

RMRIUG
2009
ANAHEIM

Converting our Collection to RFID
J4
Goals Accomplished and Lessons Learned

May 17 - 20, 2009

Repeated at RMRIUG, June 12, 2009

Presenters

**Poudre River Public Library District
(formerly Fort Collins Regional
Library District)**

- Carson Block, IT Director
- Carol Gyger, III Systems Administrator

Outline

- Describe the major pieces of our RFID project
- Very complex project involving every library department – can only convey our “highlights”
- Teamwork!
- Successful: on time, well under budget, and a hit with staff and patrons alike

How it all started

- Studied RFID for several years
- “The Request”
- Study/research for our unique institutional drivers (6 months)
- Creating a shared pool of understanding with managers and key staff of what RFID is and isn’t (2-4 months, and ongoing throughout project)
- Proposal prep (2 – 3 months)
(and a shout out to Jeffco!)

Presentation to District Trustees

- New district, brand new board, and no budget process yet
- 20 minutes to:
 - Define RFID
 - Share why libraries (in general) use it
 - Describe why we want to use it
 - Describe why we want to do it now
 - Present a high-level project description
 - Present project budget and ask for \$800,000 to convert the collection to RFID

Presentation to District Trustees

- Did not oversell nor undersell RFID
- Approval of project!
- 2-3 months to get new finance officer on board and identify funding sources

Our Drivers (#1)

- **Higher levels of service for patrons through greater efficiencies in materials handling**
 - Higher accuracy in and out
 - Smoother and faster; materials available faster after check-in
 - Lowest paid staff benefit from more ergonomic process
- **Most commonly cited by vendors**

Our Drivers (#2, but key)

- **Better Self-Service Library Patrons**
 - Fewer steps, better customer experience
 - Friendlier: fewer false-positives at gates
 - Build own self checks:
 - Much less costly per unit
 - Ability to deploy more
 - Ability to define and refine hardware and interface
 - Return on Investment (ROI) in five years
- **Specific to our library**

Our Drivers (#3)

- **Time – but this changed for the better after the project began**
- **Also specific to our library**
- **Often a common driver**

Project Manager (Carson Block, IT Director)

- **Create broad-level project plan**
- **Choose team leaders**
- **Identify, communicate and maintain project vision**
- **Provide resources, coordinate communication, keep the project on schedule and on budget, make decisions, and be responsible and accountable for final decisions.**

Weeding and ODC Master (Becky Sheller, Collection Development Librarian)

- **Weeding**
- **Informal team leader and role model**
- **Highest professional standards**
- **Expert at balancing subjective approach and volume approach**
- **Weeding time and effort saved retro time, effort, and cash**
- **Closest to my desk**

Weeding – Why, How, Who?

- **1-year rule / Save money on tags**
- **Weeding criteria**
 - Low circ – via weeding lists
 - Poor condition
 - Format – VHS, cassettes
- **Who**
 - Children's and Adult staff
 - Circulation staff – during checkin, tagging
 - Friends of the Library

Numbers

- Collection – 400K
- Circulation – 2.3 million (2008)
- 66,000 items withdrawn in 6 months
 - Adult: 30K items
 - Children's: 36K items
- Six month long weeding push at both libraries saved over \$30,000 in RFID tags
- Weeding is never done

The “Big Weed”

- Two dozen volunteers and ten staff mobilized
 - Pulling
 - Wanding (put on w/d list)
 - Boxing
 - Hauling
- Withdrew 12,000 items in two days; 18,000 items within one week
- Should have weeded for condition during this weed

Green Alternatives

- FoL – Friends gave clear guidelines on what they wanted and didn't want for book sale
- Better World Books takes discards from libraries and schools (www.betterworldbooks.com)
- Waste Not Recycling in Loveland (www.waste-not.com)
- Colorado Talking Books Library takes discarded large print books
- Find resources in your area

Retroconversion Queen (Chris Cortez, Circulation Supervisor)

- Retro-conversion
- Managed the largest crew of folks
- Expert manager and motivator
- Excellent tactical skills
- Made Carson give her party money early for her crew

Getting Started

- Determine staff hours based on budget, timeline and collection size
- Staffing – using existing staff
- Set up schedule for entire project
- Train staff in small groups
- Determine chain of command

Map Out a Plan

- Decide how you want to break up collections and in what order you proceed
- Once you start a collection stay with it until completed
- Have a supervisor on every shift for the first week
- Coordinate with Circulation for checked in items and transits

Communication

- Create forms to clearly communicate between each shift
- Keep daily and weekly stats
- Keep a list of all collections that can be marked off when completed
- Use a step-by-step guide sheet for each shift

What Worked Well

- Pre-cut tags
- Training in small groups
- Weekly meetings with project managers
- Weekly email updates to staff
- Did not lock ourselves into a set order
- Had a designated area for staff to place items with questions regarding tag placement

Ill Systems Administrator (Carol Gyger)

- Technical prep and support
- Sweats the small stuff (and it's all small stuff)
- Super geek (highest compliment, dontchaknow?)
- Worked closely with each group on details – our RFID guru!

