uk@oclc.org.

Stuart continues,

***“CONTENTdm made it easy to quickly establish a digital presence for selected parts of our special collections. It is an essential tool in exposing our research collections in French Revolutionary and post-revolutionary drama. We are now able to provide full-text access to materials where previously this was not possible.*”**

To date, the digitised collection represents 10% of the entire collection. We see this as an on-going project that we will continue with until we complete digitising all of the material we want to cover.”