

# WorldShare® **Management Services** EZproxy® Hosted Service



## The University of Gloucestershire leads with learning analytics and shares insights

OCLC and the University of Gloucestershire have collaborated with Jisc to share WorldShare Management Services and EZproxy datasets to generate a valuable understanding of the library's impact on student learning.

## Prioritising student engagement

The University of Gloucestershire prides itself on the level of support it provides for its students. “We’ve always prioritised student support and retention,” said James Hodgkin, Associate Director of Library Technology and Information. “When Jisc started looking for pathfinder institutions for a UK learning analytics project, we were keen to get involved.”

The university’s strategic aims to increase student engagement and enhance personalised support fit very well with Jisc’s vision.

Jisc had been working with virtual learning environments and student record systems before turning its attention to library data. “We knew that adding library data to learning analytics would move us forward,” said Lee Baylis, Senior Analytics Innovator at Jisc, “but we needed to work out how best to access library system outputs and work with the data.”

## Partnering with OCLC and the Jisc learning analytics project

The University of Gloucestershire’s relationship with OCLC provided the crucial step forward. “We’d used some of OCLC’s products in the past,” James said, “and like other libraries, we’d looked at the e-resource usage data on EZproxy logs.” EZproxy hosted by OCLC provides access to detailed usage logs that help libraries understand how electronic resources are being used.

In July 2017, University of Gloucestershire implemented OCLC’s WorldShare Management Services (WMS). This provided a great opportunity to build learning analytics capabilities into a library management system from the ground up, in close collaboration with OCLC.

“Our relationship with OCLC grew,” said James, “and from the first project meeting in London, we saw how receptive they were to the idea of contributing library usage data to a scalable learning analytics hub.”



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### Lee Baylis

Senior Analytics Innovator,  
Jisc



OCLC set up weekly data feeds from WMS for circulation data and daily data feeds from the hosted EZproxy logs for e-resource usage data.

“By working with OCLC, we could understand the datasets, work out what we needed, and convert them into xAPI, a standard learning analytics format,” Lee said.

## Gaining learning insights from library analytics

The project has analysed user transactions involving both printed and electronic resources from the WMS and EZproxy datasets. “We’re also capturing contextual information, including details of the user session,” said Lee. “If they look at several resources in the same session, for example, we can build up a picture of that student’s engagement with the library.”

Integrating the data feed with the university’s student record system opens further insights. “With the user ID, we can now link to the student’s course and department,” said Lee. “So we can see how many students in a certain course accessed ScienceDirect, for example. The student record data that we hold is quite comprehensive, so we can even start to compare library resource usage across demographic groups.”

Ultimately, with a more granular picture of student engagement than qualitative student feedback can provide, the university will be in a stronger position to provide the right support and interventions for each student. And this gives the library an increased profile in terms of its impact on student success.

### LEARNING POINTS

- Library data can and should play a central role in understanding institution-wide learning trends.
- With EZproxy, libraries can analyse e-resource usage along with circulation data.
- Expanding analytics into areas such as gate entries and reading lists will generate important insights into the pedagogical value that the library delivers.



WMS gives universities the data they need to measure the library’s value quantitatively.



# Finding potential for library usage data in learning analytics

The project is now at a point where it can consider other sources of library data. This includes gate entries and reading lists. “We can map student behaviour to reading lists and identify which items the student has borrowed,” Lee said. “Alternatively, we can identify items that they didn’t borrow, which academics can use to refine their reading lists. We can also start to map the transition from prescribed reading to self-directed learning.”

An accurate picture of resource usage across printed and electronic resources will also provide an evidence base for collection management decisions.

James and Lee are increasing the profile of libraries in the emerging area of learning analytics. “It’s not universally accepted that all library usage data should be involved in learning analytics,” said Lee. “But we see library attendance and resource usage as fundamental indicators of student engagement. That’s why Jisc wanted to include library data from the start.”

## Sharing knowledge across UK higher education

“What we’ve done for the University of Gloucestershire, we’ll be able to extend to other OCLC members,” Lee said. “We’ve got the standard processes and data structures in place to process WMS and EZproxy data straight away.”

Collaboration with OCLC has given Jisc the momentum to open conversations with other library systems providers. “For a long time, we had no open door to any of the library vendors,” said Lee. “This was a real barrier, so when OCLC came on board and worked with us on the data and the standard plug-in, they really set the bar. Other vendors have since come forward, but it took OCLC to get that ball rolling. They are the real partners in this project,” James agreed. “They’ve been great partners so far at the University of Gloucestershire,” he added. “They’re very open to innovation and sharing ideas and working together really in a collaborative way. It’s been very positive from my point of view.”

### KEY OUTCOMES

- OCLC and the University of Gloucestershire collaborate with Jisc to develop standard plug-ins for a UK-wide learning analytics hub.
- Data from WMS and EZproxy deliver fresh insights into library resource usage and impact.
- The university enhances the personalised support it provides to students through the use of learning analytics.

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**Lee Baylis**

Senior Analytics  
Innovator,  
Jisc

WMS and EZproxy have allowed the University of Gloucestershire to form a more comprehensive understanding of how students engage with the library and what support they may need. By working closely with OCLC and Jisc, the University of Gloucestershire has taken a leading role in evaluating learning analytics and contributing library data to a national hub for the benefit of all UK libraries.

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