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# evidence

Issue one 1



Welcome to Issue 1 of "Evidence," our new monthly newsletter.

As EBSM and smartsm go from strength to strength, we wanted to share our news with you and keep you up to speed with developments.

We hope you find it interesting and look forward to your feedback.

Please feel free to contact us about anything contained within this newsletter - we're here to help and our doors are always open...

- › customer news
- › product news
- › EBSM hints and tips
- › guest column
- › events



## customer news

**WOW – what a start !**  
**2008 has been a hectic and very successful year for us so far.**

### The smart money is on smartsm

Since the launch of smartsm last September, we are delighted to now have 6 UK public authorities who are fully "LIVE" with smartsm including Westminster City Council, Bournemouth Borough Council, Stirling Council, Borough of Poole Council, East Dunbartonshire Council and East Ayrshire Council.

We are extremely pleased with the consistency of the improvements we are seeing and our clients seeing some tremendous results in terms of improved stock quality, increased loans and reduced book expenditure due to effective pan-authority stock transfers.

With each authority being structured uniquely, no two authorities are following the Evidence Based Stock Management (EBSM) methodology in exactly the same way. This emphasises the flexibility of the methodology and demonstrates the power behind the smartsm software tools.

The system is flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of practical scenarios. Importantly, since each authority arranges its libraries and collections in unique ways with each setting their own performance targets, smartsm allows total customisation to reflect each authority's set up.

Case studies are currently being prepared outlining the successes to date and exploring the ways in which the various authorities are utilising the smartsm tools and integrating the methodology into their day-to-day practices as part of their drives towards efficiency gains.

### **Practical benefits currently being delivered by smartsm**

- Improved stock
- Increased loans
- Better customer service
- More efficient use of staff time
- Improved local marketing
- More informed purchasing and control over supplier selection
- Better use of stock and reduced need to purchase stock

### **Library Management Systems**

As a result of current client implementations, smartsm is now able to extract data from a range of Library Management System vendors including:

- DS
- Infor
- SirsiDynix
- Talis

Bridgeall have joined the Talis Additions Partner Programme and are excited about working very closely with Talis both at a technical and commercial level – to deliver integrated, Talis Certified solutions to libraries.

We have a number of exciting commercial announcements "bubbling under" ranging from new customers coming on board to some high profile strategic partnerships. Watch this space in coming issues of Evidence to find out more about how we are progressing.



### Pass it on

Know anyone who might be interested in our newsletter? Forward this email to up to 5 friends.



### Add us!

To make sure you receive future emails, please add **evidence@bridgeallsmartsm.com** to your address book.





## product news

It's been pretty fast paced so far in the smartsm Development Team, with version 1.7 of the software released last month, and version 1.8 to follow in the next few weeks.

The past 6 months have really been focused on working closely with our customers and LISTENING. Our customers have been very pro-active in helping us to shape the system into what it is today. Their feedback has been crucial in allowing us to develop such an intuitive and easy to use product, bristling with the features today's librarians demand.

We have been working with SirsiDynix on making the Marc21 Export utility of their Unicorn system fully integrate with the data upload process of smartsm. We've also seen a greater alignment between the Action Plans offered in the Fiction and Non-Fiction modules of the system, with a focus on improving the time taken to generate the smartsm Assessments and Action Plans. We have seen a considerable time reduction in the generation of this data when reconfiguring system targets, for all of our customers.

We've also begun adding some more advanced processing to the platform to give a greater picture of the actual stock use within the authority.

The current focus is on improving the intelligence behind the smartsm action plans for swapping overstocked Non-Fiction material to generate an even greater number of loans for the system.

We're also on the final stages of developing the deadstock action plans for our Non-Fiction module, fitting in with our aim of fully aligning the Fiction and Non-Fiction modules.

Last, but by no means least, we're working on implementing smartsm on an additional 2 library management systems, whilst ensuring a continued, high availability, mission critical service for our existing customer base.

