

Antwerp British School - Belgium

Junior Librarian Case Study

We are a 215 pupil Primary and Secondary school in the city of Antwerp. The school has been in existence for 28 years and caters for mainly expatriate families living and working in the city. We take students from 3 to 16 years of age. The students take the iGCSE at age 16 as entry into a college of further education in Belgium.

The library was a converted classroom in the annex to the main building. The school has been slowly increasing and weeding it's stock of books. It has used a traditional card check out system up until June 2006. We were finding this system very difficult to manage, as we have no librarian. Instead one of the teachers coordinates the library acquisitions and usage along with parent volunteers helping to put books back on shelves, repair and cover books and generally keep the library tidy.

We decided 18 months ago to switch to an automated system for a number of reasons-

1. Our accrediting agency CIS (Council of International Schools) suggested strongly that we acquire such a system to improve the service offered in the library to all students.

2. We were finding that many books were going "missing" using the traditional card system and it was very difficult to recall them.

3. A lost library book was very difficult to trace and return to the borrower.

4. We had no idea how many books we had, fiction or non-fiction, of which genres, authors or categories.

The teacher coordinator of the library had developed a good group of willing parents who had been cataloguing, coding, covering and maintaining the collection. The administration decided to take the initiative and give the go ahead to buy an electronic automated check out library system.

"As Head of Education I was given the remit on choosing a suitable system. After a long search and review of available systems Junior Librarian showed itself to be the system most fitting our needs."



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We bought the package including the thumb print reader in November 2005. The rest of that academic year involved learning about the specific aspects of the package and drawing up an implementation plan.

With the help of parent volunteers the books in our collection were catalogued starting with the fiction section. By Easter this section was ready and we piloted the checking out of fiction books with our Year 6 class to see how the package worked in reality. We found that our Year 6 students were very enthusiastic for the system. From Easter until the start of the new academic year in September 2006, the non-fiction part of the collection was catalogued.



At the start of the 2006 – 2007 academic year we finger printed all students and staff onto the database and began to use the system throughout the whole school. The results have been very positive. We have noticed that the students are all far more interested in borrowing books, They are also more careful about returning books and taking care of them. We have found that any books misplaced can be traced to their borrower quickly and overdue books chased up without any problems.

We are now looking to the future to enhance the usage of Junior Librarian. As our mid year approaches we will be looking at what each individual student has borrowed. We will also be printing reports at the end of this year to see which books and authors are most popular over the different year groups and age ranges. This will help inform purchases of new titles and the weeding of old ones.

“As a school we are now seeing what great value for money the purchase of Junior Librarian has been for the Antwerp British School library.”



Librarian

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