Beyond the library catalog and Summit: The bridge to knowledge and an innovative approach to managing library materials and services

The 37 libraries of the Orbis Cascade Alliance are moving from individual stand-alone systems to a single shared integrated system. Through strategic planning, we decided that the move to a single shared solution will improve services, cost efficiency, and prospects for cooperative collection development and collaborative approaches to technical services (the behind-the-scenes library operations).

Scale matters — moving from 37 systems to a single integrated system enables us to work together in new ways. This collaboration allows us to:
- lower our costs for borrowing from one another,
- leverage our collections funds,
- reduce our cost of print management
- and better preserve the historical record.

Just as important, this new system brings with it a new user interface. Through a single search box, users will be able to search across a much broader array of content from the libraries’ collections.

As Alliance libraries have worked together over the last few years, it has become increasingly clear that the 20+ year old systems we now use came from a time of limited network bandwidth, expensive data storage, and lack of standards. They were great for their time but now these old systems make it difficult and costly to create new services, integrate with other systems, create new workflows, and extract data.

We also know the cost of operating older systems is very high, especially so when we each are running our own individual systems. The costs of this new system are distributed across the 37 libraries using a well-established model the Alliance has used for other fees and a team of staff from across member libraries are collaboratively doing the work of implementation.

This is an enormous project because we are dealing with 8.8 million titles which represent 26,390,313 resources held at our 37 institutions. It is enormous because we are undertaking three projects in one: moving from 37 to one, implementing and co-developing a next generation system, and...
creating innovative approaches to collaboration in technical services that provides improved options to explore the best ways to work together.

Because of the scope of this project, it will take until December 2014 to get all Alliance libraries on the new system. Groups of six to 10 libraries will migrate every six months, with the first to go-live in June 2013.

Why is this a big deal for Shoen Library? Because we are part of the first cohort to go live on this evolving system, we are blazing the trail and doing the heavy lifting for the rest of the Alliance libraries who follow.

Not all the functionality we expect to have in December 2014 can be in place until the last libraries come on board, so we will be running a hybrid of the old and the new until then. The same good service you have come to expect from library staff, along with the delivery of Summit and Interlibrary Loan items, will continue uninterrupted but there may be the inevitable bumps that come with any migration, particularly one of this scale. But the goal should be worth any possible mild disruption. Thanks in advance for your patience and good humor.

Information on how to navigate the new user interface will be available on Shoen Library’s website, at all our service desks, in handouts, and of course, with staff members. If you have any questions or suggestions along the way, be sure to inquire at the library!

Contact:
Nancy Hoover, University Librarian
Shoen Library
Marylhurst University
Marylhurst, OR 97036-0261
503.699.6261, ext. 3372
nhoover@marylhurst.edu