### Technology benefits of smartsm

- Works with ANY LMS
- Delivered over the internet - no software to install or maintain
- Minimal input from your IT department to implement and ZERO ongoing support commitment from them

### Product Demonstrations

We would be delighted to arrange a no-obligation demonstration of smartsm for you and your colleagues.

The demo only takes around 90 minutes and can either be delivered face to face, on site in your library or over the internet. To request to see the latest version of smartsm in action, simply send an email to [demo@bridgeallsmartsm.com](mailto:demo@bridgeallsmartsm.com)



## EBSM hints and tips

### Some thoughts on Catalogue Maintenance - by George Kerr

This is a much neglected area in library management but one which requires a more professional approach if we aspire to excellence in customer service provision.

It is also an essential first step in Evidence Based Stock Management and should then become part of a regular routine. It is essential because without it, you will be forced to work with inaccurate data instead of data which reflects reality e.g. missing stock will show up as on shelves and not used since it was stolen – thus distorting your 'Dead' or 'Inactive' stock figures.

Smartsm provides a 'Dead Stock' assessment process with Action Plans, which have the hugely beneficial side effect of providing you with an extremely accurate on shelf check list to facilitate a quick stock inventory. Every item on the Dead Stock Action Plan has a status, on your LMS, of 'On Shelves'.

Smartsm clients simply take the lists to shelves and look for the items. Smartsm can now even export this data into your **RFID readers** too – making it even easier to manage your stock.

Any items listed which are not present are "missing" and should be removed from your catalogue. We encourage all our clients to use the Dead Stock Action Plans for this purpose on a regular basis as well as, of course, for identifying Dead Stock which is still actually on shelves.

Logistically, it is not really feasible to carry out such an inventory every few months. It should become a regular event but a more likely frequency is something like every couple of years.

Rather than allow the catalogue to gradually lapse into inaccuracy again during this period, there is a technique which is very effective in maintaining a good level of accuracy – I would describe this as 'status' maintenance.



There are three stock statuses which are used in most systems to identify stock which is 'Inactive'.

1. Claims returned (disputed returns – this status is normally set manually)
2. Long overdue and now lost (non-returned legitimately borrowed items. Most LMS's can be set to change long overdue items to this status automatically after a defined period on loan)
3. Missing status (items requested by users which should be on shelves but are not found – this status is normally set manually)

Since the stock with these statuses is inactive and does not reflect the reality of your current stock use, you need to work out a routine to eliminate these.

This can be done by producing monthly printouts, branch by branch, for each one of all items falling into these statuses in the previous month.

These Action Plans are sent to libraries and staff are allowed one week to take the following actions :

1. Final shelf check.
2. Anything not found is assumed to be ready for deletion and this is done at local level.

For long overdue returns, details are kept on borrower records of course.

The set period for taking the required action is important because it ensures that the monthly listings do not get out of synch and start to overlap each other.

#### **End product :**

1. Catalogue is kept pretty up to date between stock checks
2. Additional value brought to request service by the more accurate catalogue (few holds being placed against single copy items which will never be filled)
3. Staff have confidence in the accuracy of the catalogue and its data

If you take the additional trouble to identify default catalogue values for all the long overdue items deleted, you will be able to identify an accurate annual cost of non returned overdue. I have done this and the true cost is frightening. However you can then use this as evidence to seek a local authority wide solution since you can now demonstrate the true cumulated cost of all of these 'small debts' – maybe data sharing with other services and denial of access to these services until the library 'debt' is purged.



## **guest column**

### **The Customer Journey - Fiona Emberton, Embervision**

In this article, we suggest the very simplest of strategies to smooth the average customer's physical journey.

The first objective of a business serving the public is to provide a positive and friendly message to visitors. Research shows that eight weeks after a visit, the following experiences will be remembered rather than the actual services accessed. These are known as the Moments of Truth (MOT) and are:

- 1 'Street and door appeal '
- 2 The transition or decompression zone
- 3 The farewell

#### **Street appeal**

In our recent national project across Wales, 62% of customers (from a sample of 400) reported that they had noticed an improvement to the exterior of the library. This was achieved by training the library team to concentrate on those things they had control over such as managing landscaping contracts more heavily, ensuring windows are clear of clutter and that litter is dealt with. All of this costs nothing. It is all to do with staff culture and creating regular quality audits tied into individual staff performance plans. If your supervisors aren't happy with garden maintenance or window cleaning, do not pay the contractor until you are. For landscaping, we recommend the use of compact, prickly evergreens around library walls – to discourage vandalism and to lower garden maintenance costs.

