

# Chapter 16

## ERMS Druthers

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### ABSTRACT

*In an effort to find an online-automated electronic resource management system that provides licensing, acquisitions, and statistical information easily, Columbia College of South Carolina journeyed into the world of open source and vendor-based applications. During this journey, dead ends and roadblocks paved the way. To encompass all the identified requirements of the online-automated system, a new system needed to be designed.*

### ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Columbia College of South Carolina (CCSC) offers coeducational graduate and evening undergraduate programs, but at the center of this institution is a private, residential, four-year Liberal Arts College for approximately 900 women. It was founded in 1854 in Columbia, South Carolina, where it remains today, and it is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. With a student-faculty ratio of 12:1, Columbia College ranks among the top-performing institutions in the country in the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). Students are from twenty-three states and twenty countries (Columbia College, 2012).

CCSC's J. Drake Edens Library consists of approximately 120,000 print titles, 200,000+ electronic titles, and 70+ electronic database subscriptions (both purchased and open access). There are three, full-time reference/user services librarians, and up until July of 2012, two technical

services librarians, at which point the two positions were combined into one. It was decided that a merger of all technical service responsibilities could be successfully completed by one librarian without too much interruption of the work process. However, to accomplish this goal, more online tools to help with the management of each area encompassed in this merger, needed to be explored.

Collins and Grogg (2011) report that "ERMS users want a centralized system that can run a gamut of acquisitions – and the ability to track data over time" (p. 24). This statement summarizes the challenges that an Electronic Resource Manager faces every day. There are "one-stop shop" systems available to the end user that provides them with search capabilities of a library's entire collection of print and electronic resources. There are vendor-based systems that allow managers to view the services the library has acquired from the vendor and there are individual resource database areas that provide the usage statistics and other relevant

information for the resource. In summary, there is a variety of tools currently available to provide the Electronic Resource Manager with the information he or she needs to be successful, however, each tool requires a log-in that the Resource Manager needs to remember and maintain. In today's busy world, a centralized system in which to maintain all this information would be more proficient. This case study reviews the requirements needed for this centralized system and what one manager has done to find this centralized solution.

## **SETTING THE STAGE**

The responsibilities of managing electronic resources were spread out between all the library staff. The lead reference librarian was taking care of the initial management and yearly statistical gathering activities. Another reference/Web librarian was responsible for adding the database resource to the proxy server and to the library Web page list, while the serial manager was responsible for adding the individual serial titles that were purchased in electronic form to the Electronic Resource Management System (ERMS) provided by EBSCO. The cataloger was responsible for adding the records of both the individual titles, as well as the titles provided by each electronic database to the catalog and keeping those records updated. The cataloger was also responsible for updating the ERMS with current information about the subscribed database resources. Finally, the acquisition/collection development manager was responsible for the contracts, and the administrative assistant was responsible for keeping track of the licensing. With the merging of all technical service responsibilities came the desire to streamline the electronic resource management process that was in place.

In an effort to improve the electronic resource services offered by CCSC, the library staff came together and strategically planned what options were available to bring the scattered responsibili-

ties together. It was decided that while each still maintained a voice in the selection process, the emerging technologies/technical service coordinator (the newly formed position that combined the responsibilities of the cataloger, systems administrator, acquisitions, and collection development) would be handling the management, statistical gathering and analysis, licensing, contracts, and the up-keep of all the records in the ERMS for all the electronic resources that are currently in place. This would also include those that will be purchased in the future. The Web librarian would maintain the responsibility of the proxy server as well as the Web-based resource list.

The goal of this new organizational structure is to have one person responsible for all the aspects of electronic resource management to avoid confusion and streamline the process. In the past, even though everyone did their part effectively, the challenge was ensuring the information flowed from one participant to another to prevent any lapse in the time frame of the launching of a new resource. It is thought that by implementing this new organizational structure, the fractured process that had been used before would no longer provide the challenges of the past. Crum (2008) provides supporting evidence that the cataloger and electronic resource manager need to work closely together, "...there is a need to develop and harmonize local practices for cataloging serials; cataloging and electronic resource staff need to work together to develop procedures for managing electronic titles in the catalog" (p. 220). This need provides a good reason to bring these positions together. Systems administration also requires a strong working knowledge of cataloging and the technical skills to maintain the electronic resource environments. Therefore, this new structure worked, although, like with any new process, there are new challenges. In this case, these challenges are directly related to the increase in responsibility to one person. This case study reviews how these challenges are being met and overcome.

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