Case Study - Sunderland Library Service

SOLUS is excited to have worked with Sunderland Libraries to create their new Library App. We interviewed their Digital Library Operations Coordinator, Ian Sherlock, to find out about their experience since launching the app.

Why do you believe having a mobile app is important for your library?

24 hours library service provision for users to access catalogue, renewals and other services. The app helps keeps the service modern and current. We'd inherited a library service that was greatly in need of updating and the Library App has been an important part of that modernisation. I also think that the newer generation of library user prefers to deal with services via an app instead of face to face or over the telephone.

How do you think it enhances the library's services?

The reasons stated above would be the main points. I also think it makes patrons feel like they have a bit of management and ownership over their account, reading tracker, self renewals etc.

How has the app changed the way your customers interact with the library?

Out of hours service delivery and, for certain types of interaction, an instantaneous response. Speed and accuracy of customer service really has been the thing. We've probably got more sign ups for our e-book service due to app users finding it through link from the app than we would have otherwise.

Success Story

"We had a lovely lady who was house bound and couldn't visit the library. Her husband would come weekly and select books for her but he'd get very frustrated at finding books she hadn't already read etc. With the app she can now browse the catalogue herself and the reading tracker ensures that she can check if she's read it before."

What specific needs or challenges did you aim to address by implementing a mobile app?

I can't speak for the initial set up and reasons for implementation as I wasn't in post at the time. However, a few challenges have risen while we've been using the app. While undergoing a branding change we've wanted to make changes to the app images and icons. Rather easy to request but a little time taking while waiting for the app stores to implement. Secondly, in terms of functionality, we've had a few issues with harvesting from LMS resources which required some technical intervention from both Solus and the LMS provider. I'm happy to say that both parties were responsive and we were able to troubleshoot effectively and resolve the issue in a timely manner.

"The Solus Library App keeps the service modern and current. We've been guilty of being slow to update the service and the Library App has been an important part of modernisation."

What features of the app do you find most beneficial for your library?

For us it's the standard features, catalogue access, reservations and renewals. However, during covid and library refurbishments click and collect features were beneficial.

How did the implementation process with Solus compare to your expectations?

I wasn't part of the process at the time. I do recall that the rollout to front line staff went without a hitch. Lately, the recent app upgrade would be a better point for me to comment on, this was virtually seamless and surpassed our expectations!

To find out more about the Solus Library App - visit our website at www.sol.us/library-app or to request a demo, send an e-mail to info@sol.us. Thank you to Sunderland Library Service for taking the time to provide your feedback.

SOLUS is the world's #1 Library App provider for public libraries with SOLUS built Library Apps now in use in almost 8,000 locations globally and growing rapidly. The Library App supports 15 different ILS platforms using APIs and web services and is available in 40 languages. SOLUS has expanded its product suite to include Events & Room Bookings with its eb#1 product and to Library Web Discovery with the LUCi Discovery platform.