

CIVICA

Case study

College of
Southern Idaho
Library transforms
its archives with
Spydus Library
Management
from Civica



Case study

In 2025, the College of Southern Idaho (CSI) celebrated its 60th anniversary. An integral part of this respected institution is its library, which has been keeping collections throughout those last 60 years. These relate not just to the college's history, they also preserve important historical records about the people and communities that make up the Magic Valley region. It was only recently, however, that the college library set about digitizing its collections to make them accessible to the public for the very first time.

While converting the physical records into digital assets required specialist archiving skills and patience, the main challenge was in finding a platform built specifically for managing digital archives that could also provide easy integration with library services and curate digital exhibits. That was, at least, until they discovered Spydus Library Management by Civica.

Digital archiving made easy

"Our archives existed, but people didn't really know they were there", said Reed Hepler, the librarian and archivist tasked with delivering this transformation. "Even people on campus didn't really come in and use them. I was hired with a mandate to modernize this valuable resource into digital collections, digital archives and digital exhibits that could be accessible to all."

CSI's collections reveal a rich history that covers the origination, changes and development of community groups and institutions around Magic Valley, as well as important records pertaining to the history of the college itself. However, they had all remained

largely hidden from the public view due to archaic archiving systems of dusty box files.

Finding a suitable platform with functionalities to match Reed's remit proved tricky. "Once I had organized and archived the physical records, my first digital iteration was a website built on very basic HTML. It took a long time to set up and then the functionality was extremely limited. It also looked terrible", he said. "We were completely financially and physically hindered from creating an accessible and user-friendly resource."



