



# SELMS: Going from strength to strength through partnership with Civica Libraries



Created in 2006 when six authorities joined together, the SELMS consortium has more than doubled in size since, now including 13 member authorities across the South East of England. The library consortium currently supports more than 600,000 borrowers with over six million items stocked across its libraries.

## Supporting a growing consortium with a single database

To support its recent and future growth, the SELMS consortium needed a robust, efficient library management system designed to support their requirements and provide an exceptional user experience for their customers. SELMS chose Spydus to manage all their resources within a single database, but with each partner authority benefiting from their own distinct parameters, collections and search interfaces.

## Outcomes

- ▶ **Cost savings – one of the 13 SELMS authorities saves over £81k per annum and another has cut their system costs by 50%**
- ▶ **Improved performance – reservations fulfilled more quickly**
- ▶ **Reduced technical burden on single authorities**
- ▶ **Improved customer self-service experience and provision**
- ▶ **Channel shift to more efficient means – telephone renewals now down to 1%**
- ▶ **Ability to quickly benchmark performance across other authorities**
- ▶ **Shared expertise and best practice.**

“Spydus functionality is just fantastic, because a customer can have access to all 13 authority libraries and more than 300 service points with just one library card. They can sit at home and browse over six million items of stock, reserve what they like, and have it delivered to their local library.”

Hilary Ballard, SELMS

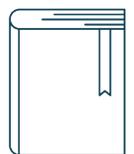
600,000

borrowers supported across 13 authorities



Over 6m

items of stock available from over 300 service points



The SELMS consortium has helped its member libraries make significant cost savings and performance improvements with Civica's Spydus library management software.

### Boosting efficiency by combining resources

Combining resources as a consortium means that the authorities within SELMS provide the same high level of customer service across their individual sites, sharing best practice. By holding regular consortium meetings, the member libraries can easily benchmark their provision and learn from the experiences of others, whilst benefiting from cost savings and efficiencies gained by aligning and extending services.

As Duncan Mead from Medway Libraries explains **"Being part of the SELMS consortium offers Medway Library service and therefore the residents of Medway a whole range of benefits. Being part of this supportive group allows Medway to reflect, compare, contrast, test new ideas and seek out support from this vast pool of experience and expertise. This is so important when planning the future strategic direction of the service."**

Hazel Edwards, Buckinghamshire Libraries, adds; **"As part of SELMS I have a ready-made pool of library expertise to call on. With partners willing to share their knowledge readily, we all benefit."**

**"Reading has moved to a system that offers better functionality to staff and customers...and has allowed a saving of over 50% on the previous provider."**

Simon Smith, Reading Libraries & SELMS partner

Although the biggest challenge for any library is to deliver services with squeezed employee resources and within tight budgets, it's also key to retain loyal customers and offer a high-quality customer experience with these resource constraints. Working across authorities allows libraries to offer their customers a much wider catalogue with multiple access points, while retaining a local perspective.

### An effective consortium model with Civica Spydus

Spydus, Civica's library management system, is highly flexible and has been developed with consortium working in mind. With an easy-to-use portal, customers can access library services from both their local library and those across SELMS.

**"Civica's consortium model offers customers a single portal to access all services, but it does this without compromising the service's local identity – it is flexible and allows us to set up our own fees and charges and include local initiatives while maintaining the same overall setup."**

Hilary Ballard, SELMS

For SELMS, it is important that each library maintained a local identity – libraries are a community hub, so it is vital that specific local events and initiatives can be promoted. Spydus is a flexible system that can be tailored to the individual needs of libraries while taking advantage of the cost savings and efficiencies gained by being part of a consortium.

### Cost savings and performance improvements

Joining SELMS and taking advantage of the Spydus system has enabled the member libraries to make significant savings, both in terms of costs and administration time. Alongside the benefits that being part of a consortium can provide – for example the increased purchasing power – using Spydus has seen the libraries reduce their expenditure and reallocate budget and employees elsewhere.

For example, Richmond Library saves £10K a year on its archiving software by implementing Spydus. By moving to digital communication rather than direct mail, they also save an average of £17k on postal charges and are able to redeploy one full time equivalent salary. Coupled with a £24K annual saving on support and maintenance, Richmond is saving around £81K a year.

And as Simon Smith, Reading Libraries, states **"We have also gained access to linked systems at a consortium rate which we would not have been able to afford when standalone."**

Not only have SELMS' libraries made significant financial savings, they have also seen performance improve and have continually met and exceeded targets. Prior to using Spydus within a consortium context, Richmond Library were ranked 15th in London in terms of response speed of reservation requests. They are now ranked first, with 79% of reservations delivered within seven days.