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SUCCESS STORY

Editorial note: GeniePlus is now SydneyDigital

National Safety Council

Flying Solo; GeniePlus and the Power of One

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL'S GOALS

- OPAC for Council members and the general public
- Bi-directional information sharing that supports partnership with other organizations
- Reporting and business intelligence
- Independence from IT

The nation's leading safety advocate for more than 100 years, the National Safety Council is a non-profit organization with the mission of eliminating preventable deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. NSC advances this mission by engaging businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public to help prevent the third leading cause of death in the U.S.—preventable injuries.

With local Chapters, global networks and more than 50,000 members, NSC is committed to helping keep people safe wherever they are.

The Council's varied collection includes materials dating back to 1959; there are over 150,000 documents, as well as books, journal articles, whitepapers, and government documents—all in print. They are now digitizing their own archival materials, and are evaluating trends in reference and research requests in order to prioritize materials as part of that project.

Evolution to external access and self-service

The imperative for a library automation system stems from the National Safety Council's charter: to serve as a clearinghouse of information related to safety. After using a Data General system and Lotus Notes, they moved to DB/TextWorks because they wanted a system purpose-built for libraries. This worked superbly for internal

"GeniePlus has linked the association's information services firmly to myself and the library. It links the results to the provider, and enables me to have even more impact.."

Alaina Kolosh,

MANAGER, LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

access for many years, but with a membership of 55,000 organizations, mostly in North America, consisting of corporations, universities, and government agencies, as well as student memberships, the next step in their evolution was the implementation of GeniePlus. Designed to enable external access, its Web-based OPAC supports a focus on making their information easily accessible to the Council's members and to the general public. At one point, the NSC had multiple librarians, who embodied the "information gatekeeper role"—but over time, user self-service became increasingly important, and in fact became crucial when Ms. Kolosh became the solo librarian. The Council's history and satisfaction with DB/TextWorks inspired confidence that GeniePlus is a solid product tailored to a special library's needs, that implementation would involve no drama, and that it would always be backed up by great client service. Per Ms. Kolosh, "We also feel very confident and comfortable that [your] company isn't going anywhere any time soon."

Strategic and operational challenges? No problem ...

In addition to accessibility and discovery, GeniePlus solves several of the NSC's strategic and operational challenges. One of these involves pursuing partnerships with other organizations because it enables bidirectional information sharing. Per Ms. Kolosh, "GeniePlus also offers a current, 21st century interface and experience. Users don't think twice

about leveraging it because they recognize the way it works and looks.” This supports a positive image and credibility for the Council.

An operational challenge common to the non-profit space is that of IT support. As many GeniePlus clients have, Ms. Kolosh selected the software-as-a-service option (SaaS) and enjoys the benefits of Lucidea hosting, maintenance and updating. There is minimal Council IT department time needed, and the system is “always on and always current.”

GeniePlus has also taken the place of the shared drive that Ms. Kolosh referred to as “the vast wasteland”, ameliorating issues such as making decisions based on old data, a lack of version control, and retention of unneeded information.

Intelligence and impact

There are two additional operational areas addressed and enhanced by GeniePlus: business intelligence and membership growth. The Council’s President is an advocate of KPIs (key performance indicators) and departmental dashboards. Says Ms. Kolosh, “[with GeniePlus] it’s easy to pull metrics together on the fly and present that data professionally”. A related activity is the use of metrics on research and reference requests; this demonstrates that the library is a significant member benefit you don’t find in most non-profits, and it definitely contributes to membership growth.

Per Ms. Kolosh, “Especially as a solo, it’s great for me to be able to evaluate and rebalance my workload, and document where I’m spending my time. I track whether a requester is a staff person versus a Council member, or member of the public, and I track everything over time to monitor trends. We send out a monthly newsletter and I track how many people receive it, how many people open it, how many items we’ve added to our catalog. I capture all back-end activities as well as requests, for a holistic view of our activities and impact.”

Extending reach and reputation

In addition to providing services to members and the public, the library supports other Council departments and activities, including fundraising and prospect research. Leveraging GeniePlus’ request management capabilities

supported a move away from using expensive external contractors, and enables reuse of prior research—saving both money and time. And per Ms. Kolosh, “Request management data helps us know where we need to acquire content, e.g., for emerging issues such as a change in regulations, or newly identified hazards. We mine the database and reuse or update research results for the editors of the Safety and Health Magazine, or help the Member Department put together a topical packet. Having the information so easily accessible helps me be more responsive. People are impressed with speedy and complete deliverables, so using GeniePlus is a great reputation builder.”

Interestingly, self-service research via GeniePlus brings more people into the library when they want to take a look at materials they’ve discovered online. The system links information services very firmly to Ms. Kolosh and the physical collection, and increases her impact. She gathers feedback on the system from Member Appreciation events where she spotlights the catalog, and stresses the importance of requesting content and asking for research directly through GeniePlus, promoting the single knowledge and information venue now available to users.

And on the back-end, there’s also great value in having a single venue for accessing information and pulling it all together. “When everything is distributed in a CRM, spreadsheets, and email, it’s hard to fully mine it when you need to. So GeniePlus’ single venue is terrific for both knowledge management and efficient workflow.”

When asked what three words best describe her experience working with Lucidea, Ms. Kolosh responded: “Piece of cake!” Expanding on that, she says, “[You] make everything so easy. The system just works; it never crashes and never fails. The Client Services Team delivers personal connections and productive sessions. Leveraging new software can be overwhelming, especially when you’re a solo. Lucidea staff share insights and experience, and point me in the right direction. Just as I aspire to do for members and other end users within the National Safety Council.”

About Lucidea

Lucidea is the premier library automation and 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 SydneyDigital and how it can help solve your library management and automation challenges, visit lucidea.com/sydneydigital

Contact Lucidea

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