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### **Welcome to Issue 11 of "Evidence"**

Wow - another month gone by already? Things are really getting exciting here at smartsm. We're now well and truly into Conference Season and have been busy demonstrating the latest version of smartsm to many potential customers both in the UK and overseas !

Our website **Download Area** has been updated and it is even now even easier to find all the downloadable documentation (product datasheets, presentations, press releases, past newsletters etc) all in one place.

To explore these for yourself click >> [HERE](#)



### **customer news**

This month we have implemented smartsm with 3 more Library Services going LIVE including:-

- **Middlesborough Libraries**
- **Sandwell Libraries**
- **Wokingham Libraries**

>>>>>>

In April we organised a number of well attended seminars highlighting the synergy between smartsm and our partner's offerings including:-

On 16th April - RFID Showcase with Intellident at Talis - we showcased what smartsm + Intellident's RFID Stock Management tools can achieve and the benefits that can be realised and the High Return On Investment now possible.

On 22nd (Glasgow) and 30th (Birmingham) we ran the first in a series of seminars with Civica, Intellident and BDS which examined Efficiencies becoming possible in modern day library service through the appropriate use of technology such as smartsm+EDI+RFID and trends in Outsourcing of Procurement in Cataloguing. These events have proved so popular we are considering running more events later this year and also looking to repeat for next year!

On 28th we exhibited at CILIP Ireland Conference in Belfast, which was the first showing of smartsm in Ireland for over 18 months. The latest version of smartsm generated a great deal of interest from both North and South of the Border.



### **product news**

We are delighted to announce the completion of our SMART;Scotland Feasibility project. This Scottish Government funded project has enabled the company to push the boundaries of technical innovation further on two fronts; Library Stock Management RFID Integration, and Data Aggregation Initiatives that revolve around a standardised library centric view of bibliographic data.

Our new RFID stock management solutions are now fully operational, integrating seamlessly with all of the major UK RFID vendor solutions.

Over the coming months we will also be able to share with you our exciting plans for data aggregation innovation which are all geared towards bringing even more efficiencies into the library sector.

### **Pass it on**

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## ebsm Hints and Tips

### Frequently asked questions about EBSM - by George Kerr

Two frequently asked questions over the years can be usefully drawn together since they are strongly linked.

- (a) Doesn't the way we work now, not work equally well?
- (b) Does the methodology work?

My first reaction to these has been to pose some questions back at fellow librarians –

Have you never been frustrated by the lack of data on which to base your decisions?

Be honest with yourself. Have you never felt that you wasted money on some of the stock you bought because you had to base decisions on guesswork about what library users wanted?

Can you honestly say that you have never been influenced by personal knowledge of, or interest in a subject – or that no-one in your purchasing team has?

From the outset the EBSM methodology was based on extensive customer personal survey work over several years, both with current and lapsed users. It was very clear from this work that there were significant levels of dissatisfaction with existing stock provision – and in many cases the dissatisfaction had led eventually to library user desertion. Two main areas of dissatisfaction were identified by our users.

- (a) Poor physical quality of stock (this included dissatisfaction with large quantities of inactive stock). Typical quotes from users included : "Why is it always the same old books I see when I visit my library"; "Why don't you weed out old stock so that I can see the wood from the trees"; "There always seem to be rather a lot of rather scruffy books on shelves ; certainly lots that I would not be prepared to take home with me"
- (b) Poor stock relevance. This problem was represented by quotations like : "I'm only interested in books on antiques/science fiction (wide variation expressed here) and never seem to find much to suit me but you seem to provide lots and lots in other subjects/genres with no-one appearing to use them.

Quite clearly we were not getting things right and as a consequence, were not providing our users with what they wanted. As a team we had lots of 'experience' but much of that appeared to be devoted to continuing with the 'status quo' in provision because we had no evidence of what was really wanted, to guide us on future provision.

Bearing in mind all the things we appeared to be getting wrong, the EBSM toolset gradually evolved and was put into operation. From now on we intended to be guided by real evidence of demand. If you think about it, the methodology, which looks at current and past use of stock and uses this, along with target setting to move stock towards being more customer focused, is actually an example of ongoing proxy consultation on a massive scale. It enables a regular interaction between your thousands of regular users and stock managers, and surely this is much better than using our own intuition?

In terms of how the methodology works, there is now a substantial body of evidence:

The London Borough of Westminster along with Essex County Library were both involved in a Bertelsmann Foundation funded project to implement the manual EBSM methodology currently in use in West Lothian. The full project paper can be downloaded at [here](#) , but the overall feelings about EBSM can be summed up by the quotations below from staff involved in the project.

Essex : "Has made stock management "real" for a large number of staff – hands-on, direct experience

"I didn't think my library had any grubby stock left..." – Library Manager

Westminster : "Extremely useful for good stock management - ensuring stock is in good condition and relevant to meet user needs and to produce issues. Should produce savings in staff time."

"We base stock supply on customer demand principles - therefore computer driven information is an excellent basis."

All of the services who have adopted either the methodology (or smartsm which facilitates the fast and easy adoption of the methodology), have been lavish in their praise. For example Essex County Library, who adopted the methodology around 1999 reported that it was ideal, gave excellent guidance on stock purchase, had considerably improved stock editing and that staff, after the first few months, now found it difficult to remember operating in any other way. – it had in fact become very much a mainstream operations. It is also noteworthy that both Essex and Westminster have gone on to subscribe to smartsm as an improved way of continuing to use EBSM.

In my previous local authority, West Lothian, total issues over a ten year period between 1990 and 2000, were up by c 2% (during the same period in the UK as a whole, issues had dropped by almost 20%). In the first 5 years after the introduction of the non fiction EBSM tools, NF issues rose by 8%.



