

Chapter 8

Developing Unique Study Room Reservation Systems: Examples From Teachers College and Stony Brook University

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ABSTRACT

Room reservation systems are important in an increasingly collaborative library environment. This chapter explores two case studies of libraries experimenting with room-bound, electronic reservation kiosks. Teachers College, Columbia University built a native app to run on room-coded iPads, while Stony Brook University developed custom code to run Steelcase's RoomWizard system in a university environment. This chapter will discuss the particularities and challenges of both systems while addressing the solutions from other libraries discussed in the literature. Room reservation systems are a challenge for libraries of all types and many diverse solutions, from using vendor solutions to creating tools from scratch, have emerged in recent years. This chapter will explore two stories on that spectrum with attention to the potential applications and solutions emerging in this area.

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INTRODUCTION

Collaborative spaces are an essential part of many academic libraries. Access to technology and growing expectations from patrons have led many libraries to transition from paper-based systems for reserving collaborative group study rooms and other spaces, towards web or mobile reservation systems. There are now many web-based options for libraries, including both open and licensed systems and some of these are affiliated with integrated library systems or other vendor-produced products. These systems must have the ability to conform to each library's specific policies, groups, and specifications, which leads many libraries to create their own customizable reservation systems. This chapter will explore an overview of libraries in the literature creating web and mobile study room reservation systems and focus in on two case studies, from Teachers College, Columbia University and Stony Brook University, of libraries creating and customizing vendor-created room reservation systems for their own requirements.

Most libraries do not have the infrastructure to support the full development of study room reservation systems and onsite display systems, so this chapter will focus on two case studies that have built upon existing software and adapted it to meet the unique needs of the institution. In the case of Teachers College, a native iPad app was built on an open source meeting room booking system and at Stony Brook University, developers made modifications to a vendor-supplied product for booking study rooms.

BACKGROUND

There are several examples of libraries customizing their own web-based reservation systems on top of existing technology using open source software, WordPress Plugins (Smith, 2016), and other tools. There are also examples of libraries taking on this task from scratch with teams of developers and sharing them with the community. Ball State University Libraries built a web system for room booking called OpenRoom (Arthur, Robert, & Bradley, 2010) which later added the capability to book rooms via mobile (Kim, 2013). The Cabell Library at Virginia Commonwealth University also adopted Ball State's OpenRoom (Doherty & White, 2012). Ball State's OpenRoom is a good example of a room reservation technology that was built for a specific library, but was then made open source and adapted to several other libraries. This model represents a good way to mainstream library created technologies to institutions that may not have the infrastructure to support from-scratch development.

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