

CASE STUDY



Arthur Lakes Library
COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

Colorado School of Mines is a public research university dedicated to educating students and professionals in the applied sciences, engineering and associated fields

Challenge

With a growing number of standard reports that need to be produced regularly, combined with increasing 'ad hoc' requests made by senior staff for specific institutional insights, the staff felt constrained by the cumbersome nature of Microsoft® Office Access in creating these reports.

Solution

Not only has Analyzer enhanced the library's ability to generate and distribute standard reports, it has allowed staff to proactively respond to 'ad hoc' information requests.

Results

Quick, seamless installation
Time savings and automated output
"On The Fly" report creation
Improving insights into circulation information

Data at librarians' fingertips with Voyager Analyzer at Arthur Lakes Library, Colorado School of Mines

Founded in 1874, the Colorado School of Mines is a public research university dedicated to educating students and professionals in the applied sciences, engineering and associated fields, with special expertise in the development and stewardship of the Earth's resources.

The Arthur Lakes Library is a specialized technical library that supports the educational and research goals of the Colorado School of Mines and also serves as a regional center for information in engineering, associated engineering and related science fields.

Building on the Success of Voyager

The Arthur Lakes Library is a specialized technical library that supports the educational and research goals of CSM and also serves as a regional center for information in engineering, associated engineering and related science fields. The library is a selective U.S. Government depository library and a partial depository for Colorado state publications. It's also a member of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, which supports the library's online catalog. Its collections span more than 115,000 volumes, 18,000 serial and journal titles, 260,000 government publications, 400,000 microforms and 202,000 map sheets.

After a thorough evaluation of its internal operations in the late 1990s, the library selected Endeavor Information Systems' Voyager to serve as the institution's integrated library system (ILS) in 2000. "We chose Voyager because it provided the flexibility that we wanted in an ILS," recalled Laura Guy, systems librarian at Arthur Lakes Library. We appreciated the fact that people could use the software to create basic reports and do bulkloading more efficiently. Overall, we felt that Voyager was much better suited to our needs as it allowed us to do things at a level that competitive offerings couldn't match."

The Reporting Challenge

While Voyager has continually helped the library in automating certain operational processes, recent increases in the number of reports required for addressing specific projects necessitated an investigation into alternative reporting tools. Historically, the staff at Arthur Lakes employed Microsoft® Office Access to create and update these reports, but many found it a cumbersome and unwieldy tool.



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The library recently adopted Endeavor's Analyzer reporting and analysis module to achieve efficiencies in the generation and distribution of internal reports, as the tool offers business intelligence capabilities via a Web-based, graphical interface designed to simplify data collection and evaluation.

"With Analyzer, you can set up reports to generate a PDF file or an Excel spreadsheet. You can also specify how often you want the report to run, be it daily, weekly or monthly. Once you've done this once, you're done, stated Guy. All the nit-picky things you had to do in Access are no longer necessary. What I'm finding out is that you can do quite complex things in Analyzer, and as you learn more, you see that there is more that you can do."

"One of Analyzer's real strengths is its ability to assist in meeting requests for ad hoc reports."

Quick, Seamless Installation

Guy spearheaded the selection and installation of Analyzer. She noted the stark contrast between the technical hurdles of implementing an enterprise software system with the ease of getting Endeavor's reporting module to work: "People might think that adopting Analyzer involves an exhaustive implementation process. While Endeavor's installation team did some work on the server prior to shipping it, we were able to plug it into our network and, after some minor tweaks, we had the software up and running on the same day."

"Analyzer is incredibly powerful and fast. On the surface, you can do things very quickly. Plus, there are some safeguards in place where the presentation layer has been designed to prevent you from making mistakes with your data."

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Improving Insights into Circulation Information

In addition to serving as an academic library, Arthur Lakes also serves a large public community, several hundred of whom pay an annual membership fee that enables them to take full advantage of library services. Working in Access, the Circulation staff experienced difficulties tracking member patrons, such as which patrons owed membership dues in a particular month, which patrons were current on their memberships and which patrons had memberships that were past due.

Guy was able to convert this data into Analyzer reports that run by themselves every week and are sent via e-mail to the appropriate staff member, who receive “a beautiful little PDF file.” Overall, this holistic view of patron status makes it much easier for Circulation staff to follow up with various categories of patrons on an individual basis. “Now we know who we need to contact each week in order to alert them about the situation,” reported Guy.

Looking Forward with Analyzer

Due to its intuitive nature, Guy sees Analyzer affecting different departments within Arthur Lakes Library. Instead of people requesting information from her, she envisions staff members creating reports themselves. “Analyzer is incredibly powerful and fast. On the surface, you can do things very quickly. Plus, there are some safeguards in place where the presentation layer has been designed to prevent you from making mistakes with your data, where as Access doesn’t have such protections.” Addressing the long-term vision of the library, Guy said, “As staff becomes more comfortable with the software, they might start thinking about different ways to apply the solution to various problems. And we like the idea that a tool like Analyzer may make someone think in ways that they haven’t before.”



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