



How global is your

library?

SAE Institute, a global college focused on the digital arts, struggled to manage its libraries across 51 campuses in 25 countries. The library staff rarely talked between campuses. Some campuses used discovery interfaces that were confusing for SAE's students. Other campuses had no integrated library system at all, relying on spreadsheets to manage their libraries. Students couldn't view or access resources from other regions. Rather than working as a global library, the libraries were siloed and unable to effectively cooperate.

Globalising libraries and their services

"SAE was in search of a library systems solution that would help unlock its siloed information and human resources throughout the world," explained Christopher Paroz, Curator of Digital Resources at SAE Institute (oc.lc/sae). "It was critical to us that any solution would provide our users equity in accessing information and human resources irrespective of their geographical location. Implementing OCLC's suite of library products has allowed us to achieve this. Their systems have provided a platform upon which we have been able to globalise our library and its services."

OCLC (oclc.org) is the global library cooperative that connects the collections, labour, and communities of libraries around the world. More than 16,000 member institutions in 120 countries work together to contribute and share through OCLC. With WorldCat® (oc.lc/worldcat), the world's largest network of information about libraries, at its core, OCLC provides libraries with comprehensive insights into other libraries' collections and services.

SAE chose OCLC's WorldShare® Management Services (WMS, oc.lc/wms) to truly globalise its campus libraries. Christopher worked closely with librarians across all regions to determine the best solution. "Everyone agreed that OCLC was best positioned to meet the needs of our students, particularly WorldCat Discovery," he said. "We're essentially talking globalisation of the library as well as the system. WMS is the crux of that."

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Providing better service to both students and library staff

Implementing a global library system—migrating some libraries off older technology and introducing a system for the first time in others—can be stressful for staff. But Christopher said, “Everybody embraced the migration with a big hug, despite the amount of work.” He added, “When you’ve been pulling the cart up the hill on your own and suddenly a whole pack of horses comes along, you welcome it.” In the southern region, which includes Australia and New Zealand, Christopher said, “the first implementation commenced around mid-May. We were live by our September intake.” Although he didn’t have a circulation process documented before WMS went live here, his staff started work right away. “That’s a great example of how user-friendly an interface is, where you can sit there and brainstorm it and work it out in a couple of minutes,” he said.

Now that WMS is available in SAE’s libraries, students have had an easier time finding and accessing resources. This is not only because of WMS’s intuitive discovery interface, but also because they can now search their own campus, all SAE campuses, and libraries worldwide in one search. “Getting to an electronic resource through the new proxy is a lot simpler for them because we’re using a truly integrated system,” Christopher added.

Looking toward the future

“From our perspective,” Christopher said, “what we’re doing now is forward-thinking, modern, and it’s definitely developing important soft skills for the team. ... I’m literally a global librarian.” For the first time, staff members are talking regularly to each other to share best practices. “There are US librarians who know the skills of those in Australia and contact them directly. I encourage that. Leverage off those skills, and leverage off that knowledge. That’s what I hoped for, more unity within the team.” He added, “What WMS has essentially done is enable us to unlock skillsets across regions.”

“We’re all very positive and very refreshed, despite all the work we’ve done,” Christopher said, “about growing and moving forward, modernising the library, and making the most out of the resources now at our disposal. Doing the best we can with them.”



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