

ARGUS

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

Case Details

Key Challenges

- Minimize training burden and offer interns and volunteers more time with the collections
- Make collections directly accessible to researchers and authors, with enhanced curation
- Streamline data entry and reporting workflow

Why Argus was selected

- Ease of use and navigation makes training sessions largely unnecessary
- Argus offers increased imagery and additional background information and documentation
- Built-in prompts and shortcuts speed data entry, tailored reporting very efficient

"We have used Argus since January 2013. The software is visually appealing and easy to navigate. We find new ways to navigate and use our data on a daily basis. As we become more familiar with the workings of the database, we are able to access our data in more useful ways. As with any database, the way in which the data is organized, and knowledge of that organization, is the key to extracting the data. Argus is easy to use and has functionalities that simplify and guide our actions. We are very pleased with our decision to integrate Argus into our work flow."

- Elizabeth Holmes, Senior Registrar

Support System: Behind the Scenes at Buffalo Bill Center of the West

The mission of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is to educate and entertain worldwide audiences about the past, present, and future of the American West. This mission is accomplished through ideas, collections, programs, exhibitions, and scholarship.

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West acquired the original Argus system in 1988; they were early adopters at that time, and used it successfully for many years. When the time came to upgrade, they followed a democratic process with all potential end users involved in the choice of a new system. Ms. Elizabeth Holmes, Senior Registrar, describes the Center as an "urban museum in an environmental setting...with a New York mentality, but in Cody, Wyoming." An urban museum requires cutting-edge technology to support its collections management functions, and Argus was the clear winner.



Argus meets all the goals set forth by the Center's staff and leadership in the areas of operational efficiency, strategy and technology, and has delivered many other benefits as well—benefits that allow staff to demonstrate their value to visitors, offer expanded access to their collections, and further their mission to educate and entertain anyone with an interest in the American West.

Challenges

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West relies on interns and volunteers for data entry and cataloging, and Ms. Holmes and her team are committed to offering them a positive experience. Most of these temporary staff are getting ready to graduate from university or are conducting post-graduate work, and they want hands-on time with the collections. With Argus, learning to use the system itself is easy; it's intuitive and simple, freeing up time to work with artifacts. Some interns or volunteers are hoping to move into the museum business and experience with a robust collection management system is very useful—especially when it's so efficient that it leaves time to learn about the other aspects of museum operations.

Major goals for a new system were:

- Increased accessibility for staff and end users
- Minimal training requirement
- Simplified navigation and personalization
- Integration with existing IT projects and architecture

Solutions

Ms. Holmes used to provide considerable training to staff, and interns or volunteers. With Argus, however, training that used to take at least half an hour now requires "maybe a minute or two over the phone." Operational efficiency is certainly enhanced, and the system also allows Center representatives to deliver greater value to visitors and derive greater satisfaction themselves. For example, many volunteers are highly educated retirees who are looking for something stimulating to occupy their time. These individuals primarily act as docents, although less than 10 percent of them access Argus directly. In addition, the Center's gallery kiosks display data from Argus which allows the Center to share additional, valuable information with visitors as they tour the museums.

Operational Benefits

- Reduced training time allows staff, interns, and volunteers to start working with collection immediately
- Easy and fast data entry, reporting, and search saves time, and frees up administrative resources
- Navigation is much stronger, prompts with lexicon terms, and allows for easy correction and copying of records

Strategic Benefits

- Cost effectiveness builds credibility with leadership, who expect Center staff to be good stewards of their endowment funds.
- Enhanced the partnership between the Collections staff and I.T.
- Argus allows easy provision of background information or documentation to other Center departments

Technological Benefits

- Argus integrates with existing IT architecture, policies, and procedures
- Argus allows the Center to leverage configuration and personalization options with minimal training
- Argus has powerful search capabilities, cross linking, nimble data entry, and reporting

About Lucidea

Lucidea is the premier knowledge management software company, helping people navigate the ever expanding universe of information, turning it into actionable knowledge. We achieve this by providing tools that accelerate access to knowledge resources, while simplifying their management.

To learn more about Argus and how it can help solve your knowledge resource management challenges, visit www.lucidea.com/Argus

Partnership

Center staff enjoy frequent interaction with the Argus team; there's a confidence that they will always get truly responsive help and support.

This confidence and trust comes from 25 years of experience using classic Argus, and it informed the Center team's decision to choose Argus over its competitors when the time came to upgrade. Implementation was largely straightforward, but it took some time to understand how to get the best reports and how to use them. The Argus support team worked with Ms. Holmes to perfect the reporting procedures, and collaborated with her IT team to decide on ways to link to the Center's image database—currently housed outside Argus—in order to give users a seamless experience. Ms. Holmes calls the Argus solution a “real relationship builder” between herself and the IT team as they work in partnership to optimize the system for the Center.

Access and Discovery

The Center's IT staff can easily pull content from Argus and express it through the public website and the gallery kiosks, including much more imagery than was previously available. Argus has the visual appeal, powerful search capabilities, and easy navigation that make users comfortable, whether they are experts or novices.

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West makes their collections available to museum visitors and to researchers from all over the world. Each year there are many international visitors to Cody, Wyoming, who make their way to the library as research fellows, for instance, or as post-graduates who are writing papers or books, or preparing research using the Papers of William F. Cody. Now, with direct access to Argus, these scholars and authors have expanded access to the collections and no longer need to rely on Center staff for training.

The Center houses many beautiful and fascinating western objects and works of art. Ms. Holmes' personal favorites include a silver saddle used by Buffalo Bill Cody; a Sac and Fox bear claw necklace made from otter skin, ribbons, and mirrors with an insignia proving its owner to be a chief; Albert Bierstadt's painting *The Last of the Buffalo*, and *The Cheyenne*, a Frederic Remington bronze sculpture from 1902. This is part of the Center's significant Remington collection, which includes his bronzes and his paintings, as well as a personal studio collection of artifacts that he used to develop his art. Visitors to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West public website can see and learn about these objects and many more, which helps them enjoy the broad value of the Center, and ultimately to plan their visits. The information in Argus is expressed through the website and through gallery kiosks, enriching both the virtual and in-person experience of this wonderful collection.

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West now has a family of raptors, including Teasdale the great horned owl, Isham the red-tailed hawk, Salem the American kestrel, Hayabusa the peregrine falcon, Suli the turkey vulture, and Kateri the golden eagle. Each has been saved from environmental threats, but cannot safely be returned to the wild. Through a daily live animal presentation, the Draper Museum Raptor Experience, these birds of prey are used for educational purposes and entertainment in a way that echoes Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows...proving that an urban museum can indeed stay true to the “Spirit of the American West.”



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