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In the Cloud with OCLC – New System at Pepperdine University Libraries

Sally Bryant, Pepperdine University
Gan Ye, Pepperdine University

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by Sally Bryant and Grace Ye

We recently went live here at Pepperdine University Libraries with OCLC’s new Web-scale Management Services (WMS). WMS is a next generation integrated library system hosted by OCLC (www.oclc.org/us/en/webscale/default.htm). Pepperdine University Libraries decided after reviewing costs of the many Voyager upgrades we would need and the added costs of server maintenance that we would change to the WMS system.

Pepperdine was one of the first libraries to go live with WMS. The WMS system replaces our old integrated library system, which was Ex Libris’ Voyager system. Voyager was a server and client system, while WMS is in “the cloud.” WMS is currently a beta system and will be available sometime in 2011.

One of the hardest things about the whole conversion process was migrating our voyager patron records into WMS. In WMS the patron’s bar code is a unique key, while Voyager uses the institution ID as a unique key. This means that in Voyager each patron may have multiple bar codes. We needed to merge multiple bar codes into one bar code. Another problem was cleaning up all of the old patron fines and fees, records we had manually created, etc. We also had proxy patrons and inactive patrons that we could not delete from Voyager to migrate to WMS. We had to clean up all of these problem areas before we migrated to WMS.

Once we migrated to WMS and went live, we got used to doing a number of ILS functions differently. For one thing, WMS is a web-based system, meaning it is accessible from anywhere. Also, many circulation functions such as pull lists are in real time. WMS also allows for staff members to use their individual patron accounts as a staff module log in (different permissions are assigned to student worker and staff accounts). We are also using the WMS reserve system called Academic Course Reserves. This is just the first phase of their reserves system, but it is quite easy to use and it is searchable. We are looking forward to the report module and placing holds on individual copies, not just on the title. Overall, WMS is easy to use in terms of the user interface.

Since WMS is a beta system, right now we are still uncovering issues and fixing problems, but, it is nice for us to have input for the design. We believe that in the future it will cut down our work time and free us from maintaining local library system hardware and software.

Sally Bryant graduated from San Jose State University SLIS in 2002. She is the Head of Access Services at Pepperdine University.

Grace Ye graduated from McGill University in 2002. As a systems librarian at Pepperdine University, she assisted OCLC to migrate Pepperdine University Libraries’ Voyager data to WMS and configure the WMS system.