

Case Study: Libraries North West

Manchester City Council

TCR Region: Libraries North West
Local Authority Type: Metropolitan Borough
Population Served: 441,200

Libraries: 23 plus mobile service, Prison Library & Powerhouse Youth Library

UnityUK Licences: 1

UnityUK Services: Standard service
 Integrated ILL management

Requests Made P.A.: 1301

Requests Supplied P.A.: 1092

UnityUK Member since: May 2006



Trafford Council

TCR Region: North West
Local Authority Type: Metropolitan Borough
Population Served: 212,000

Libraries: 15

UnityUK Licences: 1

UnityUK Services: Standard service
 Integrated ILL management

Requests Made P.A.: 1137

Requests Supplied P.A.: 900

UnityUK Member since: June 2006



About the services

Manchester City Council and Trafford Council are both members of the Libraries North West Region. Across both Manchester and Trafford, members of the public can place a request in any public library. The library staff then email the requests for items that are not in stock through to their respective central requests management team, who handle all aspects of the request process.

In Manchester and Trafford, the procedure is similar; the central requests unit checks the bibliographic details and confirms if the item is in print. If it is in print, then the stock management team decide whether to purchase the item. If the item is particularly obscure, or is out of print, then the team set out to borrow the item from another library.

Each team in both authorities use UnityUK as the primary tool for searching for locations and generating the requests to go out to supplying libraries, but UnityUK has been implemented locally to support individual working practices.

In Manchester, UnityUK is used independently from their local library management system. In Trafford, the bibliographic details for the request are verified and downloaded into their local library management system, where a request record is created that is linked to the requester details. UnityUK is used to identify supply locations and automatically generate a request rota. When the item is received into the central unit, both UnityUK and the local library management system are updated to indicate receipt of the item. The item is



then sent out to the local branch and issued to the requester, via the local library management system.

Both Manchester and Trafford use UnityUK to build a rota that has been tailored to their individual preferences, and both authorities borrow from other Libraries North West members as their first preference.

Using UnityUK

Manchester needed an automated request service that was linked to a comprehensive union catalogue, and selected UnityUK. However, they also wanted to be part of a community of users, as Gillian Titterton, Resources Officer at Manchester explains, “Systems don’t work without people and interlending is all about working together and cooperation. By going with UnityUK we knew that we would get support from other users across Libraries North West. **Being part of a lively user community enables us to share ideas and push forward for new features and functions.**”

Trafford were also keen to use the same system as other libraries across the Libraries North West region. They also saw the benefits of a single electronic system that could handle all aspects of the process and so would reduce the duplication of data entry, eliminate filing and improve accuracy.

Kate Smith, Library Assistant, Interlibrary Loans at Trafford Council continues, “We are already phasing out the paper records in our system thanks to UnityUK. We can rely on the system to progress requests without us having to remember to check what’s happening. This improved tracking means that we need only take action if we’re alerted to a problem. As a result, we can prioritise our time to sort out the tricky requests and leave the system to process the routine ones.”

In both Trafford and Manchester, UnityUK has opened up access to a wider collection of library authorities, particularly to libraries from London, The Midlands and Wales, where access was not available previously.

Both authorities agree that the UnityUK help desk service



has been helpful and knowledgeable. During their early days with the service, helpdesk has provided an invaluable follow up after the initial training sessions.

Summary

Manchester is keen to encourage other users to take up the ILL management service, as Gillian explains, “As more UnityUK users take up the integrated ILL service, the need to use and manage emails to send requests will be reduced. This will speed up our workflow.”

In the first 9 months of service, Manchester used UnityUK to:

**carry out 2159 searches
place 1048 requests**

In the first 8 months of service, Trafford used UnityUK to:

**carry out 1068 searches
place 378 requests**

An option that Manchester would like to consider in the future, as a service development, is the UnityUK end user interface for the public which will enable users to search and to submit their requests to the central request unit.

Kate at Trafford concludes, “We believe that the time taken from Trafford sending a request to us receiving the item has been reduced. This is partly due to the efficiency of the service and partly due to the reduction in our administration overhead.

Ultimately, the end result is an improvement to the service that we can offer to our customers.”

