



White Paper

The Benefits of Automated Patron Notification

TALKINGtech



March 2010

Technology drives notification efficiency

In response to the country's budget deficit, state, local, and federal government spending will need to be reduced resulting in budget cuts across the public sector and forcing a new drive for efficiency gains. In a recent survey, 24 states reported cuts in state funding for public libraries. Of these, almost half were cuts of 11% or greater.¹

However, demand for library services continues to rise. In December 2009, the Boston Public Library's Groveland Branch saw circulation up a stunning 88 percent on the previous year². Library management are being challenged to do more with less - something's got to give. The most likely casualties will be customer satisfaction and staff morale.

If library management are to avoid the likely affects of tighter budgets, then technology may hold the key. Many libraries have been at the forefront of adopting new forms of self-service. However, some of these solutions require extensive capital investment, which takes time to procure and implement. Luxuries, few libraries can afford right now.

What many libraries have been benefiting from has been a quiet efficiency drive in the important area of communications. Every day thousands of library notices are printed and posted for overdue and reserved items. However, by automating their outbound notifications using voice & SMS messages, many libraries have achieved significant operating expenditure savings which have been ploughed back into front line services. By successfully replacing manual phone calls and expensive printed notices, library services have increased the speed of notice delivery. What's more, by utilising methods with a higher call to action than paper, circulation is improved.

Libraries using automated messaging technologies have also minimised the impact of recent postal strikes. There is also the benefit of reducing paper usage and improving your green credentials.

"We used to make phone calls for holds. It took a staff member all evening and that staff member wasn't available to serve the public. What an incredible waste of time and staff resources."

Ouachita Parish Public Library, Louisiana, USA

Implementing these services will ensure staff spend more progressive hours helping users better utilise services rather than making phone calls or filling envelopes. Typically, services can be in place within 8 weeks and one installation supports an entire library service with no staff or user application requiring roll out or training. Automated voice calls in particular tap into a wealth of data, which libraries have been collecting for years – landline telephone numbers. This ensures the investment required is usually paid back in less than 18 months or rental options can be paid for, out of the operating expenditure saved from day one.

"Cost savings have been substantial...notices are now being received within a day rather than two to three days it took via post."

Lancashire County Library & Information Service, United Kingdom

¹ http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pressreleases2010/january2010/trendstudy_ors.cfm

² http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/01/04/check_it_out/

As operating costs continue to rise, it becomes increasingly more difficult to meet demand without reducing services. Leveraging technology to reduce printed notifications will reduce operating expenditure, protect services and save frontline staff from back office functions. Ultimately, it could help your library service do more with less.

TALKINGtech provide automated telephone contact solutions, creating a vital link between libraries and their users. TALKINGtech is the leading supplier of telephone voice and SMS notifications for public libraries in the USA and on average has helped libraries save 60% in costs.

Since 1986, hundreds of libraries have implemented TALKINGtech solutions which have provided vital services in New Zealand, Australia, USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Europe and South Africa.

For a free cost savings analysis from TALKINGtech please contact Sean Young on 1800 631 0315 or email seany@talkingtech.com

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