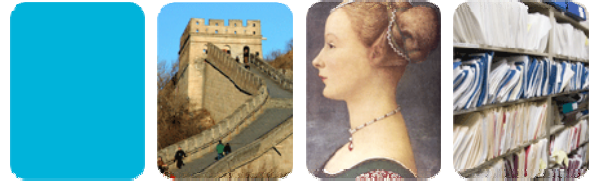


## CASE STUDY



# University of South Florida Cultivates Digital Collections with DigiTool

With campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee, and Lakeland, USF has the ninth largest enrollment—over 45,000 students—and is one of the top 70 research institutes in the United States. The university grants over 200 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees and offers continuing education courses.

### Challenges

Using a solution comprised of homegrown and commercial applications, USF was searching for one cost-effective solution that would enable collection sharing and growth.

### Solution

Using DigiTool, USF is managing diverse collections—from e-books to oral histories—in a single system that supports the consistency of metadata and the standardization of processes.

### Results

DigiTool empowers USF and its small support staff to continue growing the library's digital collections and increase global collaboration

The University of South Florida (USF) began collecting and building its digital collection in 1995, long before commercial digital asset management systems were available. To manage its growing collections, USF devoted internal resources to the development of a homegrown application for managing, searching, and presenting these materials. As digital asset management technology advanced and commercial applications became more readily available, USF began exploring the possibility of migrating its digital objects to a system that would foster collection growth without overtaxing university resources.

### The Search for a One-stop Solution

"There was no software that we could have purchased at the time to provide access to our digital collections," recounts Dr. Mark Greenberg, director of Special Collections, "so we had to create one." Richard R. Bernardy, Jr., technology and systems analyst, was the mastermind behind the solution. To begin with, Bernardy utilized a combination of tools, including OCLC's Site Search and Luna Insight®. Bernardy ended up writing his own software to meet the library's needs. USF also tested CONTENTdm® prior moving on to DigiTool.

The solution created by Bernardy served the university well for over ten years, a period marked by impressive growth in USF's digital collections. However, over time, the amalgam of homegrown and commercial systems became difficult to maintain. With several applications playing a role in the solution, the inconsistency of the metadata associated with the digital objects was of major concern to USF. "We had a lot of fragmentation," comments Bernardy. "The goal was to have a one-stop solution that would ensure consistent metadata for the entire collection."

As a member of the Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA) group, USF considered joining FCLA's DigiTool® implementation project, but ultimately decided to acquire its own instance of the software. "We thought that it would be an exciting opportunity for USF to have the creative freedom of an independent digital asset management solution while retaining the ability to contribute and share content with FCLA," says Greenberg.

### From Fragments to an Integrated System

The University of South Florida purchased DigiTool, the Ex Libris™ digital asset management solution, in December 2006. The implementation staff, headed by Bernardy, set to work on a fast-track implementation.

Training and data migration took place from January to March 2007. The first part of the USF collection went live on March 1st—just 120 days from signing the contract.



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“The fact that DigiTool works great right out of the box and the excellent support we received from Ex Libris made it possible for us to get up and running so quickly, especially in regards to interoperability via DigiTool’s various component APIs” says Bernardy. The system went live with over 12,000 digital objects. This number has grown rapidly ever since. “By the end of 2007 we hope to have over 60,000 objects in the system,” reports Bernardy.

DigiTool is now enabling USF to manage a diverse collection of digital materials in one integrated system. The collection consists of open-access journals, electronic theses and dissertations from graduate students, oral history audio interviews and transcripts recorded with Tampa-area community members, maps, newspapers, photographs, manuscripts and rare books, and historical materials related to Florida history. In addition to being an important part of the university’s research mission, these objects are a vital resource for members of the community. “Not a week goes by where we don’t have a request from a member of the community looking to have one of our photos reproduced,” comments Greenberg.

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### Building Global Relationships with DigiTool

DigiTool has enabled USF to build a strong digital collection using minimal staff resources. “DigiTool allows us to do extraordinary things with an extremely small staff,” remarks Greenberg. For example, the Graduate School can upload students’ theses and dissertations independently, streamlining the library staff’s workload.

Even more exciting are the opportunities that DigiTool has opened up for collaboration with other institutions around the globe. One example is a water research project USF is conducting with the Monteverde Institute of Costa Rica. All project documentation is stored in DigiTool, and researchers in Costa Rica can deposit material directly into the USF system. “Global relationships are one of the most important strategic initiatives for this university. DigiTool gives us a real opportunity to develop and foster these relationships in the area of digital collections,” says Greenberg.

USF sees potential for even greater use of DigiTool. “The product is extremely open. I have the capability to write software in components that are external to DigiTool but that work within the DigiTool environment,” says Bernardy, who is currently customizing user interfaces for a number of collections that USF hosts through its partnerships.

The USF digital collection will grow in a number of ways, including increased publishing of open access journals and special collections that include medieval manuscripts and the works of Irish American playwright Dion Boucicault. “Our commitment to DigiTool is based on the significance that we place on digital collections,” concludes Greenberg.



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