

Lancashire County Libraries move over to UnityUK

Birmingham, UK, 22 July 2008: Lancashire County Library and Information Service which runs one of the busiest public library ILL units in England, has moved its lending and borrowing operations over to UnityUK. In 2007/08, Lancashire made over 13,000 requests and supplied over 7000 items.

Lancashire has been using UnityUK to find locations since April 2006 and their catalogue, including holdings information, is now live within the service. Early in 2008, they introduced UnityUK's lending service into the authority and in July 2008 they moved over their requesting functions to the Unity UK service.

Peggy Eccles, Principal Librarian Bibliographical Services with Lancashire County Library and Information Service explains why, after many years with the same supplier, they chose to move, "The UnityUK service is a modern and intelligent service that we knew would help us to upgrade our processes and ultimately improve the service we provide to other libraries and our customers. We have built a good reputation as a supplier to other public libraries and we believed it was important for us to join the thriving UnityUK user community."

With UnityUK in place, Lancashire has streamlined and fully automated both its lending and requesting functions; with no need to maintain separate files or handle hundreds of incoming email messages. UnityUK's built in rota building facility ensures that Lancashire can easily build long rotas where necessary and the system automatically tracks the progress of every request without the need for human intervention at any stage. This has enabled Lancashire to improve the efficiency of their service, reducing processing times for both requests and item supply.

UnityUK integrates closely with Lancashire's library management system (LMS) to reduce the need for duplicating data entry in multiple systems. Request details are automatically transferred from UnityUK into their LMS, and an automated process creates a catalogue record that is used for issuing the items to borrowers. This high level of integration lowers the administrative overhead and reduces the opportunity for mistakes during data entry.

Peggy continues, "It was vital that our transition to UnityUK went smoothly, so OCLC put together a package for us that included workflow consultancy and process improvement prior to our move. This gave us the opportunity to refine our processes and then tailor the service to meet our needs."

For more information on UnityUK email uk@oclc.org.