

CASE STUDY



Making e-resource management easy at the Library of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Challenges

The Digital Library of the University of Ljubljana required a unified library portal that would enable federated searching and access to all library e-resources from a single entry point. Disparate purchasing, management, and usage policies had previously led to user confusion.

Solution

The Digital Library of the University of Ljubljana chose a hosted MetaLib and SFX solution offering users with a single point of entry through which to access the library's complete e-collection. And the library with a sophisticated system to manage the different licensing agreements and access rights matrices of various consortial units.

Results

The Digital Library of the University of Ljubljana—a Web portal providing access to the library's complete e-collection. MetaLib and SFX serve as a basis for enabling the search of and access to electronic and digital items. Focused on new library industry trends, the University of Ljubljana looks forward to a long relationship with Atlantis and Ex Libris.

Based on centuries of educational tradition, the University of Ljubljana was founded in 1919, and remained the only Slovenian university for approximately half a century. Located in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, the large University student body imbues the city with a youthful and lively character. 63,000 graduate and postgraduate students and close to 4000 teaching staff make use of the University's huge library information system—based on the network of two university libraries (Central Technological Library at the University of Ljubljana and the National and University Library).

The University of Ljubljana chose the Slovenian developed COBISS (the Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services) integrated library system (ILS) for the automation of its print collections. Once this project was up and running, the University turned its focus towards the management of its electronic resources.

“When e-resources first became available, we had not yet created uniform purchasing, management, and usage policies for the academic libraries that we served,” explains Miro Pušnik, head of the managing committee of the Digital Library of the University of Ljubljana. “As a result, each university faculty began purchasing the e-resources relevant to its area of study. These materials were often restricted to the users affiliated with that specific faculty, and were made available to them via a Website or other search system developed by that department. Some of these systems supported remote access to the resources while others required users to access the resources from within the library.”

“Researchers wishing to search across all library resources were faced with different entry points and interfaces rather than a consolidated listing of all library e-holdings. This left our users frustrated and led to under-use of many valuable resources. We quickly established that a unified library portal, via which our users could perform a federated searching across all of our e-resources, was essential. We began drawing up a list of requirements for choosing a metasearch solution and OpenURL link resolver that would help us to meet the goals of this project,” summarizes Pušnik.

Sophisticated, clear, and easy to host—a tall order

“First and foremost, we required systems sophisticated enough to accommodate the different licensing agreements and access rights matrices of various consortial units,” explains Dr. Uros Kunaver, head of information technology (IT) at the Central Technological Library at the University of Ljubljana. “Secondly, the system had to

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provide a single point of entry through which all users, regardless of access authority, would see the library's complete e-collection displayed via an A-Z list and a catalog of resources. Last but definitely not least, since the library did not have the IT resources or physical space required to support these systems, a hosted solution was mandatory."

Atlantis S.r.l., the exclusive distributor of Ex Libris™ products in Italy and Slovenia, entered the tendering process with the University of Ljubljana and demonstrated the SFX® link server and the MetaLib® metasearch solution. "During the bidding process, we examined the experience of users at other institutions running products and employing services from Ex Libris and Atlantis. After reviewing both product demonstrations and the experiences of existing customers, we decided that solutions such as these were what we required for our new library portal," explains Dr. Kunaver.

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"MetaLib and SFX had both been implemented successfully in many large consortia and often as hosted services. The wide range of services offered by these products easily fit our needs. We were very pleased when the outcome of the tender was announced and we learned that we would be working with Atlantis," adds Dr. Kunaver.

The Ex Libris, Atlantis duo fit the bill

"We were very impressed with the speed and accuracy with which the Atlantis team understood our needs and implemented the solutions to meet them," recalls Dr. Kunaver. "The implementing team at the University of Ljubljana worked very closely with the Atlantis project manager to address specific requirements enabling SFX links from MetaLib records to identify users accessing the library from outside of the university." This functionality allows users to enter the system as a guest and receive a full listing of the library's e-collection. An SFX service indicates the academic schools or departments to which a specific resource is available. Once a username and password is entered, the portal recognizes which library unit(s) the user is affiliated with and to which resources that user has access rights.

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Users that authenticate themselves upon entering the system are immediately presented with the materials that are available to them and are given a bird's-eye view of the entire library e-collection. In addition to being able to access the portal from various university sites and services, most resources can be accessed remotely—extending the boundaries of the library to meet users wherever they are.

A lesson in collaboration

"We collaborated with the library to create a hosted solution that would meet its exact needs," explains Liliana Morotti, chief operations officer and marketing director at Atlantis S.r.l. "The library chose which services it wanted to maintain independently and those that would be supported by Atlantis or initiated by Atlantis and transferred to the library. Training began before the system was fully operational so that library staff could begin supporting users from day one."

"Atlantis was an excellent partner throughout the project," says Miro Pušnik enthusiastically. "Right from the beginning, the Atlantis team worked with us to define a system that would work exactly to our specifications. They then trained us to use the system, to teach our library staff, and to continue customizing the interfaces independently. We decided on the degree of independence we were ready for at every stage of the project, and Atlantis was there to support us. Library staff and end users were extremely happy with the results."

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"Our newest project, the The Digital Library of the University of Ljubljana—a Web portal providing access to electronic and digital items—uses MetaLib and SFX as a basis for enabling the search of and access to electronic and digital items such as journals, books, databases, and reference material," comments Dr. Kunaver. We are very focused on new library industry trends and are excited to see Ex Libris addressing them with new product versions and cutting-edge offerings such as the Primo® discovery and delivery solution. We believe that the relationship between Ljubljana, Atlantis, and Ex Libris will continue to develop into the future."



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