

St Francis Hospice Palliative Care Library Eclipse Case Study

The library is run by volunteers of varying ages and abilities, but all have found the system easy to use. If there is a problem the instruction manual is well written, clear and concise. Failing that the help line will talk you through any problems.

The Palliative Care Library has a stock of approximately 2000 books, videos, DVDs and documents. There is also a large number of journal articles and dissertations which are used for research purposes. We also subscribe to 16 journals. The library is open to all hospice staff and volunteers as well as local GPs and community health care workers. At present we have about 600 borrowers registered.

The library was opened about 10 years ago, with borrowers signing books out in an exercise book. There was also no catalogue, only an accession register. Eventually a basic catalogue was developed using Excel, but this only showed author, title and class number.

In 2002 it was decided to purchase software which would assist in library management. We looked at several systems, but Micro Librarian's Eclipse was not only by far the cheapest but also seemed to provide all the things that we needed; a proper catalogue which could be searched by key words etc, an issuing system which would show and print overdues as well as a reservation system. We applied for a grant from Help the Hospices and they gave us a contribution towards its cost.

Because the system is designed primarily for school libraries there are obvious discrepancies, but these are few and far between. Instead of class and year groups, we have Nurses, Doctors, Students etc. We do not use the Dewey class system which the catalogue defaults to, but instead use letters of the alphabet - the subject of Death is F - which defaults to fiction! So instead we use F1 and all is well. The catalogue also shows all books as belonging to SCHOOL so this has to be changed to Education Centre. Obviously we cannot use Magicat which is designed for childrens' books, but these things are minor irritations and easily overcome.

Janet Lawrence (Volunteer Librarian)

I was worried that we would have to re-catalogue all our stock but Micro Librarian suggested that we saved our catalogue onto a floppy disc and send it to them and, hey presto, they copied it onto our Eclipse software.

In 2004 we hired a bar code reader and did a stock take using Eclipse. It was completed within a three days, and we were able to see clearly what was missing and print out a list which was circulated. Within a few days several 'missing' books materialised! Other statistics are easy to produce and can be helpful in all areas of library management.

“All in all, we have been well pleased with Eclipse and would definitely recommend this system to other hospice libraries.”

