National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

Creating a more unified institution

NYCU
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The merger of two major Taiwanese universities was the perfect opportunity to upgrade from siloed systems to a single, shared network with the cloud-based Ex Libris platform.

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About National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU) was created in 2021 through the merger of two top-tier universities in Taiwan: National Yang-Ming University, which focuses on biomedical research, and National Chiao Tung University, which focuses on electronic communications research. At present, NYCU incorporates 19 colleges, 7 national laboratories, and 75 academic research centers. There are over 20,400 students enrolled at the university, which has a teaching staff of 1,245 faculty members.

The NYCU libraries, located on the Yangming and Guangfu campuses, employ a total of 46 librarians, a director and an associate director. The libraries' collections include 1,126,649 print volumes, 1,087,908 ebooks, 121,010 multimedia items, 158,716 e-journals and 196 databases.

NYCU is also part of the University System of Taiwan (UST), through which four university libraries jointly develop, integrate and share their resources. In 2003, National Central University, National Chiao Tung University, National Tsing Hua University and National Yang-Ming University recognized the advantage of establishing a university system which would combine the energy of the four universities in teaching and research, integrating their resources and playing up complementary strengths to enhance the quality of education in each of the four universities. In 2008, the plan was finally approved by the Ministry of Education and UST was formally established. After the merger of National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, the National Chengchi University also joined UST.

A Complex of Silos

As NCYU was the product of a merger between two major institutions, it faced several integration challenges. For the libraries, this included a mix of library management systems that did not naturally mesh. The Guangfu campus library had been using Ex Libris Aleph for a long time, while the library at Yangming campus used Sierra. The libraries also depended on third-party solutions for some activities and a siloed system for managing interlibrary loan records from the UST consortium. In addition, SFX and Ex Libris Primo were in use for library discovery at some of the universities in the UST.

Processes were disjointed and there was little mutual visibility across the libraries without a unified resources management solution. For example, ebook donations had to first be saved in a siloed repository and then an Aleph cataloging record with a hyperlink had to be created. Similarly, resource websites had to be created for other digital assets. Patrons were pleased with the UST's interlibrary loan services, as well as their interactions with the catalogue through Primo; however, librarians were unable to get necessary real-time updates regarding patrons at other institutions than their own.

Time for an Upgrade

Library Director Ming-Jiu Hwang sees the mission of the library as providing patrons with the most precise and accurate information. To achieve this goal, the NYCU libraries were dependent on systems that had to be coordinated during the university merger. Rather than attempt to manage an increasingly complex ecosystem, the library team saw the merger as a good opportunity to move from siloed management systems to a single, upgraded and unified library services platform.

The NYCU librarians were familiar with Ex Libris solutions in use at the Guangfu campus and in the UST network. They saw that the Ex Libris Higher-Ed Platform, with Alma for resource management and Primo for discovery, would be most effective in providing a true cloud-based solution that made it possible to function as a fully unified organization and integrate seamlessly with larger consortia. To jointly manage metadata records and acquisitions, share resources, and coordinate fulfillment, resource sharing, vendor information and administration. An Alma Network Zone was configured as part of implementation. All the members of UST worked hard to ensure that relevant data was uploaded and incorporated in the Network Zone. Alongside Alma and Primo, the university also adopted RapidILL for even more efficient interlibrary loan.

Sharing Across the Entire Lifecycle

NYCU libraries are embracing the Ex Libris cloud technology, as they learn to use new features and workflows. With the implementation of the Alma and Primo solutions, they have already eliminated siloes and unified resource management, streamlining library processes.

With the Network Zone, for example, there is no need for error-prone deduplication across separate catalogues or between Primo and a resource management system. The ability to seamlessly collaborate across the Ex Libris platform allows for the creation of a shared catalogue from the earliest stage of the resource lifecycle. Moreover, the library team has found the integration of RapidILL to be very successful in facilitating a more efficient and broader interlibrary loan.

Director Ming-Jiu Hwang also noted that his team is very pleased with the flexibility and robustness of Alma Analytics. He encourages the staff to utilize the tool for insights into their processes and collections, as well as to share information across the library branches and with academic stakeholders. The director is looking forward to leveraging Alma Analytics for data-driven decision-making regarding acquisitions and the like, as more data is collected in the months to come.

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