

CASE STUDY



Managing Electronic Resources with Ease at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany

Jacobs University Bremen, opened in 2001, is an international, private university. Through intercultural education and transdisciplinary research and teaching in a broad range of fields from engineering, the humanities, the natural, and the social sciences Jacobs University prepares its graduates for international leadership and global citizenship.

Challenges

As one of the youngest institutions of higher education in Germany, the university was established when the electronic resource revolution was already in full swing. The university's library naturally chose to focus on an electronic, rather than print, collection. For its user body of 1,200 students from 93 nations and 390 staff, Jacobs University's library urgently needed an electronic resource management (ERM) solution that could provide a single point of entry from which all of the institution's e-resources could be administered, while streamlining the management of the library's extensive e-collection by the single librarian responsible for e-resources.

Jacobs University Bremen, a private English-language university, is distinguished by its international orientation and the high standard of its student body's academic and personal potential. Dedicated to excellence and innovation, intercultural education and transdisciplinary research, the university's mission is to prepare tomorrow's leaders to responsibly meet the global challenges of the 21st century. The university Information Resource Center (IRC), which includes the library, IT and multimedia departments, is home to over 41,000 print volumes, 32,000 online journals, and 13,000 electronic books.

In search of a unified solution

The university began its quest for an electronic resource management (ERM) system and new link resolver by identifying the library's requirements. These included the seamless integration of the ERM system and the link resolver, the ability to integrate local packages (e.g. national licenses); identifying products that offered APIs enabling the library to create unique product extensions; and the option of a hosted solution that would reduce the quantity of library and IT resources invested in managing its e-resources collection. "Verde suited our needs perfectly, standing out as the only ERM system that satisfied all of these requirements," explains Anja Kakau, systems librarian at Jacobs University.

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Less than a year after implementation, Verde® Direct— the hosted electronic resource management solution from Ex Libris™— is now the principal tool used in managing e-resources at Jacobs University. The librarian responsible for e-resources loads and activates all packages directly in Verde, which automatically synchronizes the data with SFX. "The ability to load local packages works beautifully with Verde," explains Julia Graepel, technical services librarian at Jacobs University.

"Verde has proved valuable to the university in trials on new e-resources," notes Graepel. "Preparations are underway to use Verde for licensing in the future. Verde will be the main tool used in managing all electronic content. As the majority of the library's budget is dedicated to electronic resources, Verde has quickly become a central element in the library's long-term strategy."



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Solution

Verde® Direct—the hosted electronic resource management solution from Ex Libris™—enabled this small institution, with very few staff in the library and IT departments, to take advantage of a sophisticated e-resource management system. By integrating Verde with the library's SFX® OpenURL link resolver Jacobs University is maximizing Verde functionality, making it the library's main tool for managing electronic content.

Results

Jacobs University's e-resource librarian uses Verde to manage and update the institution's 32,000 online journals and about 100 databases. Tasks such as loading local e-resource packages directly into Verde and automatically synchronizing the data in Verde with SFX streamlines formerly time-consuming processes and allows the librarian to focus on more knowledge-intensive tasks.



Metalib and SFX by Ex Libris are also part of the University's long-term e-resources strategy for delivering comprehensive e-resource services to students and staff alike.

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A unified solution implemented by a unified team

Three project teams worked together on the smooth implementation and configuration of the Jacobs University Bremen hosted Verde and SFX solutions. These teams were made up of the small, focused university library staff, the Ex Libris Germany project team, and the company's hosted services group working out of the Chicago office of Ex Libris North America. Graepel and Kakau were pleased to report that they had integrated most of the library's e-resources into SFX and Verde by the end of January 2008—just two months after the start of product implementation.

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Jacobs University's library staff found the Ex Libris development teams and project managers to be helpful and responsive, particularly in finding solutions to all aspects of the hosted Verde instance. “The Verde platform is flexible as well as extremely robust,” observes Kakau. “The project managers and Ex Libris staff were familiar with every feature of the product and with our requirements. It made us feel very comfortable that they always knew what we were talking about.”

The long-term view

Looking to the future, Jacobs University envisages incorporating the system into more facets of its e-resources work, particularly in the area of usage statistics and analysis. The library is planning to use the open interfaces of the Ex Libris product suite to their full potential in the coming years. These APIs will give librarians the opportunity to integrate their e-resource services with the university's course management system and intranet.

Staff members are confident that Verde will continue to provide a firm framework for managing e-resources at the institution's Information Resource Center. As a young university with a purpose-built library, Jacobs University demonstrates how the sound management of electronic books, journals, and databases can serve as the foundation of a successful next-generation research institute.

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