

The Pirbright Institute

Surrey, United Kingdom

About The Pirbright Institute

The [Pirbright Institute](#) is a world leading centre of excellence in research and surveillance of viral diseases of farm animal viruses and viruses that spread from animals to humans. The Institute was formerly known as the Institute for Animal Health and has recently merged its two sites to a single location in Surrey. It employs more than 400 employees including 120 scientists, a large support base and 45 students completing post graduate degrees.

The Pirbright Institute Library

The Institute chose Liberty as their library management system in 2014. Liberty is used primarily by the scientists and students to search and discover information to assist their research and study. Prior to Liberty, the library books, journals and staff publication resources were managed on separate databases – moving to Liberty meant the achievement of a one stop area to discover all information and resources available.

The library was also previously in two locations, Liz Pritchard joined as the librarian with the objective to merge the two libraries and deliver online resource access where possible.

Liz comments:

“My role when joining The Pirbright Institute to merge databases was a challenging task but by choosing Liberty and working with Softlink it was much less stressful. Liberty offered all the functionality required for the Library and ensured we achieved a central search system with effective search functionality.”

Converting resource records

With 140,000 journal articles, 5,000 books and 8,000 staff publications, merging the two libraries resources was a huge task for Liz. The historic collection of journal articles and staff publications including patents required customisable fields to be developed in Liberty. The two libraries operated independently and the books were classified differently. The databases did not have copy records, instead individual records that resulted in an unclear view of the library resources. Liz says:

“As the libraries classified their books differently, the Liberty conversion has proved invaluable in sorting out the overlaps and variations in classifications.”

Softlink took care of the conversion through every step. The resources lists were provided to the Softlink technical team who developed customised data fields and migrated the data into Pirbright’s Liberty system. Liz further comments:

“Converting our resources data was the most important part of the project – with such a vast collection and customisations required. The Softlink team were fantastic, completing the conversion with no problems resulting in a single accurate database of resources for the library.”



Liz has completed a full stock check of resources and will be uploading copy information using accession numbers as barcodes with Softlink's help. For the first time Pirbright has one resource database with everything available in one central platform, fully searchable by all library users in the Liberty OPAC.

Discovering resources in Liberty v5

Centralising the discovery of information has proved to be very beneficial to the scientists and students at Pirbright. Liberty offers a search functionality that delivers accurate search results with basic to advanced search, supporting researchers in finding exactly what they want and much more quickly.

Liz says:

“The search functionality in Liberty has meant researching information is much easier for staff, scientists and students. They no longer need to search separate databases but can find exactly what they need instantly in one search in Liberty.”

Since the conversion, the Library has extended the resources in their library catalogue with the addition of subscription records, online journals and PDF documents associated with theses. Liz will continue to make the most of using Liberty, exploring all the functionality that achieves a better user experience.

Liz concludes:

“What I like about Liberty is that it offers all the functionality needed to efficiently manage our library but also the flexibility to customise and develop as our library needs grow.”