

## Improving the Service at the University of Lincoln



### Key Benefits of Keystone at University of Lincoln:

- Enhances student experience of library service as information can be updated in real time
- Enables students to see account details in a single sign-in to the student portal, speeding up the return of overdue books and decreasing fines
- Improves accuracy so library staff spend less time manually updating fines and chasing small amounts of money
- Facilitates e-payment integration meaning fines can be paid at any time of day or night

### Key Benefits of Capita's Keystone Solution:

- Runs independently from the core system supplier, so easily integrates any LMS with finance systems, payment solutions and student VLEs
- Delivers efficiency savings by removing the need for repetitive, manual data re-entry, and diminishes the possibility of error occurring
- Simplifies the workflow, optimising your institution's resources

### Background

The University of Lincoln was looking for a more time effective and streamlined way of letting students know about library fines and collecting any monies owed. They discovered Capita's Keystone solution could provide exactly what they needed to efficiently integrate their existing Library Management System (LMS) with their student virtual learning environment and an e-payment solution.

## Simplifying the Process

The University of Lincoln is ranked in the top 25% of all UK HE institutions for student experience but the library staff felt there was room for improvement in the way its fine collection was handled.

"Firstly, it was difficult to draw students' attention to any fines, as they had to specifically log into the library system to view their account details. We sent out statements every quarter but it was easy to run up significant fines during the three months in between.

"Students could pay library fines over the phone, but library staff had to manually adjust the system which took time. The temporary e-payment system we had in place allowed part payments to be processed, and this often resulted in numbers that were often hard to reconcile. There were also regular delays in getting the systems updated, which added to the confusion." Tara Howard, ICT project manager, University of Lincoln.

## The Right Product

The University chose Capita's Keystone solution to simplify the workflows associated with library fine collection and to improve their service to students. Keystone provides a range of modules that enables organisations to integrate any Library Management System (LMS), regardless of the core system supplier, with services including student portals, finance and payment systems.

"Keystone provided exactly what we needed. The fact it integrates with any LMS, not just Capita's own, meant we could keep our existing Horizon system. We could push library account information into our virtual learning environment, making it easier for students to view their fines. We could also seamlessly integrate with any e-payment provider so students could pay online," says Tara.

## Efficient Implementation

The first stage of the work was to improve the visibility of library accounts, by launching an option to 'View My Account' on the frequently accessed student virtual learning environment. This allows students to see any outstanding fines or overdue books via a single sign-in.

"Although we met with various challenges, overall the process was smooth, and Capita installed Keystone very quickly," comments Tara.

## Successful Partnership

The second part of the process was e-payment integration, and the University of Lincoln used existing supplier WPM Education to handle this. Although unusual, working with two suppliers on this project proved beneficial.

"We knew WPM Education and Capita had an existing relationship, as they had worked together on similar projects in other universities. This was a huge bonus for us as it meant the channels were open for them to communicate directly with one another," says Tara.

Lucy Paine, partner manager at WPM Education, comments: "Capita have a strong focus on partnering. Through collaboration with Grant White, their Partner Manager, we are able to work as a team for the benefit of our shared current and potential clients and this really adds a tangible value to the service we can offer our customers. A thorough understanding of each other's businesses means projects are smoother, communication more focused and sector understanding of our combined solutions improved."

## Business Benefits

As soon as the 'View My Account' option went live on the virtual learning environment, it had a positive impact on the service the library was able to offer.

"We immediately had considerable and encouraging feedback from students, who appreciated being able to see more easily what they owed. We've already noticed an improvement in the speed at which books come back on to our shelves – enabling other students to borrow them.

"On the payment side, despite being in the early stages, we have already seen fewer mistakes and a huge reduction in the amount of errors our library staff need to query. Previously 40% of desk enquiries were related to late return charges, but this is falling. Our staff are spending less time manually updating the system and chasing small amounts, and more time answering learning queries and providing information."

## Improving Student Experience

Keystone's flexibility to integrate systems from any supplier has helped deliver the result the University of Lincoln was aiming for at the start – an efficient library service that offers an exceptional student experience.

"Ultimately, we hope to see less accumulation of fines. When students are strapped for cash anyway, we've no desire to see them run up needless debts," says Tara.

"Another outcome of the project is the ability to make good on our commitment to remain focused on our students, and provide them with modern and up-to-date facilities. Around the Christmas and Easter holidays we remain open for 24 hours a day so being able to view and pay library fines 24/7 is a natural extension of the flexible service we offer."

### Other Keystone modules available:

- **Finance Integration** – automatically shares financial information, such as invoice data, between library and finance systems
- **Portal Integration** – allows students to access all their data, including email, library accounts, student fee information and shared networks, in one place
- **Identity Management** – allows students and staff to update their details across the institution

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