Months of uploads
managed in just
two days

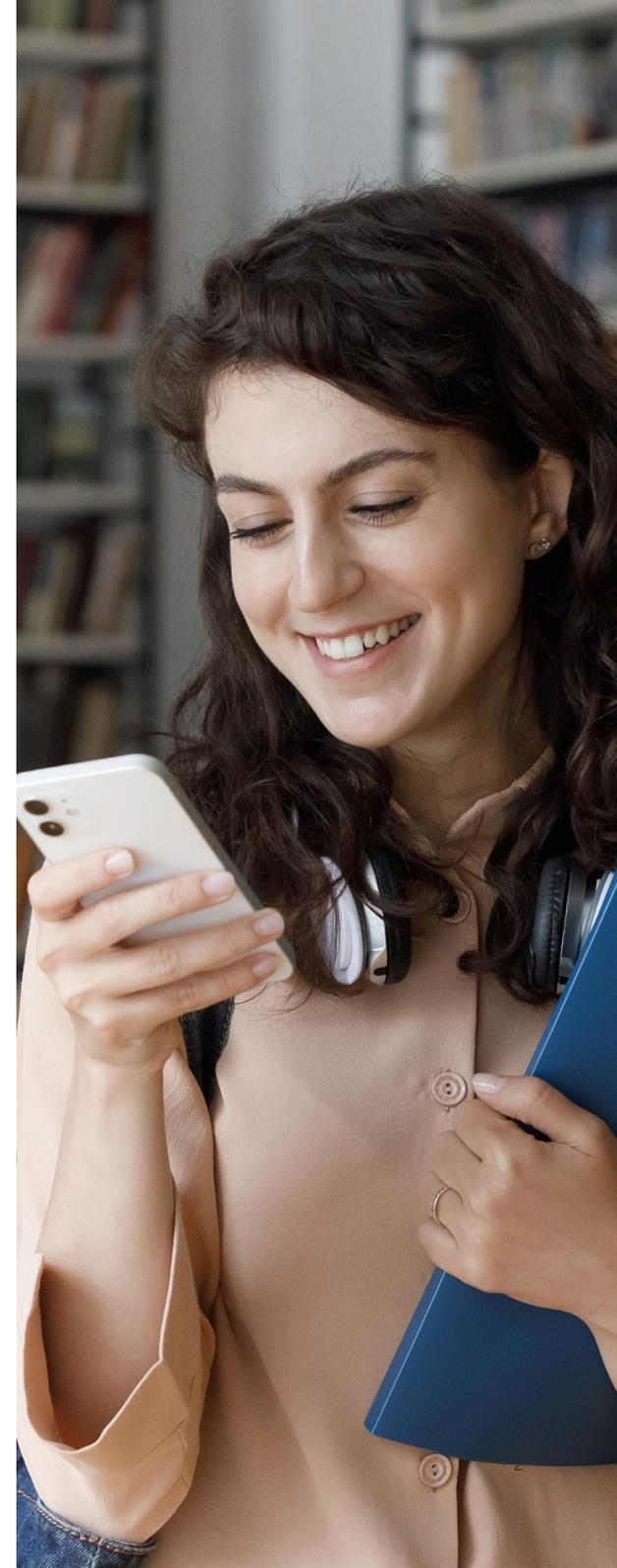


Create digital collections in
just 20 minutes



Set up engaging digital
exhibits

CIVICA





Finding an integrated library management platform

Reed searched for suitable archiving software but found them all to have very limited capabilities. That was until he received a recommendation about a library management provider that was a new entrant to the US market. Civica had arrived in North America with 40+ years' experience in developing sophisticated digital library management systems via its Spydus product. It was already well established as the archiving solution of choice among some of the biggest public service organizations across Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the UK. Importantly, unlike competitors that Reed had explored, its archiving and digital asset management modules were offered as standard core components.

"I knew that I was onto a good thing with Civica when I was talking to an ex-archivist from the outset. She understood exactly what I needed and was able to show me the art of the possible in digital archiving. It was such a welcome relief after exploring so many other options that just weren't up to the task. In fact, Spydus is able to deliver

way more than I could have expected, essentially rolling six key offerings into one, which I hadn't thought possible before."

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Transforming library archives

What took three months to upload onto the previous system, Spydus facilitated in just a couple of days. It took Reed around 20 minutes to create each collection in the new system, ultimately curating the records and digital assets, including audio files, images and videos, across CSI's 34 different collections with ease. As part of the process, by following the Spydus template for organizing data, Reed was also able to **reduce the size of the digital collection by 1.5 terabytes** by removing duplicated data.

Keeping the records up to date is another area of significant improvement with the new system. "I used to have to update a single record in four different places and make all of the cross-checks before going live. Now it's managed via a single action that automatically updates every instance across the collection. That's a huge efficiency saving and makes it foolproof to human error."

In terms of support services, Reed added:

“ **the customer support has been phenomenal.** ”

They are really helpful and really fast. If we are struggling to do anything then they'll jump on a video call and help us out. For example, we worked with the Civica team to create an extra widget that tracks who has reserved our study rooms and when. We've been able to easily customize and expand on the functionality like that."





Increasing public interaction with library archives

Spydus includes useful templates and page generators designed for creating digital exhibit pages. This hadn't been possible for CSI before but now presents new opportunities for increasing interactions with the collection. "We're aiming to increase comments and engagement with the community via our new library management system," Reed said, "and we are experiencing an immediate increase just by being able to properly display some of our unique and fringe collections."

Reed estimates that about half of the archive users are from the college itself, with interactions now "skyrocketing" as more people discover its availability. Other requests come in from interested local parties and businesses looking for historical information on a range of topics.

"One business owner was looking for a picture of the first airplane ever flown in Magic Valley, which took place in the Twin Falls area. We hold the image in our collection. They planned to upsize it to be used as decorative artwork on their office wall."

The archive is also growing as a result of this transformation. Increased awareness has led to an increase in people wanting to donate historically relevant records for preservation. Most recently, a number of digital records were added that marked the college's 60th anniversary celebrations. "There is increased awareness that this service is now available, and more people are coming forward to use it", Reed finished.

With Spydus, CSI is creating a dynamic, accessible resource that will continue to grow and engage the community for years to come.



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