

# Richmond Libraries deliver real cost savings and efficiencies

Improving public service experience with Civica's Spydus Library Management System



"Improving customer service is the most important priority for us and Spydus helps us do just that. "

"By migrating across to Spydus we have seen very real cost savings, an increase in borrowing, massive reductions in consortium loans and consequently improved availability of library stock for local residents."

Steven Liddle  
Library Strategy and Performance Manager

Since 2007 Richmond Libraries had been part of the London Libraries Consortium (LLC), using Axiell's OpenGalaxy library system, a product which they had been using since 1984.

Richmond Libraries reviewed their library services in 2011 creating a strong vision which identified the need to harness new technologies to develop modern virtual library services, deliver cost savings and improve customer service.

Along with advances in technology, customer needs were rapidly changing, austerity measures were putting pressure on costs and they had identified inefficiencies within the LLC itself. All of these were strong incentives to change their library management system.

A thorough review and tender process was undertaken to identify the right system that could deliver against their over-riding priority to improve library services for their customers.

"We were looking for a system which would enable us to deliver the vision outlined in our Connecting Communities Library Strategy - not just a Library Management System but one which would incorporate community information, digital images and archival records and an events booking system," says Steve Liddle, Library Strategy and Performance Manager of Richmond Libraries "we evaluated the systems available and Spydus was the one which came closest to meeting our needs."

They also identified that by moving to Spydus and joining the SELMS (South East Library Management) consortium, they could benefit from savings of around £45,000 over 5 years.

## A catalyst for change and improvements

Richmond used the change in library management system as an opportunity to improve the information they held about their library stock. Thanks to the functionality in Spydus, they were able to carry out a thorough stocktake across all 12 libraries. They can now rely on the data within their library management system to be accurate and up-to-date. Steve says "For the first time in many years we have been able to provide statistics for our CIPFA return that are an accurate reflection of our stock holdings."

## Driving real cost savings and service improvements

Richmond had identified that around 40% of its consortium reservations were unnecessary and therefore carried significant transportation costs that could be greatly reduced if a more sensible approach to consortium loans was adopted.



"Spydus has allowed us to streamline backroom processes enabling us to deliver a better and more efficient library service than we were able to before."

"Despite some customers being concerned about our move away from the LLC, in an independent survey, 87% of respondents say they are satisfied with the library service, which is an increase of 8% from last year!"

Paul Donaghy  
Library Systems Manager

Their research had also revealed that local library stock was often being transported to service another borough's customers which, in addition to incurring unnecessary transportation costs, also increased lost stock and reduced stock availability in local libraries, necessitating more consortium loans.

With Spydus, when customers search for a title, the system will search within the local library, then across the borough before widening out the search in increments across the consortium ensuring that stock is provided from the closest location.

Since implementing Spydus, Richmond has seen a 49% reduction in transportation costs and postage costs have been reduced by 37%. They have also achieved greater response rates to reservations – 70% of all reservations are delivered within 7 days, up from 50% before Spydus. The availability of the library stock for local Richmond residents has significantly improved as well with an 82% reduction in inter-library loans.

### Increasing library reach with online services and better communication

A significantly important part of Spydus is the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) which essentially provides a virtual library providing library customers with remote web access to the Richmond library catalogue. OPAC also provides self-service functionality for customers allowing them to undertake tasks such as online reservations and renewals.

This has allowed Richmond to take advantage of the increased availability of home computers and handheld devices making their library services more accessible and easier to use, as well as creating efficiencies by reducing the administrative burden on library staff.

The Spydus web OPAC is now the busiest 'branch' of the borough's libraries as customers find it easy and convenient to use.

The feedback from the public about the new online library services has been fantastic. One customer emailed the library service to congratulate them: "...what a great library website you have. Just reserved 2 books and extended a loan on another, all on a Sunday morning from my bed. I love the library."

Spydus has allowed Richmond libraries to deliver better communication to promote their services and embrace social media to reach new audiences. Using Spydus, they were able to encourage better and longer participation in the Summer Reading Challenge, making it their most successful reading challenge to date.

"We're delighted with the results we've seen from moving across to Spydus and would certainly recommend it to other library services," says Steve, "we have lots of plans for the future to continue our schedule of service improvements, including moving across to Spydus community information and event bookings systems."