



Press Release

For immediate release
18th June 2007

Hampshire gets branches online with UnityUK

Hampshire County Council is the first authority in the UK to provide all its branches and mobile libraries with direct online access to the UnityUK national resource sharing service. As a result of this forward thinking approach to using UnityUK, branch library staff across Hampshire can manage requests and update customers about progress, at any time of day, without the need to refer to the Central Interloans Team.

By bringing UnityUK into each branch, staff can check the progress of a request, receipt items, carry out renewals and return items directly to the supply library. Library customers benefit as they receive real time information about the progress of their requests, without having to wait for their local branch to check with the central bibliographic services unit.

Carol Marshall, Requests Manager at Hampshire Libraries commented, "We always believed that trusting the branches with UnityUK was the way forward and they have coped really well. Customers expect up to the minute information and progress tracking online for anything they order over the web. Interlending services needs to be able to meet that expectation if they are to be taken seriously."

Enabling Hampshire's branch staff to manage areas of the request process directly has reduced the paper trail between the branches and central team and as a result, four filing cabinets of paper have been eliminated from the process. The service has also speeded up the interlending process and reduced the administrative burden on the central team.

All branches and mobiles were online with UnityUK by 1st January 2007, and all have successfully upgraded to the new version of UnityUK, which was released in April 2007. Between August and December 2006 the Interloans team trained 150 trainers at regional sessions including representatives from all 54 branches, 19 mobiles and the regional Library Development Teams. These trainers cascaded the training to the staff back at their home base."

Training notes and crib sheets were produced by the central team, based on the standard training notes provided by OCLC PICA.



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OCLC PICA supported the branch roll out in other ways, as Carol explains, “The support desk have always been great, even when we’ve gone to them with a non-standard question. They provided reports that enabled us to trace where branches had not changed the status of an item for a given time period. This helped us to track problems with individual requests and to identify which branches required further training.”

Hampshire is planning to develop branch services further. A pilot is underway where branches initiate their own periodical requests in the system, which are then automatically picked up and progressed by the Central Interloans Team. If the pilot continues to be a success, the team are planning to start rolling out this service to all branches later in 2007.

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Notes to editors:

About UnityUK

UnityUK is the upgraded web-based resource sharing and interlibrary loan service provided by The Combined Regions (TCR). UnityUK, launched in May 2006, delivers leading edge functionality for union catalogue, cross database searching, holdings and item location, interlibrary loan and resource sharing services. UnityUK uses the latest international resource sharing standards and integrates with all major library management systems in use in the UK today. UnityUK also links together the union catalogues of the TCR member libraries and LinkUK library resources, to provide the first national resource sharing service for the UK.

www.unity-uk.com

About The Combined Regions (TCR)

The Combined Regions (TCR) is the organisation behind the Unity resource sharing service. For more than 10 years, TCR has provided interlending services to its 140 member library organisations across the South West, North East, East Midlands, North East and Scotland. Under the Unity name, TCR’s resource sharing services began with a CD union catalogue, and in 2001 moved to become web-based. In February 2006, The Combined Regions announced the launch of a new and upgraded Unity service to be provided by OCLC PICA.

www.combinedregions.com

About OCLC PICA

OCLC PICA is a leading supplier of software solutions, content and services to libraries. Professionals and end users in academic and public libraries, the health sector, as well as government and cultural institutions worldwide benefit from its services. These include its own union catalogue and resource sharing solutions, integrated library systems and portal products. In Europe and southern Africa, OCLC PICA also offers the full range of OCLC products and services for cataloguing, eBooks, collection and digital content management and virtual reference services.



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OCLC PICA B.V. is jointly owned by OCLC Inc. and Stichting Pica. OCLC is a not-for-profit organization and offers its services to 54,000 libraries worldwide. Stichting Pica (est. 1969) is a foundation that promotes and encourages the scientific and public information service in the Netherlands. OCLC PICA has its headquarters in Leiden, the Netherlands, with offices in the UK, Germany, France, Switzerland, the USA and Australia. More information about OCLC PICA can be found at www.oclpica.org <<http://www.oclpica.org/>> .

OCLC PICA incorporates OCLC Europe, PICA (a key service-provider in the library infrastructure of the Netherlands), SISIS (the leading library-automation company in Germany) and Fretwell-Downing Informatics (a leading international provider of library automation and resource-sharing solutions).

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