



Promoting Library Excellence Through Efficiency



ares
automating reserves

ARES® RESERVES MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE CASE STUDY

Scott R. Anderson, Information Systems Librarian, Millersville University

Case Study Follow-up: One Year Later

“We are looking at some pretty significant cuts over the next year or two, and there are some ways Ares can help us weather the budget storm. Faculty might examine textbook purchases and determine they could save money by placing books or chapters of books on reserve instead. In addition, library staff are ratcheting up digitized offerings. We are reviewing the use of entire monographs on reserve to determine if the use is really just for a chapter or two. In that case, we’ll digitize the chapters and return the monograph to the stacks and perform copyright clearance when necessary.

“I don’t anticipate budget cuts affecting professional and paraprofessional staff, although some student hours have been reduced. Ares is helping the library manage with fewer student hours by having the most productive students cross-trained on ILLiad and Ares. The similarities in the look and feel of both systems expedite the training process and facilitate the effective sharing of student resources.

“Recently we’ve noticed a new use of Ares—working groups placing documents on reserve. Some of these documents require copyright compliance, which Ares easily handles for these groups. We’re looking forward to integrating with Blackboard and to the enhancements of Ares 2.5, including tagging.

“Ares continues to work very well for us. If I had it to do over again, I might choose the hosted solution, which wasn’t available when Millersville went live. When it’s time to review the lifecycle replacement on equipment, we plan to examine the hosted solution as a way to free up some internal technology resources.”

Why Millersville Chose Ares

In the world of technology, stuff happens. In the case of Millersville, a huge computer nightmare caused the library to lose all of its services. According to Professor Scott Anderson, Ganser Library Systems Librarian, this presented the library with an opportunity to evaluate the systems they were using, including their e-reserve software.


“We were using another reserves management software package with some customization that we had done. Once we started shopping around we narrowed the field

to two or three choices. At this point we involved library staff and student employees to help make a decision.”

Scott said the library was already using the ILLiad™ Interlibrary Loan Management Software for interlibrary loan. After the great system crash, they were really pleased with how quickly Atlas responded to get their ILL service back up and running. This established relationship and the confidence in Atlas’ customer support were key factors in making the decision to choose Ares for the library’s e-reserves software.

Now available from the following regional networks.





But they weren't the only reasons. 'We rely heavily on student employees and they liked what they saw with Ares. The system was intuitive to use and whatever tasks they were responsible for, the Ares environment made their jobs easier.'

Choosing Ares also made economic sense. The library had already made the investment in hardware to host ILLiad, so they could easily add Ares to the same machine. And, said Scott, the two systems work well side by side, with downtime in terms of upgrades measured in minutes. "Ares is a little more expensive than what we had before, but we've more than made up for that because we operate more efficiently."

Once the decision was made, Atlas had their Ares installation up and running in about a day. "The support from Atlas is fantastic. When we had our local computing problems and lost everything, Atlas did a snap installation for our ILLiad instance. When we did the e-reserve installation a few weeks later I talked to support and they scheduled us for the next day."

Scott says having the same company providing two services means fewer holes in the campus firewall. He also points to these other benefits of using Ares:

- **Training synergies with ILLiad.** The look and feel of the two systems are the same. If you've learned to use ILLiad, you can quickly learn Ares.
- **Intuitive work environment.** Students can operate independently. With very little training they uploaded thousands of records correctly.
- **Leverage the investment made in ILLiad hardware.** Any library hosting their own ILLiad instance can host Ares on the same hardware.

Supporting Faculty and Students with Better E-Reserve Capabilities

At Millersville, library staff review all uploads and handle copyright. Faculty members identify what they want to place on reserve and the staff does the rest. The fact that student employees found the Ares interface intuitive to use lowered the training threshold. Plus, there's a synergy with ILLiad "so we got a twofer," said Scott.

According to Scott, one of the big advantages of Ares over their former reserves system is the ability to do authentication at the student level, not just at the course level. With the previous system, everyone (faculty and students) needed to know their course password. With Ares, users can authenticate at the student level and associate themselves with courses. This means that the e-reserve system authentication mirrors all other library services, reducing the administrative overhead they had before and dramatically reducing the number of questions related to access.

Another nice feature is email notification. When new materials for a course have been uploaded, students receive email notices alerting them that there is new material for their course.

The library has received positive feedback from students and faculty, including a gratifying email message from a faculty member saying how much she liked the new e-reserve system. "We're a small enough campus that we can be a full service shop for our faculty. If you were a larger institution you could turn on all the features to enable faculty to do everything themselves and I'd be confident that the system would work efficiently."

About Millersville University

Located in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County, Millersville University began in 1855 as a teachers college.

The school now offers a wide range of graduate and undergraduate majors in the areas of science and mathematics, education and humanities and social sciences. More than 7,200 undergraduates and 1,047 graduate students attend Millersville, which is ranked among *U.S. News & World Report's* top 10 public universities in the North.

About Atlas and Ares

Atlas Systems is a software development company founded in July 1995 with the mission of developing library automation to "promote library excellence through efficiency." Atlas is best known for the ILLiad Interlibrary Loan Management Software, in use in over 900 libraries and now distributed exclusively by OCLC. The Ares system automates library reserve services, provides around-the-clock access to reserves collections includes integrated copyright management services, and saves time for faculty members and library staff.

For more information, visit our website www.atlas-sys.com, email us at ares@atlas-sys.com, or call Rich Stryker at 757-467-7872 ext 210.



244 Clearfield Avenue • Suite 407 • Virginia Beach, VA 23462 • www.atlas-sys.com

Promoting Library Excellence Through Efficiency

This case study was developed based on an interview conducted with Scott Anderson by Judith A. Michaelson, MLS, principal of JAM Marketing, LLC. JAM Marketing is a marketing consulting firm focused on helping organizations design and implement short-term marketing strategies that yield long-term results.