

CASE STUDY



Bringing e-Resource Management into the Next Generation

Verde at the UNILINC Consortium, Australia

Australian Catholic University (ACU) and Southern Cross University (SCU) have many things in common. Both are located in Australia, maintain multiple campuses throughout the country, and serve thousands of students and faculty. As members of the Australian library consortium UNILINC, both institutions are also dedicated to incorporating cutting-edge solutions that streamline their library operations.

Challenges

In the early 2000s these two universities experienced a rapid proliferation of e-resources and both came to the realization that "management by spreadsheet and memory" would not suffice.

"After our e-resources doubled within just one year, we knew we had to bring in a technological solution, and Verde was the answer," says Heather Pearsall, library manager of electronic services at ACU. "We were the first Australian customer, through UNILINC, of Aleph®, the Ex Libris integrated library system (ILS) solution. Since we have also been happy with the Company's SFX® link server and MetaLib® metasearch system for accessing e-collections, Verde was a logical choice for us."

"We knew we had to bring in a technological solution, and Verde was the answer."

SCU felt the same way. "Our positive experience with Aleph, SFX and MetaLib was most certainly a factor in our decision to purchase Verde," says Phil Finnimore, manager of electronic resources and systems at SCU.

As members of UNILINC, ACU and SCU both use the shared UNILINC Aleph system, as do other universities, the state police service, the National Gallery of Australia, and several other educational institutions throughout the country. "All of our members use the UNILINC Aleph system and most have SFX and MetaLib, so we have a close and successful working relationship with Ex Libris over time," says Tony Cargnelutti, project manager for UNILINC.

Previous experience with Ex Libris was a key factor in the smooth implementation of Verde at the two UNILINC institutions. "Often, the simultaneous installation of two systems can be quite complex," Cargnelutti says. "However, due to our successful



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Solution

It was no surprise that these institutions—both satisfied Ex Libris™ customers through UNILINC for nearly a decade—sought out the Company's Verde® electronic resource management system to help address their growing e-resource challenges.

Results

Just a few months since first deploying Verde in the summer of 2007, ACU is quickly discovering that the system offers much more than meets the eye. The ability of Verde to manage constituents within the UNILINC database has exceeded all expectations and management processes have begun moving closer to an all-electronic system.

relationship with both Ex Libris and our members, the process went smoothly and took very little time, and now each institution enjoys a system that reflects its individual needs and look and feel. We are now well positioned to include any other libraries, members or otherwise, in our Verde initiative. UNILINC welcomes any library wishing to take advantage of the power of Verde and the expertise at UNILINC."

"Ex Libris is a true leader in developing robust, standards-based systems."

The fact that Verde, like the rest of the Ex Libris offering, is based on global communications standards and protocols ensured seamless integration with the Aleph and SFX systems. "Good integration means less duplication and more efficiency," Pearsall says. Such a commitment to global standards also assures Verde's interoperability with all the other Ex Libris products utilized by ACU and SCU. "Ex Libris is a true leader in developing robust, standards-based systems, and Verde is another case in point," Cargnelutti says. "It communicates with all other Ex Libris solutions deployed by the two universities, which helps create a powerful, unified system."

Enhanced Access, Enhanced Efficiency

Notwithstanding these synergies, Verde is first and foremost a powerful e-resource management tool. Built with the "biggest and best knowledge base there is," according to Cargnelutti, the system helps library staff define and track each step in e-resource licensing, acquisition, and management. Verde also gathers and displays detailed information about library collections and brings new resources and other electronic products available in the marketplace to the attention of the library.

"We've been very pleased with Verde from the outset," ACU's Pearsall says. "The system helps improve our access to e-resources and enables us to manage our growing



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electronic collections without increasing staff. And with Verde, we can manage our budgets more effectively."

While SCU is still inputting much of its data to bring Verde up to full speed, Finnimore is quite buoyant about the system. "Once all the data is in place and the workflows are set up, Verde will increase our flexibility and efficiency," he says. "We'll be able to easily generate reports and won't have to reinvent the wheel each time we carry out a task."

More Than Meets the Eye

Just a few months since first deploying Verde in the summer of 2007, ACU is quickly discovering that the system offers much more than meets the eye. "The more I continue to learn about Verde, the more I realize how sophisticated it is and how vital it is to our operations," Pearsall says. "I'm particularly impressed by its ability to manage constituents within our database. The system has exceeded my expectations to date."

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UNILINC's Cargnelutti is also impressed with how well Verde ages with greater usage. "Verde is a very flexible system," he says. "Staff can use it at its most basic level at the outset and then take greater advantage of its functionality over time. The product has huge potential that we didn't recognize when we first worked with it."

Whether partially or fully utilized, it's clear that Verde is doing its share to ease libraries into the next generation. "Our management processes have been moving closer and closer to an all-electronic system," SCU's Finnimore says, "and while we're not quite there yet, Verde is a key part of that vision."



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ACU's Pearsall believes that when it comes to other libraries acquiring a cutting-edge system like Verde, it's not a question of if, but when. "Since almost all information is being delivered in electronic format, there's so much more data out there than before which makes it impossible to manage via our traditional ways," she says. "We don't have a choice any longer, and the sooner we make the change, the better."

About UNILINC

UNILINC is a non-profit cooperative formed in 1978 to develop and operate a library network for the benefit of members. Members participate in resource-sharing activities including an integrated library management system (Aleph) that provides a shared bibliographic database of over 2 million items as well as fully autonomous functionality at the institutional level. Other systems provided by UNILINC to all interested libraries include the Ex Libris products MetaLib, SFX, Verde, and DigiTool® as well as the Web-ezy information literacy system developed by UNILINC. UNILINC also undertakes consulting (information technology, best-practice library provisioning, benchmarking), cataloging, library training, website development, data conversion, and system support and development services.

For additional information on UNILINC, see www.unilinc.edu.au.

About Australian Catholic University

Australian Catholic University, established as Australia's only Catholic, national, publicly funded university, is open to all. The university empowers its students and staff with a strong sense of social responsibility and concern for the moral and ethical dimensions of their study and their professional and personal lives.

For additional information on Australian Catholic University, see www.acu.edu.au.



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About Southern Cross University

With a student population of over 14,000, Southern Cross University is building on its reputation of offering contemporary courses that are attuned to the professional needs of industry as well as maintaining an international research profile that is aligned with issues of relevance in its region. Beyond its goal of serving as a best-value education provider, the university aspires to be the region's most research-intensive university.

For additional information on Southern Cross University see www.scu.edu.au.



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