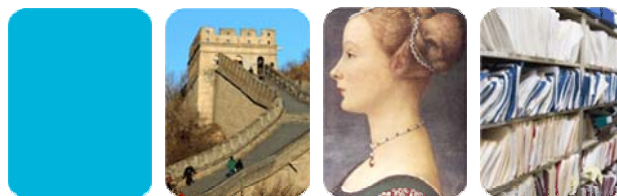


CASE STUDY



AccessCLE

Providing Access to Scholarly Articles at the Law Society of Upper Canada

The Law Society of Upper Canada governs legal-services providers in the public interest by ensuring that the people of Ontario are served by lawyers and paralegals who meet high standards of learning, competence, and professional conduct. In addition, the Society offers a variety of public services, promotes access to justice, and seeks to ensure that law and the practice of law are reflective of all the peoples of Ontario.

Challenge

With thousands of scholarly papers published through its continuing legal education programs, the Law Society of Upper Canada required a means of offering easy access to individual papers. Full-text searching in these unindexed publications was essential for enabling users to find and acquire individual articles.

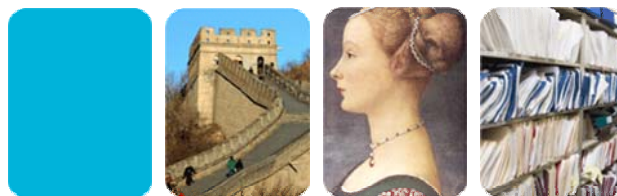
With a wealth of digitized scholarly materials that were available to users only as printouts, the Law Society of Upper Canada searched for a solution for cataloging and managing these documents and making them easy for researchers to find and purchase. In 2007, the Law Society recognized that the DigiTool® digital asset management system was the solution that they required.

As part of its continuing legal education (CLE) mandate, the Law Society publishes many thousands of scholarly documents that arise from its professional education programs. These documents are saved as PDF files and cataloged according to the title of the event or program. Previously, researchers could acquire a complete binder of a program, but not individual articles, and had no way of determining whether an article that was in the collection was relevant to their needs. Because each learning program can contain as many as 20 documents, the Law Society's primary requirement was to enable researchers to search for and purchase individual items.

Wanted: a full text search of scholarly articles

The Law Society thus sought a digital library solution that would provide easy access to individual articles—simple navigational features and a tool for searching the full text of items and metadata. The full-text search would go a long way to facilitate the discovery and purchase of program materials. “We wanted to make it as easy as possible for researchers to use our e-commerce site,” explains Olcay Atacan, head of technical services at the Law Society of Upper Canada.

CASE STUDY



Solution

Having selected the Voyager integrated library system (ILS) in 2003, the Law Society was keen to implement a digital access and management solution that could seamlessly integrate with its ILS. DigiTool—which enables users to browse through collections and to search the full text of articles—was the obvious choice.

Results

Articles from CLE programs dating back to 2004 are now available through AccessCLE, powered by DigiTool, with new papers added after each program takes place. Law Society members and non-members can easily download an individual article, or an entire “binder”, from a particular program. DigiTool smoothly blends with the Law Society’s e-commerce system, enabling users to purchase items efficiently 24 hours a day

By scanning the documents with optical character recognition (OCR) technology, the library rendered all the items decipherable for full-text searching. Librarians then coordinated the incorporation of each item into DigiTool and organized the items hierarchically in collections of archived programs dating back to 2004. Librarians also added metadata to indicate relationships between articles within a collection and in multiple collections. Included in the metadata for all items are the author, title, and program details, as well as links to other items in the same program. Articles published after 2007 also include live links to court decisions published on CanLII, the Canadian Legal Information Institute—a feature that facilitates users’ research into individual cases.

“Individual item search is something we have always wanted.”

Streamlined access to legal articles

AccessCLE users can browse by collection or search for particular words or phrases to find relevant materials. A user can search the entire archive or can specify a particular area of practice, such as administrative law or intellectual property. Launched in September 2008, AccessCLE registered 3,300 page views in the first week. “We were able to achieve these excellent results because of the openness of the DigiTool platform,” notes Ms. Atacan.

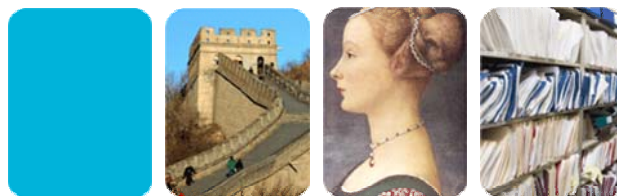
The Law Society integrated the AccessCLE archive seamlessly with an e-commerce system. Navigation is simple, with users clicking an Add to Cart icon in a manner that is familiar to them from online shopping sites. Purchasers can switch effortlessly between DigiTool and the e-commerce system, which share the same branding and look. “You don’t notice that you’re moving from DigiTool to another server,” adds Ms. Atacan. To ease decision making, DigiTool presents users with a three-page preview of an article before they commit to purchasing it.

“We were able to achieve these excellent results because of the openness of the DigiTool platform.”

In 2009, the Law Society added the Primo® discovery and delivery solution to its suite of Ex Libris solutions to create a single point of access to all of its collections—print, electronic, and digital.

User feedback about AccessCLE has been extremely positive. Law Society reference librarians find DigiTool extremely helpful in accomplishing their tasks and in providing assistance to researchers. “Individual item search is something we have always wanted,” comments one member of staff.

CASE STUDY



A dynamic collaboration

The implementation of DigiTool was a joint project between the CLE staff, the library, and the IT department. Members of this interdepartmental group worked in close collaboration with Ex Libris to ensure a smooth, successful implementation. “Working as part of a heterogeneous team enabled me to see how library systems can help other parts of the organization,” observes Ms. Atacan.

“Throughout the project, the commitment of the Ex Libris implementation staff was exceptional.”

“Our experience with Ex Libris was very positive,” concludes Ms. Atacan. “The Ex Libris team leader very quickly showed Law Society staff members how to take advantage of the rich functionality and openness of DigiTool in order to customize AccessCLE to suit our unique needs. Throughout the project, the commitment of the Ex Libris implementation staff was exceptional.”

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