CASE STUDY

Voyager Brings Library Resources Closer to Students at Tarrant County College

Tarrant County College (TCC) is a two-year college serving over 37,000 students in the greater Fort Worth, Texas, area.

Challenges

A homegrown library system limited the ability to locate library resources, could not be accessed from outside the campus, and impeded staff collaboration and efficiency.

Solution

Voyager provided the functionality that addresses the needs of patrons and staff and is easily customized by internal resources.

Results

Voyager has enabled the library to improve the level of services available to patrons and empowered library staff to meet patron needs more efficiently and effectively.

Serving over 37,000 students, Tarrant County College (TCC) in Texas, USA was looking to replace its homegrown library system with one that would improve student access to library resources and facilitate collaboration and sharing among the college's four campuses. To address these needs, the college selected the Ex Libris Voyager® integrated library system to manage all aspects of library services-- acquisitions, cataloging, and circulation--while providing students with Web access to the library catalog.

Outgrowing the Homegrown

Like many institutions, Tarrant County College relied on a homegrown library system. However, in 2000, the staff began exploring opportunities to enhance the library system's capabilities.

TCC's older mainframe system posed several limitations. Non-MARC-based records greatly limited search capabilities; the lack of connectivity to outside databases limited use of such resources; and finally, students working off campus were greatly inconvenienced by the lack of remote access to the system.

When the college chancellor announced a campus-wide initiative to upgrade all business systems, the library leapt at the chance to modernize its infrastructure. "We saw an opportunity to bring a much higher level of service to our students," says Rick Heyser, director, Technical Support Services, who has worked for TCC for the past 20 years.

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The Voyager Solution

"Our decision to go with Voyager was driven by the acquisitions and cataloging modules," says Heyser. "The acquisitions module in Voyager was much friendlier and produced better results than anything else we saw."

Once a decision was made, several steps were needed to make the system usable. The initial step was converting decades of accumulated non-MARC records to the standard MARC format. After every item in the college-wide library network was retagged for a new barcode system, the actual data transfer was completed.

Once the system became operational, three staff members assumed the day-to-day Voyager administration tasks: Vicki Fite, coordinator of LR software; Jim Robinson, computer applications specialist; and David Ray, information service lead program analyst. With this staff in place, TCC has been able to take advantage of Voyager's easily customizable interfaces.

"Our computer applications specialist does all of the customization on the WebVoyáge site. If you look at our system, you can see that he's implemented many user-friendly changes," explains Heyser.

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Benefits to Users and Staff

Voyager has enabled the Tarrant County College libraries to step up to the level of services that users expect and provide the functionality that allows staff to perform daily tasks with greater efficiency.

With the MARC format in place in Voyager, TCC library holdings are easier to access. "Since implementing Voyager, we've expanded our services considerably, particularly with links to outside databases and by providing access to the system from outside of

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the campus," says Heyser. "With Voyager, students can get access from anywhere. It is far more user oriented than the old system."

Library staff find the new system equally useful. Voyager enables librarians to view detailed information from other campuses. The new acquisitions module, in particular, has created a bridge between the libraries and the college business office. By directly accessing real-time information in Voyager, each library can see where it stands against budget at any given time. "Using information from our Voyager database, we are able to supply all the financial information requested by the district's accounting department," explains Vicki Fite.

TCC continues to leverage technology to improve user services and streamline back-office processes. "We are in the process of implementing EDI for our book purchases, and we have a task force in place to take a fresh look at our Web site and how it serves our users," notes Heyser. "These will be additional benefits that we can extend from the foundation of Voyager as the integrated library system."

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About Tarrant County College

Tarrant County College is a two-year college that serves the greater Fort Worth, Texas, area. The college grants associate of arts degrees, associate of arts in teaching degrees, and associate of applied sciences degrees—an affordable starting place for students entering the workforce or transitioning into a four-year institution. TCC has four campuses, in the cities of Arlington, Hurst, and Fort Worth, with separate libraries at each site.