Case Study – McGill University

Overview

The McGill University Library is internationally renowned, and recognized as one of the most research-intensive institutions. Comprised of 13 branches and over 6 million items, it is the fourth largest academic research library in Canada accommodating over 10,000 visitors each day.

The McGill Library began collecting rare materials in the 1850s, and through gifts and purchases the collections now constitute a highly diverse and valuable research resource. The collections actively support the teaching, learning and research needs of McGill students and faculty.

"The Rare Books Library has an existing digital service available for those who need high- resolution images for publication. This specialized scanning service requires coordination time between staff, researcher and the digital team, not to mention actual scanning time." Says Ann Marie Holland, Liaison Librarian for the History of Printing Collection.

There is also the issue of book preservation – most of the materials in the Library require special attention and care, therefore traditional photocopier technology was an inadequate solution for providing access to the materials.

The Ristech Solution

McGill University Library has worked closely with **Ristech Company Inc.** in the past for other digitization projects, so when the Book2net Kiosk was introduced, the Library was immediately interested in the benefits and productivity this walk-up scanner offered.

"Ristech continues to provide us with leading edge technology that enables us to deliver our research materials in a cost effective and energy efficient manner." Says Diane Koen, Director of Libraries (Interim)

The Book2net Kiosk was installed in the Rare Books Library, and is frequently used for requests from students as well as faculty and independent researchers, where it has received extremely positive feedback.

The Kiosk is a self-contained book scanner that allows Rare Book staff to digitize texts and images in high-quality colour for students and researchers. This has streamlined the entire process of providing copies. The Kiosk has a scan time of 0.3 seconds and a scan processing time of 1.9 seconds, making it highly efficient and productive.

"The Book2net Kiosk performs a quick scan on the spot for those who need an image for research purposes, which is great for workflow. Rare Books staff can handle these requests separately. We get through the mounting digital requests more efficiently." Says Ann Marie Holland.

On top of its exceptional scan time and quality, the Kiosk is an open-face scanner and exerts no force or stress onto books. The scanning table is a scale that shifts balance according to the weight distribution. It also can accommodate varying spine thicknesses.

"It's the perfect machine to deal with our special collections needs because it is gentle on books and fragile items – instead of slapping heavy volumes down onto a glass platform, which is destructive to our books, the Kiosk takes the image from an overhead position, and the cradle bed adjusts to the item's specific dimensions so it is held in place safely while the image is captured." Says Holland.

Now and Beyond

As McGill University continues to be a leader in academics and research, visitors to the Library will have greater access to rare materials through high-quality images, without compromising the condition of the books.

Currently, the Book2net Kiosk is being used for site research requests and has significantly streamlined the process. Many patrons are now opting for the overhead scanner. The Rare Book Library looks to gradually replace photocopy requests in favour of this new technology and is actively promoting its use for site requests.

"We are very pleased with the output. There has been a lot of great feedback from the users. Overall, the Book2net Kiosk is an excellent solution." comments Holland.

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