#### **A friendly welcome**

We often carry out mystery shopping in libraries and other businesses, spending several hours watching the interactions between the library team and their customers. Often we see customers trying to engage with the team members, looking over to say hello to unresponsive staff or having to talk to the top of the librarian's head while he or she talks to the computer screen instead.

#### **Transition zone**

The transition zone is the area just inside the entrance and is sometimes known as the 'decompression' zone. This area should be reserved to promote YOUR business. All too often – and as a result of our 'amiable' personality type in the library profession – we allow everyone else's business to overpower ours. Library use has dropped considerably in the UK and it is essential to now reclaim this area. Good practice that will calm your customer on entry and excite them about your Service necessitates a clean, uncluttered foyer, promoting large, easily read messages and images around reading, information and community space – our core business. People can be overwhelmed by too much information or choice at this point so it is necessary to concentrate on creating a simple 'wow' moment and ensure lighting, aroma and colour are appealing and contribute to this effect.

All team members should wear name badges displaying their first name. Part of building a friendly

image is giving the customer the opportunity to use an individual name if they want to (don't waste money on badges that say 'staff'). Research shows that customers tend to trust staff who wear name badges.

The queue zone is the ideal place for a 'browse' product such as events information – either in the form of posters or, even better, on screen. We have seen some good examples of this latest technology in South Australia and the UK, and some types can be tailored to show a changing range of material depending on the time of day and which groups of people are likely to be using the library.

In summary, these are the key strategies to use that can simply and easily (and at no cost) improve the customer journey and turn members into raving fans;

1. Ensure supervisors understand their responsibility to manage cleaning and landscaping contracts
2. Take a fresh look at the outside of the building and remove any clutter that is on view in windows
3. Reclaim your foyer for bold messages promoting your business
4. Remove all visual noise and clutter so that customers can see what's on offer more easily
5. Look at your customer's journey and remove as much as possible that delays them such as queues at check in or items they have to request at a desk.

**About :-** Fiona Emberton (fiona@embervision.cc) has her own consultancy company, Embervision, and is based in Brisbane Australia and now also in England. She has been working on the CyMALWelsh library innovation project, and with several academic and public library services, rolling out RFID technology for Service Transformation using layout, leadership, process improvement and culture change techniques.



## events

### Recent Events

Thanks to everyone who visited our stand at CILIPS Annual Conference, Peebles, 3-5 June. It was great to meet so many new faces as well as catch up with existing customers.

iPod Draw - We are delighted to announce the winner of our iPod at <http://www.bridgeallsmarts.com/iPod.html>

### Upcoming Events

**Come and meet the smartsm team on our stand at the following UK events:-**

CILIP LMS Showcase CILIP Regional Library Management Showcase, Britannia Hotel, Manchester, 10 September 2008

PLA Annual Conference Public Library Authorities Conference 2008, Crown Plaza Hotel, Liverpool, 8-10 October 2008

CILIP LMS Showcase CILIP Regional Library Management Showcase, CILIP, London, 7 November 2008

### Seminars Series

We are currently planning a series of free UK-wide seminars exploring how Evidence Based Stock Management can be practically applied and show real benefits in:-

- Local Marketing
- Customer Loyalty
- Supplier Selection

Watch this space in next month's issue for more details of the schedule and how to register at an event near you !

If you would like to HOST an event for your colleagues and/or local neighbours - please drop us a line as we would be delighted to set up a tailored presentation with you.

For more information about Bridgeall Libraries, EBSM or smartsm visit our website at

[www.bridgeallsmarts.com](http://www.bridgeallsmarts.com)