CIVICA

Ipswich Libraries "click n' collect" with
Spydus APIs

Ipswich Libraries in Queensland, Australia, has transformed its library service with Spydus APIs to offer library users a unique, retail-like experience. In creating a modern library "Marketplace" for their digital and physical spaces, Ipswich Libraries took inspiration from the retail world. They created a bookstore experience in the physical libraries, and using Spydus APIs the ability to easily browse, and then "click n' collect" items online. Ipswich's library Marketplace features popular items and collections curated by librarians and based on borrowing data from Civica's analytics solution, SpydusBI.

The Challenge: Ipswich Libraries were limited by their existing system in meeting the needs of a broad customer base, including digital natives and older generations.

Overhauling the service offering

The City of Ipswich, which boasts the youngest population demographic in Australia, is a local government area in Queensland with a population of 200,000. The city is known for its architectural, cultural and natural heritage and its innovative library service, which is at the heart of its community. Ipswich operates four libraries (Ipswich Central, Redbank Plaza, Redbank Plains and Springfield Central) as well as a mobile library. A staff of 100 supports around 48,000 users, loaning over 850,000 physical items this year.

Innovation has always been a key focus for Ipswich Libraries and at the heart of this to provide a service that would transform their users' library experience. This led to the creation of the Marketplace with its book store-type of display in their two main branches and a 'Netflix' like display online using Civica's extensive range of APIs.

Whilst Ipswich has one of the youngest demographics in Australia, they wanted to create an experience that was simple and memorable for all users. "The demographic makeup didn't affect us. We felt that our previous offering was underserving a ll of our users and not just the more digitally inclined or enthusiastic ones," says Matt Pascoe, Library Business Services Manager, Ipswich Libraries.

"So we wanted to deliver a wholesale increase in value in our service offering in the digital space for everybody. We wanted to bring the library experience more in line with a contemporary online customer experience in general. As a result, we didn't really look to other libraries. We looked at the retail sector to see how we could deliver our service offering in terms of

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Ipswich libraries chose Spydus10 as their library management system, which is a modern, cloud-based system, helping them to deliver a more sophisticated library service to their users. Library staff use Spydus and its core capabilities to manage the main library functions, while SpydusBI, APIs and custom development helped them to design and deliver a modern user experience.

Replicating retail with Marketplace

The Marketplace offers content based on key categories such as top trending, award winning, inspiring etc. Inside the libraries, the collection is presented more like a book shop, with the display replacing traditional library spine-out displays. In the digital space, Marketplace translates into a modern interface offering genre-based collections that make browsing, reserving and collecting items faster through a "click & collect" experience. Books are regularly refreshed and rotated based on data received from analytics. Items that are not borrowed in a three month period are removed from the Marketplace and replaced with more popular materials.

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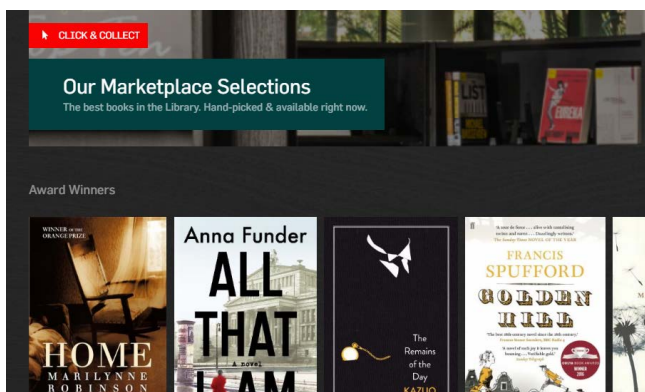
Spydus Analytics powering Marketplace

"The performance in our Marketplace outstrips performance anywhere else in the library by almost a 100%," says Matt.

"Other branches have a turnover rate of 4.5 but the Marketplace is close to 10 depending on how popular the collection is. But that wouldn't work if the librarians couldn't get regular meaningful performance information and we get that all through Spydus analytics," he adds.

Librarians and owners of curated collections rely on SpydusBI for accurate information about the performance of their collection, down to item level reporting on which books are performing and which are not There are regular automated performance reports scheduled on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis that go to the relevant departments within the library regularly. This is particularly helpful in the Marketplace, which is managed at a much more granular level.

Future plans

Ipswich Libraries have decided to extend the experience beyond their branches to high traffic areas such as shopping malls. They plan to install a library pod, a 600-book retail kiosk at the Karalee Shopping village in the near future[1]. These pods are based on the Marketplace model and will enable library users to borrow items on display and non-users to sign up as new members. The Libraries will rely on RFID technology to deliver a seamless "browse and borrow" experience and analytics to tailor the collection going forward. "Spydus will play a role in this initiative by displaying the catalogue, on boarding customers who sign up via kiosk and also authenticate the user and complete the transaction," explains Matt.

Benefits and outcomes

▶ Boost in borrowing rate with 80% of items being on loan and available for people to order for collection at their closest library[2]

▶ Accurate information about reading patterns and user preferences used to tailor offering to match user choices.

https://www.ipswichlibraries.com.au/marketplace/

1 https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/media/articles/2018/prototype-library-pod-for-redeveloped-karalee-shopping-village
2 https://www.qt.com.au/news/new-library-strategy-boosts-residents-book-borrowi/3341520/