

## Consortia Membership Helps Palm Beach Atlantic University Return To Serials Solutions Services



The library at Palm Beach Atlantic University gladly moved from its old quarters into the lovely and spacious new Warren Library where the popular Information Commons has rapidly become a central learning space for the PBA community. Combining traditional elegance with contemporary vitality, the over 86,000 square

feet, light-filled building has increased the library's holdings capacity threefold. Currently, the library has 115,000 paper volumes, and provides access to over 80,000 eBooks, 44 databases, and 42,000 electronic serials. Edwin R. Nordine, Assistant Dean, Warren Library, has seen the library's technology grow from one Apple computer used to print catalog cards to the sophisticated electronic resource management technology now in place.

Ed is actively involved in many aspects of managing the library, especially the implementation and management of electronic resources. "The library started building our e-journal collection out of necessity," Ed says. "Because we were constrained by the old library building, we literally did not have room to build a large collection of print and periodicals. The solution was to acquire more electronic resources as one way to overcome our space limitations. Technology really helped us out."

There are seven professionals and seven paraprofessionals on the library staff. Ed and Jonathan Epps, the Digital Services Specialist, maintain the technology systems, with Ed doing most of the e-resource acquisition and administration. To manage the collection, the PBA library uses an ILS which includes an interlibrary loan module and the Serials Solutions® 360 services for e-resource access and management.

In 2000, the library was using an in-house, locally maintained system to keep track of periodical holdings. "However, as more electronic resources were added, it became very difficult to keep track of changes to serials holdings and reflect those changes in a useful way to our patrons," Ed says. Ed had heard about the Serials Solutions 360 Core service, which features an A-to-Z list, both from the company literature and from other librarians. He was confident it would provide the collection management they needed and so the library purchased and implemented it in 2000.

By 2005, PBA's electronic collection had grown steadily and the library started looking into an OpenURL link resolver to provide patrons dependable access to full text articles. Even though the library was satisfied with Serials Solutions, they felt adding an additional service warranted considering alternatives. After evaluating several possible options, including Serials Solutions, PBA elected to switch to another vendor, primarily because of cost. PBA is privately funded and, at the time, was not eligible for consortium pricing for Serials Solutions services. Although he was happy with Serials Solutions services, by changing to another vendor, Ed was able to purchase both A-to-Z list and OpenURL link resolver services.

*"We really knew we liked Serials Solutions in the past. We knew they had good products and we were happy with the quality. We were looking forward to going back; it was almost like coming home."*

Edwin R. Nordine

After nearly two years of using the other vendor, the PBA library was able to switch back to Serials Solutions services, this time with the added benefit of consortium pricing. Palm Beach Atlantic University is a strong supporter of inter-institutional cooperation. For a small university, involvement in library networking provides many advantages, including peer group

discussions, professional development, conferences, events, and discount pricing. The library is a member of four important consortia: the Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), a regional multi-type library consortium; the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF), a consortium for privately funded institutions; the Christian Library Network (CLN), a national organization; and the Westchester Academic Libraries Directors Organization (WALDO).

Ed explains, "In 2007, WALDO was interested in increasing its potential buying power and the benefits of cooperative purchasing that a larger membership would provide. The consortium took in the CLN membership and boosted the buying power of the combined membership." WALDO was able to offer a generous discount on Serials Solutions services, which made the return to Serials Solutions possible for PBA. In the summer of 2007, Palm Beach Atlantic University switched to the new Serials Solutions 360 product line, purchasing 360 Core again and adding 360 Link OpenURL link resolver and 360 Search federated search service.

Ed says, "We were not unhappy with the previous vendor, but we knew we really liked Serials Solutions. We knew they had good products and we were happy with the quality. We especially liked their customer service, so we had no hesitation in making the switch. Customer service at Serials Solutions is impressive—they are knowledgeable and responsive. They are really wonderful people who know what they are doing and that comes across when you work with them. It's a pleasure when I need to call and talk to someone. They are very helpful and work at resolving a problem. They understand what I need and what I am dealing with. We were looking forward to going back . . . it was almost like coming home."

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In spite of recent budget cuts, the library has still been able to successfully manage e-resources, thanks in part to Serials Solutions services. The library has not had to add staff to manage e-resources. Using the 360 services, Ed has been able to absorb e-resource management into his existing workload.

Serials Solutions services also provide tools to evaluate and optimize the collection. Ed says, "Using Serials Solutions Overlap Analysis reporting has helped me immensely — reviewing titles for renewals and evaluating the content in aggregate products. We are able to work with faculty on trimming and eliminating some subscriptions where there were duplicates. Our print subscription reduction has been modest, but we have been able to drop some subscriptions and rely upon the electronic resource."

For users, 360 Search also has been a big win. Ed says, "When there are a large number of databases, users are able to find ones that are appropriate for the subject area. This is not a small issue. The 360 Search portal is integrated into our library catalog Web page very nicely, which makes our e-resource menu and journal title list transparent to users." Ed continues, "And, it's easy for us to maintain. I can go into the Serials Solutions Client Center and add a database in a few minutes. No special HTML to upload and no burden upon the university web team because our data is hosted by Serials Solutions."

Considering the success of what he has implemented, and with an eye to the future, Ed says that changing systems is not something he would take on lightly and he does not think the PBA library will switch again.

#### Find out more!

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