Goals

- Better customer service
- Better, faster, easier, more self service
- Staff efficiency and comfort
- Self checkout station – use “off the shelf” hardware and maintain it ourselves

Bibliotheca

- RFID tags
- Conversion software
- RFID pads
- Inventory wand
- Security gates
- Gate Tracker software

Innovative Interfaces

- Express Lane module (self checkout)
- Spanish language interface
- Item Status API
- Ecommerce

Off the shelf hardware

- PCs, touch screens
- Barcode scanners, receipt printers, credit card swipes

Our Choice Package

Conversion Station

- Refurbished laptop
- No network needed
- Only need power
- Non-metallic cart
- Plenty of Velcro
- Pouch for cables





- ### Order of Rollout
- PC replacement (Circ stations)
 - RFID Checkin
 - RFID staff checkout
 - RFID Self checkout

Configuring and Testing

Configure Express Lane screens

Spanish language translations

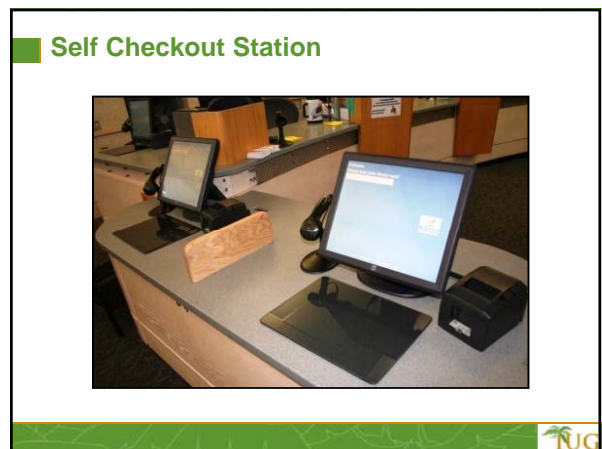
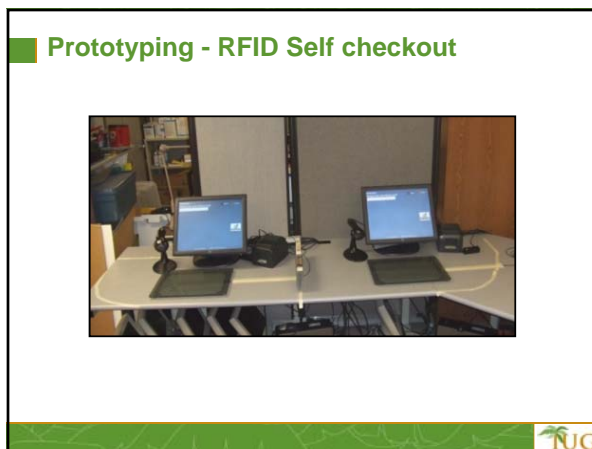
Carol E Gyger, please place any additional items to be checked out on the pad:

Title	Due Date
The news from Paraguay - A novel / Lily Tuck, Tuck, L.	11-28-2008
The bluest eyes / Toni Morrison, with a new after... Morrison, T.	11-28-2008

2 items read, 3 items checked out.

Testing – Staff pushed it to its limits

Testing – Staff pushed it to its limits



Challenges

- Every step was something new
- Tagging – what to tag, how to tag different formats
- Retrofitting existing Circulation stations at checkin and checkout
- Making a classy looking self checkout station with adequate space per user
- Watching out for metal

Did we meet our goals? YES!!!

- Better customer service
- Better, easier faster, more self service
- Staff efficiency and comfort
- Self checkout station – use “off the shelf” hardware and maintain it ourselves

Lessons Learned

- Don't oversell what RFID can do
 - be realistic about what it can and can't do
- It's a lengthy project – keep motivated by keeping your eye on the prize
(see next slide)
- Feed staff
- Have a party!

The Prize

- Customer satisfaction
 - Easy, fast self checkout
 - Smiles / “Cool!”, “Wow!” / “How'd it do that?”
- Staff satisfaction
 - Easy, fast checkin and checkout
 - Smiles
- Better collection
 - Weeded, mended
 - Barcodes moved to back cover

Updates

- Spanish language interface for self checkout – DONE!
- Inventory via RFID wand – still to do
- Decentralized self checkout stations – Half DONE!
- Ecommerce – Pay fines via credit card at Express Lane stations – DONE!
- New branch using self service model including 8 self checkout stations – DONE!

Questions?

Poudre River Public Library District

- Carson Block, Project Manager
Cblock@PoudreLibraries.org
- Carol Gyger, III Systems Administrator
Cgyger@PoudreLibraries.org
- Becky Sheller, Weeding and ODC Master
Rsheller@PoudreLibraries.org
- Chris Cortez, Retroconversion Queen
Ccortez@PoudreLibraries.org