

# U.S. Department of Commerce Library and Information Center



*Case Study*

"The SirsiDynix virtual rooms we've created...focus on the various agencies we serve and the subjects that are important to them. It's how we've organized it, and it works very well."

—Jane Sessa

*U.S. Department of  
Commerce Library Director*



A long-time SirsiDynix® customer, the U.S. Department of Commerce Library and Information Center has employed virtually every product and service SirsiDynix offers—Symphony®, SaaS™, Enterprise® and more—to consistently positive results. Because of this, Director Jane Sessa jokes that they may not have a very “exciting” story to tell, but the impressive progress and capabilities they’ve acquired more than make up for it.

As a government entity, the U.S. Department of Commerce Library has to abide by stringent rules for security of data and records. Just maintaining a server for this data requires a time- and money-intensive process—one that Sessa wanted to avoid if possible—so she solved it by utilizing the SirsiDynix remote hosting service, SaaS.

Since using SaaS, Sessa says she’s become something of an evangelist for it. By hosting the server remotely, the Library meets government security needs, eliminates the need for a full-time system administrator, and has received continual and timely software updates.

“For us it makes perfect sense to have our server hosted—SirsiDynix can do it for less and do it better,” Sessa says. “And with SaaS it’s easy for me to keep

current. The upgrades are all done after hours, they work out the bugs and we have no problems at all.”

For an in-demand government library, that peace of mind alone is invaluable, but the Library has found other values in its Symphony solution. Perhaps one of the most used is the faceted searching feature via its customized “rooms.”

Because the Department of Commerce encompasses such a diverse group of agencies with very different missions, the Library has created rooms for each of its specialties—trade law, business, commerce and the like—specifically with its policy-focused users’ needs and requests in mind.

“The rooms we’ve created tend to be areas of interest to policymakers and regulators. It’s a wide-ranging department, so the rooms focus on the various agencies we serve and the subject areas that are of importance to them,” Sessa said. “Exports, weather, environmental issues, the census, intellectual property—it’s how we’ve organized it, and it works very well.”

The Library serves some 2,500 policymakers and lawyers. Of particular interest to the library patrons is its digitized legislative history collection that is accessed remotely via the online catalog. It includes full text images of bills, hearings, reports, Congressional Record entries and final version of the public law. In addition to Commerce staff, the digitized legislative history collection attracts other law libraries that need access to the documents found in the Commerce library’s digitized collection—all of which has been handily segmented into custom “rooms” using SirsiDynix Symphony’s faceted search capabilities.

“The documents in the collection are not readily available in print or in digitized format elsewhere, so we get a lot of hits from other libraries,” Sessa said. “It’s a unique digital collection we have here.”



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