ImageWare

A new document delivery service concept

A system change at the Göttingen State and University Library

From a technical viewpoint, libraries provide three different kinds of services: services that basically don't require any technology such as the loan of manuscripts, activities that can be practically supported by technology such as media booking or cataloguing and, finally, services that rely on efficient technology, such as the digitisation or electronic delivery of documents. Yet this kind of technology is associated with a substantial cost factor and its replacement - on a tight budget - is always a big event. One such 'big event' took place when Göttingen State and University Library (SUB) initiated a project to switch over to new document delivery hardware and software between summer 2005 and the beginning of 2006.

The initial situation

Die SUB, the fifth-ranking Subito library in terms of document delivery volume, had been using a freely redistributable software called Gefjon to send electronic documents and then generate invoice records. This software had been developed at the Brunswick University Library at the end of the 1990s as a pragmatic solution parallel to the familiar Subito DOD software. Interestingly, this software is based on Allegro, which the libraries are familiar with, so it offered a home advantage compared with DOD (see http://www.allegro-c.de/gefjon/ for further information).

Since the Göttingen library had not been a traditional DOD user since Subito started out, MyBib eDoc was tested at the Düsseldorf Librarian's Day in 2005 as a rival product to Subito's DODII software, which was nearing completion at that time. The hosting concept offered by MyBib eDoc's provider, ImageWare Components - together with the VZG, the head office of the Common Library Network of the German Federal States (GBV) - met with a high level of acceptance. Another important factor was the undertaking to make the software compatible with older devices (Minolta PS 3000) and integrate Ariel orders.

Since no-one had any experience with the migration of Allegro to MyBib eDoc at that time, the SUB was a kind of 'beta customer' that helped to build confidence in the product. The terms of the contract were obviously interesting, both for the SUB and for ImageWare Components.

The change of system

ImageWare Components supplied six Bookeye® book scanners. They were to be distributed throughout the new and old buildings, and the four specialist libraries (medicine, chemistry, physics and forestry). Göttingen had originally wanted to lease the scanners, though it soon became evident that the income per page would enable it to recoup the purchase price investment in 34 months.

The software was installed on a mainframe computer at the VZG because, as already mentioned, this enabled a reduction in personnel costs. The monthly hosting fee was much lower than the system maintenance costs and the costs for the provision of a server would otherwise have been. Hosting also guarantees support during the entire process of document delivery. If any problems occur, support is provided by the VZG and otherwise ImageWare Components.

The change over of the Subito 1 (documents) and Subito 3 (monographies) services, as well as the GBV's online remote lending services, was made without any interruption to library operations. When the server had been set up at the end of May 2005, the service with the lowest order volume 'GBV direkt' was activated first at the beginning of August. Subito 1 and 3 were activated at the beginning of September.

The integration of the Göttingen library's special delivery services SSG-S, GAUSS and MATH, which had originally been scheduled for December 2005, didn't take place after all. If possible, these special services will be included in the Göttingen Subito portfolio by the end of 2006. Work is still continuing on the integration of the Göttingen Clinic's document delivery service, which has a daily in-house delivery volume of between 100 and 150 documents. Another aspect is the incorporation of ARIEL scanning software in MyBib eDoc.

The SUB Göttingen and ImageWare Components were recently requested by the VZG to test document delivery to ARIEL stations. Now, almost all ARIEL versions can receive MyBib eDoc, and files generated at ARIEL stations can also be sent via MyBib. This function hasn't been available to DODII users up to now.

The hidden costs proved to be the costs for upgrading the old scanners and costs for the procurement of more powerful computers and monitors. However, the existing copiers with scan functions were initially used in the project. The opportunity of using scanner copiers is particularly interesting for delivery stations with low scanning efficiency. Unfortunately, the transfer of invoice records to the university's SAP system was not possible. Although it can be done via CSV file which can be generated in MyBib eDoc, this would have meant dispensing with collective invoices for multiple orders.

Summary

It has been possible to process important document delivery services and all online remote lending services, which includes around 200,000 orders per year, via MyBib eDoc. The most important project aim was achieved after only four months. From today's perspective, the biggest advantage is convenient order administration because the work involved is considerably reduced. Documents are readily made available via the user-friendly Web delivery method, which is very practical when large volumes of data have to be transferred.

One positive aspect of the project is that the customer and provider were still on good terms afterwards and are already planning follow-up projects. In mid-August 2006 the SUL commenced tests in its reading room of a scan-to-USB station (eCopy station) made available by ImageWare Components, which will enable cost accounting via the charges account.

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