VERSO

CASE STUDY

Saxton B. Little Free Library Expands Patron Services with the VERSO® Integrated Library System

Challenge:

The Columbia Free Library opened in 1883 and became the Saxton B. Little Free Library in 1903. This public library houses a collection of nearly 40,000 items and serves a population of over 5,000 in Columbia, Connecticut. Over the past ten years the library has worked hard to achieve its goals of better serving the evolving needs of its patrons and leveraging the latest advancements in technology to continually modernize and streamline its operations.

In the early 1990s the Saxton B. Little Free Library began exploring its options to replace its manual circulation, lending and borrowing processes. The library staff reviewed various ILS products on the market, however, they quickly realized that many of the available library automation solutions were tailored for larger lending establishments with substantial IT budgets and departmental resources.

The small, public library needed a library automation partner that could help it keep pace with technology while keeping an eye on its budgetary restrictions.

Solution:

In 1995, after carefully evaluating several leading library management products, Saxton B. Little selected VERSO®. It proved to be an ideal solution for the library as it was designed to handle a library's automation needs while also addressing limited financial and IT resources. The system's easy-to-use interface and extensive features allowed the library staff to recognize an immediate improvement in their daily operations, while not being too complex to learn and use.

"We looked at numerous companies and finally selected Auto-Graphics as our ILS vendor because it offered the best solution at a price we could afford," noted Carol Kubala, Adult Services Librarian at Saxton B. Little Free Library. "Our next big leap in technology came a few years later when we migrated to Auto-Graphic's Software as a Service (SaaS) solution to take the burden off maintaining the ILS system ourselves. This quickly freed up our IT resources while still providing an excellent OPAC that met our requirements for patron access and record confidentiality."

Results:

With the upgrade to VERSO, the public library and its patrons immediately benefited from VERSO's intuitive patron and staff interface. Patrons are able to log into the web-based system either in the library or from their internet connection at home to search for books, place holds and control their user experience with custom settings. Patrons now have access to many new features including enhancements made available through Auto-Graphics' partner, Syndetics Solutions, such as book jacket art and content summaries. Furthermore, through the fully integrated OPAC, patrons can seamlessly access both state and local resources relating to interlibrary loan and federated search of subscription databases through a single interface.

"The patrons love the 'Search, Place a Hold from home' feature that is part of the VERSO system," continued Kubala. "They have jumped at the opportunity to select books from the comfort of their home, which helps us redirect our staff resources to running other aspects of the library."

The Saxon B. Little Free Library now enjoys VERSO's powerful, web-based administrative functions designed to improve staff productivity and workflow for the circulation, cataloging and serials The staff is also able to access and utilize a variety of customizable reports and a comprehensive statistics package online and in real-time. Deployed on a SaaS basis, the Saxon B. Little Free Library's system requires no client software to load or maintain.

"We were very pleased that Auto-Graphics, was able to meet all our requirements for the new, enhanced system we wanted to provide our patrons," added Kubala. "The upgrade was painless and dovetailed well with our existing systems in a way that has been very easy for our staff to understand. In addition, we continue to see increased usage from patrons accessing our library catalog from home and out of town. Auto-Graphics has helped us achieve a modern ILS system that benefits all our stakeholders."

Auto·Graphics

Powering the Business of Library ™