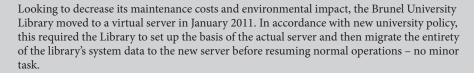# Brunel University

———— Case Study

One of the first SirsiDynix customers in the United Kingdom, Brunel University utilizes its SirsiDynix technology and services to streamline processes and better serve the university community.

"The technology has just been getting better and easier. We appreciate that... We've seen all the good changes, really."

— Georgina Parsons
Brunel University Systems Librarian

Looking to decrease its maintenance costs and environmental impact, the Brunel University Library moved to a virtual server in January 2011. In accordance with new university policy, this required the Library to set up the basis of the actual server and then migrate the entirety of the library's system data to the new server before resuming normal operations – no minor task.

The reasons for the move to virtualization were many, and promised great impact financially and sustainability-wise in the long run, but Brunel University didn't want to tackle this monumental undertaking alone. So the Library, a SirsiDynix customer since 1996, enlisted the help of the SirsiDynix implementations team. The process, according to Brunel University Systems Librarian Georgina Parsons, went very smoothly.

"Before beginning, we were advised to plan for two days of downtime for the migration," Parsons said. "But the system was actually back up that afternoon. We were really pleased, because two days for us isn't just nine to five – it's really 24 hours."

This isn't the first time Brunel University has made use of its relationship with SirsiDynix to further the Library's service and operational goals, nor is it the last. Utilizing SirsiDynix technology and support, Brunel University Library has been able to effectively conserve resources, streamline processes and customize system data and interactions to better serve the university community.
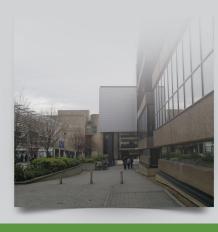
Helping students help themselves

Through the SirsiDynix Symphony® ILS patron interface, e-Library, Brunel University Library student and faculty users are able to access materials and gain information on subjects of interest. But beyond the traditional catalog functionality – complete with user reviews, ratings and other features – Brunel library-goers benefit from a slew of additional conveniences.

For example, using the e-Library "lists" functionality, Brunel users can save and bookmark favorite links. The Library has taken this one step further, expanding its own use of e-Library lists and info boxes to include quick links to sites of interest, including its Facebook page and its YouTube playlist, which demonstrates answers to common question such as how to set a pin, renew a book, make online payments or access e-resources. A tag cloud of popular searches also appears on the front page to guide users' entry points.

"It looks very nice, and we're happy to do everything we can to make things easier for students to find what they're looking for," Parsons said. "We're very friendly, but it's good for them. If they can do it themselves, they like it. "

This self-service model has extended to other areas of the Library as well. Recent integration of RFID self-checkout stations has been of particular value, simplifying things for both the library staff and users.

"The students love it," Parsons said. "Our self-service use has gone up from about 40 percent to 96 percent now. And [the equipment] is in Brunel blue, with blue lights down the sides. It's

very high tech, very impressive, with flashing lights – they're lovely."

What's more, the Library, which runs 24 hours a day for five days out of the week, is now able to more easily staff the late hours. Self-service stations speed up the checkout process by scanning multiple items in one swoop, so the Library only requires its core staff plus the overnight student workers to accomplish everything they need. Meanwhile, all transactions are seamlessly updated within the SirsiDynix Symphony ILS.

"We get a lot of good comments from the students. They can check a whole stack [of materials] at once," Parsons said. "They say the only thing they need now is for us to deliver to them at their door so they don't even have to get out of bed."

Customization options for every user

Beyond hardware integration, as used for the RFID self-checkout solution and others, the Brunel library has also integrated its Symphony ILS with various software solutions through use of the SirsiDynix Symphony API. The university's student administration system and a third-party text messaging solution are among the integrations that Brunel has been able to seamlessly incorporate.

"The administration system that holds all the student information is able to work with Symphony," Parsons said. "We have daily loads from that system to update our user records, and that's all done automatically."

Meanwhile, for the text messaging service, Parsons uses the Symphony API to pull information out of the system and notify students when a book that was placed on hold becomes available for pickup.

SIMPLIFYING STAFF PROCESSES

Of particular favor among the Brunel University Library staff is the Symphony acquisitions functionality, which interacts with the EDI and automatically updates order statuses within the system.

"Before, we used to get daily e-mails from the provider with updates, if there were delays or anything. Now it's all handled through the system for us automatically," Parsons said. "It makes life so much easier for the acquisitions staff. All the codes and everything are in there, so anyone can do it. They just pick the books they need and it gets approved. It really saves them time."

The built-in lists functionality, while intended primarily for patrons, has also become a handy time-saving tool for library staff members.

"The lists are very useful, and now there is also the permanent lists feature. Our staff probably use it as much as the students," Parsons said. "We've done a lot of customization there. Users can use it to add RSS feeds to the catalog for any search, and use bookmarkable links so they can bookmark any item record."

"We created a custom report for text messaging students," Parsons said. "When the hold pickup report runs, it runs a little script and says this call number is ready. It was a very small bit of customization – it was very simple. And now students have no reason for not coming in to collect their book before it expires on the hold shelf."

From an administrative point of view, Parsons says she particularly likes the system's staff customization features, which make it easy for staff to make selections and keep the policies organized. The SirsiDynix Symphony ILS enables each staff member access to the processes, reports and WorkFlows functionality they require, while maintaining security requirements for unauthorized data.

That means a lot for Parsons in the systems librarian function. All the upgrades, maintenance, queries and connections with other systems fall under her domain – a large task, which is simplified by the Symphony ILS's ability to bend, flex and expand to meet the Library's needs.

A technology platform to grown on

From built-in functionality to library-specific customization to third-party extensions and integration, Brunel University Library utilizes SirsiDynix technology to serve the needs of its evolving academic community. And with nearly two decades of SirsiDynix technology partnership under their belt already, Parsons said things continue to improve.

"[The technology] has just been getting better and easier. We appreciate that," Parsons said. "It's all got a lot friendlier, more intuitive. We've seen all the good changes, really."

SirsiDynix®