

# DCS Case Study

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## Middlesex University makes Library digitisation service faster and simpler

We spoke to Kate Vasili, Copyright Officer at Middlesex University about the experience of working with CLA as a partner during the development of the Digital Content Store.

Middlesex University provides extensive and flexible library services that can be accessed on-campus, or wherever students are in the world. The main resource hub at the University, the Sheppard Library, houses an enormous collection of hard copy resources, with the vast majority of its 30,000 full text journals also available online. The library has offered a digitisation service since April 2012, scanning book chapters and journal articles to make digital copies available for use by students and academics across the six dynamic teaching and research schools at the University.

Digitising reading materials makes them more accessible to both academics and students and means that library resources can more effectively support the needs of its students. The digitisation service operates under the Copyright Licensing Agency's (CLA) Higher Education Licence for photocopying and scanning. Any scans taken of original text have to be owned by the University, or be a copyright fee paid copy of a chapter/article supplied by an organisation holding a document delivery licence with CLA, such as the British Library.

Kate Vasili, Copyright Officer at Middlesex University said: *"When we first started the central digitisation service, it was actually on a manual system using an Excel spreadsheet. Initially academics would make requests via email or directly through a librarian and they would then be responsible for uploading their resources on to the VLE. We then progressed to a third party software tool to manage the request process."*

### The Challenge

*While these processes served the University well, the team wanted to explore ways in which to improve workflows, particularly in terms of reducing the time needed to source a good quality copy as well as streamlining the reporting process and increasing the reliability of CLA Licence decisions.*

*We wanted to help create a product that would eliminate our issues and one that would fit the purposes of the HE community."*

### The Solution

Middlesex University started working with CLA as one of the partners involved in the development of a new web-based hosted solution, the Digital Content Store (DCS). The DCS platform, developed in conjunction with software experts Cloudspring Technologies, was designed to simplify the current labour intensive process associated with maintaining compliance and declaring digital copies and scans to the CLA. The DCS enables users to research, record and monitor all digital book chapters and journal articles in a bid to help all higher education institutions (HEIs) reduce the risk and potential cost of copyright infringement.

As one of the CLA's development partners, the University found the development and feedback process a vital part of shaping the functionality of the system.

Kate explained: *"Any request or suggestion we made, the CLA was very amenable and enthusiastic about helping us. Talking to someone from a copyright and licensing background is refreshing because they know what we're talking about and are really able to understand our needs."*

The DCS is a web-based solution that can be used in any browser. Lists of requests from academics and lecturers can be uploaded to the system and searched for on the bibliographical database. This search includes a series of automated checks, confirming whether the book or article is included in the CLA repertoire and to checking the extent limit by calculating the percentage of the book being used.

The DCS can also connect to the institution's library management system to determine whether the specific book or journal is held in the library catalogue and check the ownership, which is a requirement of the licence.

Once the relevant automated searches and checks are completed, the user can then attach and upload the content as a PDF file. This can be done either by making a copy and uploading a scan to the system, or outsourcing the scanning via the Enhanced Higher Education Supply Service (EHES) so the British Library can scan it from its stock.

Alternatively if another university or higher education institution has already uploaded the requested document, then that copy can be used, saving the need to duplicate the scan and upload process.

### **The Future**

*Kate said: "Since we've been trialling the system we've seen how the DCS will be able to give us significant savings in both staff time and money, in processing requests and obtaining copies. By not having to report all our copying, it will simplify the administration and make the process more reliable. I think the more effortless it becomes and academics see how much quicker the system is and that there is a high level of content already available via the DCS, they will be encouraged to use the central digitisation service and make more requests."*

*Kate concluded: "By making the process more streamlined, the DCS allows us to offer more digital reading to students. It also helps make the process quicker – ensuring there'll be a quicker turnaround time, and we can now be confident that our academics are copyright compliant."*

