

The Ferguson Library

CASE STUDY

MyLibrary! Mobile App Saves Staff Time & Improves Customer Experience

Overview

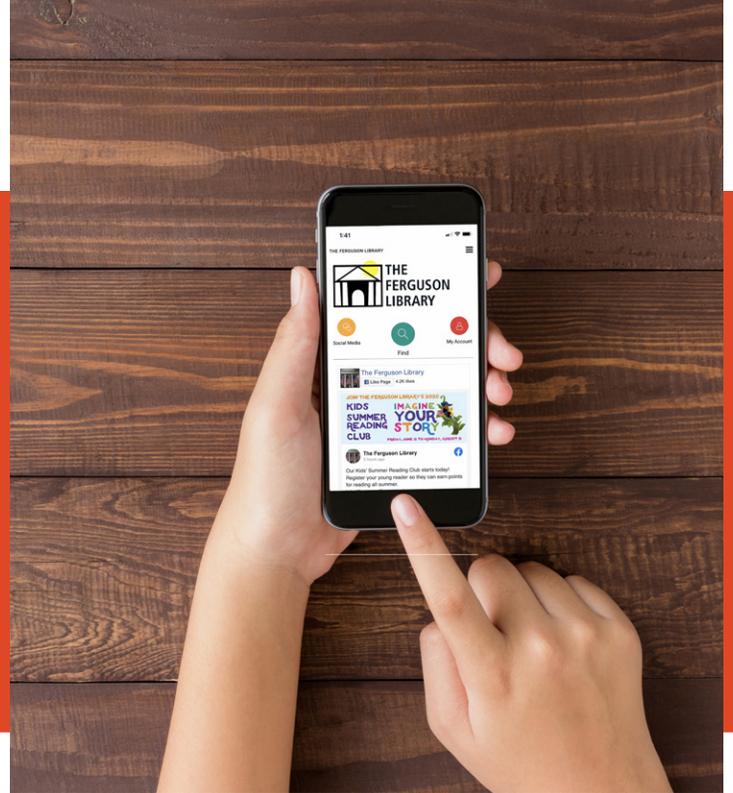
For more than one hundred years, The Ferguson Library has supplied free and equal access to information for the people of Stamford, Connecticut. While the resources, programs, and technology they offer have changed over time, one thing that remains the same is the library's commitment to providing quality, customer-driven services. A long-time Innovative partner, The Ferguson Library upgraded to Sierra in 2014 to better serve their community of 120,000 people. Since then, they have launched MyLibrary! to provide patrons with an essential mobile app.

The Challenge

OPTIMIZE MOBILE EXPERIENCE WITHOUT INCREASING STAFF WORKLOAD

The Ferguson Library has always been keen to support users on mobile devices. After initially offering a third-party mobile app, they decided to simplify by redesigning the library website to be mobile-friendly and emphasizing catalog access via the Encore mobile discovery interface. But patrons made it clear mobile access was not enough—they wanted a native app to find books quickly and have a scannable library card on their phones.

At a busy library like Ferguson, materials change hands frequently. Maisam Nouh, Technology and Cataloging Librarian at Ferguson, noted their previous solution required manual data transfers—sometimes multiple times a day—to update catalog information



in the app. It was essential to find a solution that would enable the library to maintain a high level of service for patrons without being a burden on staff.

Solution

MOBILE APP THAT AUTOMATICALLY INTEGRATES WITH ILS

Prior to their search, the leadership at Ferguson established five key criteria for selecting a mobile app. First and foremost was integration with Sierra. They wanted users to login using their existing credentials and find materials with accurate status information, the same way they could see real-time availability information in the Encore mobile interface—without requiring intervention by staff. Having used Sierra APIs to automate integration with other third-party applications, the team at Ferguson knew it was a reasonable expectation for any modern solution.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA DESIGNED TO ENSURE A GOOD CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INCLUDED:

- **Both Android and iOS friendly:** Supporting access for patrons on different device types was important to serve their entire community.
- **Mobile library card:** Patrons wanted a scannable library card displayed on their phone to use at either the self-checkout machines or the circulation desk.

- **Integration with eBooks:** Library staff wanted users to be able to checkout Overdrive materials right from the app.

Finally, price was a consideration—the library was willing to invest in a quality mobile experience, but they wanted to be sure they were getting good value for their patrons.

Using these criteria to guide the decision-making process, the Ferguson leadership evaluated mobile apps from three potential vendors before selecting Innovative's MyLibrary! app. According to Nouh, "MyLibrary! automatically integrates with Sierra, it checks the boxes on our most important mobile app criteria, and Innovative provides the best combination of functionality for price."

Results and Benefits

BETTER SERVICE IN LESS TIME

Since choosing MyLibrary!, the Ferguson Library has experienced significant benefits. Getting started was simple, as Nouh explains: "It was such a smooth implementation! So easy—and it didn't take long—maybe a few weeks. We were very pleased that everything went well!" With real-time catalog data in MyLibrary!, patrons see accurate results in the mobile app. Nouh is saving an hour or more every day with automatic updates—and she worries less, knowing data is always current.

Mobile library cards have resulted in faster self-checkouts and shorter check-out lines because patrons always carry their phones (and scannable cards). With simplified access to e-books

"Our staff love using the app while helping patrons on the floor. Instead of returning to a desk to search the catalog, they just open the app for real-time info."

Maisam Nouh

Technology & Cataloging Librarian The Ferguson Library

and e-audiobooks, expensive electronic materials now get the visibility they deserve. And library staff appreciate being able to take phones or tablets into the stacks and quickly look things up without having to type in a URL.

The Ferguson Library appreciates the ability to power best customer experiences for their community. For instance, when patrons expressed they wanted to be stay within the app for their entire mobile library experience, including complete keyword searches. Ferguson was able to provide the enhancement just a couple of weeks after MyLibrary! went live in the library. Now patrons love the native mobile experience.



Get in touch

If you're interested in discussing MyLibrary! for your ILS, contact us:

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