

# Ryedale School Eclipse Case Study

Ryedale School is a mixed comprehensive school with 570 pupils, aged 11-16 years. I joined Ryedale School in Autumn 2004 just after completion of a newly built Learning Resource Centre. It provides an excellent space for reading and private study and is equipped with 18 computers.

At this time the library was still operating the Brown manual ticket system and had no up to date catalogue.

The decision to install MLS Eclipse came after consultation with other local school librarians Eclipse was unanimously recommended by everyone I spoke to. Two librarians told me they had initially used other library management systems but had changed to Eclipse and much preferred it. I was shown Eclipse in operation by the librarian at a neighbouring school and was immediately impressed with how logical and straightforward the system was. This was very important to me as whilst I have some previous computer experience, I am no computer wizard! In addition to this, I have no training as a librarian so was slightly anxious at the prospect of setting up and operating a computerised library management system - not to mention cataloguing and classifying a few thousand books.

I contacted MLS who sent me a demonstration disc and

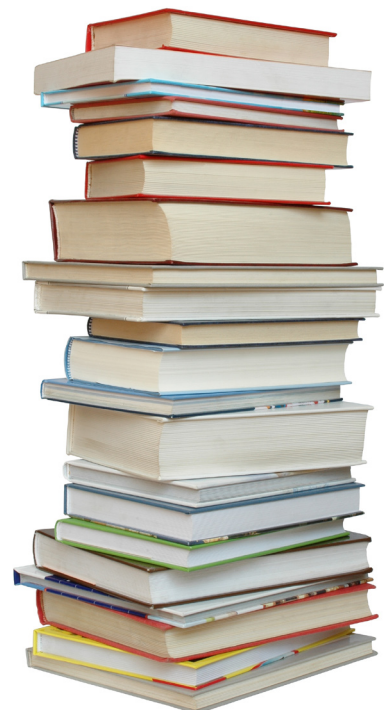
this further convinced me that Eclipse was going to be OK to use. A representative from MLS came into school and demonstrated Eclipse for the benefit of myself and a colleague from the IT Department, but to be honest it was 'sold' to me by other librarians before his visit.

We purchased MLS Eclipse using E-learning credits. This included Discovery, Identikit and Self Issue. We also opted for on-site installation and training and although this seemed like an expensive extra it turned out to be an excellent investment.

The MLS Trainer came into school on the first Monday after the Easter holidays, 2005. A colleague from our IT Department joined me for the training. The trainer installed the system in about half an hour. He imported the relevant pupil data from the school admin. system in minutes and the rest of the day was spent learning how to use the system. This included the loan management aspect and (the really scary bit for me), cataloguing books.

The training day was extremely well structured, covered everything I needed to know and was well delivered. It was not just a demonstration of the system. I was quickly cataloguing books (quite easy as it turns out!) and with the assistance of a few pupils, who I registered onto the system using the Identikit thumb scanner, was able to issue and return books.

The next day I began cataloguing books. The cataloguing itself was fairly straight forward and I don't recall having to call the Help Desk at all. I had printed out a copy of the Eclipse User guide but to be honest I didn't have to refer to it very often as the training day had been so comprehensive.



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The only difficulty I encountered in getting Eclipse up and running was that the cataloguing phase took far longer than I had estimated. However, it is fair to say that this was undoubtedly because the library stock needed a major overhaul (much sorting through and throwing out of old/damaged stock), all the non fiction books required labelling with the appropriate Dewey number and the shelves needed re-labelling too. This was definitely the worst bit of the whole thing for me but it has certainly been worth the effort.

It was also time consuming registering all the pupils on the identikit thumb scanner. However, this now only needs to be done for the Year 7 pupils when they arrive in September and the pupils' enthusiasm for using it and borrowing books probably makes it a good investment. Some of our reluctant readers, mainly boys, who were previously not too keen on library lessons, have become much more frequent borrowers. They insist on using the thumb scanner and are quite cross with me if I try to issue books without using it.

The system was fully operational a couple of weeks before the summer holiday (4,000 books catalogued, labelled and shelved). The IT Department installed Searchstar onto the 18 LRC computers. Staff and pupils were amazed by Searchstar,

and finally understood what I had been doing for the previous two months! Staff were impressed with the ability to search using keywords and that searches included non-fiction, fiction, poetry etc. and the websites.

Pupils are very pleased that they can reserve books particularly if they are reading a series. They like searching for their favourite authors, reading the book blurbs, checking whether a particular book is out on loan. They are even enthusiastic about writing book reviews now.

Since the initial installation the IT Department have had no involvement with Eclipse as it hasn't been required. I perhaps phone the help desk every 3-4 weeks when a new situation arises that I can't sort out myself with the user guide. The MLS help desk is amazing. There is always someone available promptly when you phone. The staff are friendly and calm, always able to help and will talk you through resolving a problem, answer any queries and make useful suggestions. (I sometimes wish I could phone them when my home computer gets in a jam!)

I suppose our move from a manual ticket system onto Eclipse has been pretty much like moving from the Dark Ages into the 21st Century!

After nearly a year of using Eclipse I am still discovering just how clever it is and it is so easy to use. I have no reservation in recommending the system to other librarians. The time spent cataloguing will be time well spent.

There has been nothing that I have needed to do that it can't do for me. The reports section is brilliant.

Librarian  
Ryedale School

