

ANGUS COUNCIL LIBRARIES INCREASE EFFICIENCIES WITH SCHEDULING MODULE



BACKGROUND

Angus Council in the North of Scotland runs a 7 branch library service with 2 mobile libraries and serves a population of over 110,000. The team has been using collectionHQ since 2012 and rolled out the Scheduling Module shortly after it was introduced in March 2015.

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to the introduction of the collectionHQ Scheduling Module, managing tasks across several branches and involving all staff in the use of collectionHQ had been difficult. Thanks to forward thinking management, a calendar had been introduced from the start using Microsoft Publisher which was rolled out by Support Services Librarian, Vicky Fraser. Vicky reports that although tasks could be planned, Publisher was not intuitive and was not designed for the specific tasks involved in collection management. Vicky explained: "You couldn't fit everything into the calendar entries so for example with 'Top Charts', all we could enter as a task was 'Top Charts' – we couldn't specify which chart in particular to run." As a result, the tasks which should have been run on a regular basis were not and staff lacked reminders to help them keep on top of tasks.

Publisher was also time consuming for management staff like Vicky who explained that some libraries had issues opening the files. In these situations, she would send the scheduled tasks as a PDF which doubled her workload.

THE SOLUTION

Roll Out

The roll out of the Scheduling Module started with a visit from the library's collectionHQ Account Manager who spent time with Vicky and her assistant to explain the full potential of the tool and to show them how to set up schedules. Vicky then created a plan of what frequency to set tasks and who to assign them to before entering this information into her collectionHQ schedule; a process which Vicky completed over just two afternoons.

At first some staff were a little overwhelmed with the amount of detail included in the scheduled tasks, however the ease of use and clear direction provided by each task supported a successful roll out of the Scheduling tool to staff who discovered that the specific information provided actually saved them time and has helped them to get on with tasks proactively. With just an introductory training session and by inviting staff along to training sessions hosted by the Account Manager, Scheduling has become an integral part of the staffs' workflow at Angus Council.

THE RESULT

Increased Productivity

With the collectionHQ Scheduling Module, Vicky can assign tasks to individuals who each receive a reminder of when their task is due and is expected to tick a box when the task is complete. These reminders help staff to keep on top of their to-dos and have supported an increase in productivity.

The ability to include more detail in each task and assign tasks directly to frontline staff has also widened the variety of collectionHQ tools being used. For example, where before Vicky could not specify which Top Chart staff had to run, she can now detail whether to run a Top Chart for Juvenile or for Adult Fiction and as a result

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

KEY BENEFITS

The implementation of the collectionHQ Scheduling Module has helped staff at Angus Council Libraries to:

- Delegate tasks more evenly across the team
- Monitor progress and task completion effectively
- Make better use of the range of tools collectionHQ offers

she has seen a rise in these reports being used by staff. She explains: "Since April when we introduced the Scheduling Module I can see that Top Charts for Non-Fiction and Fiction have been run 193 times as opposed to 5 before we started scheduling tasks with collectionHQ."

Vicky has also been able to include tasks to remind staff to check Performance which encourages them to monitor how their hard work is paying off, whether the titles selected are successful, and where room for improvement lies. As a result, collectionHQ's Popular Author Summary has been signed into 130 times since April whereas before only 2 or 3 staff members would regularly access this information.

Time Savings

The implementation of the Scheduling tool at the library has saved time for Vicky and for branch staff, both senior and frontline.

Previously Vicky had to accompany each task entry in Publisher with what was sometimes a 2 page procedure document describing exactly which tool to run, where to find it in collectionHQ and which collection to use the tool for. Now she can include more detail in the calendar entry outlining the precise task to carry out which staff can click on to take them straight into the tool they need to use. The ease of use with schedules has allowed Vicky to involve frontline staff more in activities as she can set tasks specifically for branch staff such as stock maintenance, freeing up senior library assistants to focus on the tasks required of them.

Because of this feature, Vicky has been able to successfully roll out a large scale weeding project of the library's Non-Fiction collection. She explains: "I have been able to set very specific weeding tasks for over the next 6 months to support our Non-Fiction weeding project. In each task I have been able to include the specific Dewey range to be weeded each month. The Scheduling tool has been a God send for that, I don't think we could have coped so easily if we were using Publisher."

Monitoring progress and task completion has also become much more efficient and effective as a result of using the collectionHQ Scheduling Module. Vicky can now see at a glance which tasks have been completed and receives an email at the end of each time period outlining who has not completed tasks which she can follow up accordingly. This allows Vicky more time to focus on some larger scale projects.

Staff Empowerment

When asked about staff buy in, Vicky mentioned some obstacles were met at first when some staff felt overwhelmed by the detail in each scheduled task. But involving staff in training and setting up the reminders has helped staff to see how much the schedule supports them in their job. Vicky explained that staff "love" the tool and they especially like that they can click on the task reminder and check a box when complete.

The ability to assign tasks directly to frontline staff in particular gives staff a sense of responsibility and allows them to work proactively.

To ensure that staff members keep using the schedules as they should be, Vicky continues to monitor use and offer training where required. The ability to monitor the library service as a whole has allowed Vicky to identify any issues with how certain libraries are doing things or where they are using different processes to the other branches. Vicky can use this insight to ensure that libraries are working in the same way as much as possible which helps to create a central system and build on team spirit.

THE FUTURE

Vicky is delighted with the results that her library has achieved thanks to the Scheduling Module so far and would like to see those results continue to improve. It is her goal to put collectionHQ at the forefront of everyone's mind and she regards the Scheduling Module as the tool which will support that.

With increased use of the tool and a wider variety of collectionHQ tools being used as a result, Vicky expects to see a rise not only in use but in the performance of the library's collection.

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