

Library resource use skyrockets with introduction of EBSCO Discovery Service and OpenAthens IPU New Zealand Tertiary Institute



Overview

IPU New Zealand is a private tertiary institute in Palmerston North, New Zealand, serving just under 400 undergraduate and postgraduate students. More than 30 countries including New Zealand are represented at IPU New Zealand, and approximately 80 percent of the student body is international. Nestled in the picturesque park-like campus, the IPU Library offers users access to approximately 11,450 physical books

and a variety of databases from vendors including EBSCO, ProQuest, Science Direct, GALE and Films on Demand.

Challenges

Prior to 2019, the IPU library had been using an outdated version of EZProxy and provided users with only a list of links to individual databases. In February 2019, Sharon Cornwall joined the IPU team as Head Librarian. Knowing the importance of discoverability and remote access, Cornwall was surprised to find that users could not access the library's resources off campus. As a result, library resources saw little use.

"Science Direct was hardly ever getting used," Cornwall noted. "The most [use] that it ever got in 2018 was 445 full-text requests."

Solutions

When Cornwall began looking to upgrade the library's authentication software, she found the long-term operational costs of OpenAthens and EZProxy similar. Although OpenAthens would be a little bit more expensive initially, Cornwall knew it would be more flexible. OpenAthens also had the benefit of being able to be managed by the librarian, without IT staff needing to be involved.

IPU Library implemented EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) in May 2019 and OpenAthens in October 2019. Since then, the library has since seen a significant increase in full-text usage.



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Sharon Cornwall | Head Librarian | IPU New Zealand Benefits & Results

In just one month, Science Direct experienced 1,731 downloads, with a total of 3,500 downloads for 2019. The library also saw a significant increase in individual journal access. For example, the number of full-text requests for Wiley journal titles went from 54 in 2018 to 843 in 2019.

Cornwall attributed the increases in full-text downloads to the combination of EDS and OpenAthens. "It's making those articles actually discoverable," she explained.

In addition, e-book usage has nearly doubled. Since implementing EDS, the number of views, downloads, print requests and email requests for e-books in EBSCO's eBook Academic Collection rose from 279 in the first six months of 2019 to 496 in the first six months of 2020.

Benefits and Results

While the majority of the students typically access resources from campus, having the flexibility of remote library access has proven vital during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Having OpenAthens in place when we went into lockdown was a lifesaver for our library," Cornwall said. "We have been able to add our new students to OpenAthens so that they can access the resources that they need immediately. Even with the lockdown and people having to access off campus, there's been much more usage." According to Cornwall, the implementation of EBSCO Discovery Service and OpenAthens has brought the IPU Library into the 21st century and revealed the value of their subscription databases and e-journals.

"It has been a success story," she said. "It's that balance between cancelling a database because it wasn't getting used, to retaining it because of use. It has made a huge difference. [Our resources] are getting so well used now."

Learn more at
<https://www.ebsco.com/products/ebsco-openathens>

