



CASE STUDY

Hareskov Public Library extends opening hours and accessibility with open+ by bibliotheca

KEY STATISTICS

Collection Size: 65,658 | Annual Circulation: 776,430
Population Served: 38,000 | LMS: Axiell Arena

CASE STUDY: HARESKOV PUBLIC LIBRARY, DENMARK

Background

Situated just outside Copenhagen, Furesø Kommune is a Danish Municipality with a population of around 38,000 residents. The Kommune is served by three main public libraries in the region; Farum, Værløse and Hareskov. Hareskov Public Library, the smallest of the three, has been designed to operate as a combination library, meaning that not only does it serve the local community as a public library, but it also acts as a school library and is housed in the school building complex. In addition, the library is also home to the local postal service - making the building a true community hub for its residents.

In 2012, facing intensely difficult budget restrictions, the Municipality decided that in order to continue to provide its communities with library services it would need to significantly reduce the number of hours that the Hareskov branch operated. Knowing the effects that this would have on the community and not wanting to compromise on the service that was offered to residents the Municipality decided to explore what options were available to avoid reducing community access to the library and its facilities.



With open+ libraries have the flexibility of tailoring when they are manned and unmanned

The most obvious solution for Hareskov Public Library was to implement an open library system at the branch. Open libraries have been popping up in Denmark and other Nordic countries for over 6 years. The solution, which is now deployed in over 50% of Danish libraries, allows libraries to extend the hours they operate by opening for a proportion of time without any staff members being present – meaning that patrons can independently conduct their normal library transactions at times that are more suitable to them. Upon deciding to implement an open library solution, Anita Bonderup, Head of Department at Hareskov Public Library, comments: “we knew that an open library system was the approach that we needed to take; we have seen it work with other libraries in Denmark and know that it has been a huge success for other communities. It was an easy decision for us to make – it is a very small community and we knew the community would take good care of our library – even though there would be no staff present.”

Solution and Challenges

bibliotheca's open library solution, open+, is made up of a set of hardware and software components that when integrated together enable libraries to fully control the opening hours and access times for their premises. With open+, libraries can tailor the hours they remain open for their communities – whether these hours be manned by members of paid staff (or volunteers) or unmanned with access granted to patrons simply by using their library card with an external access control panel.

In addition to managing opening hours and accessibility, open+ can be configured so that other elements of the library can be controlled and monitored. Self-service kiosks, for example can be safely turned on and shut down, and public access computers can be easily powered up and then down when the library is ready to close. The solution can also offer additional functions to libraries, including public announcements to patrons to advise them that the library will be transitioning from a manned to an unmanned service and a full CCTV surveillance system to ensure maximum security.

“open+ has enabled us to extend the services we provide to our community and make better use of our staff.”

Anita Bonderup, Head of Department

Deploying open+ can offer libraries a way of providing round-the-clock access to facilities without having to increase staffing costs. The solution can also make better use of staff by relocating them to different branches and provide libraries with the opportunity of opening additional branches at a cost significantly lower than opening a traditional branch.

Despite the huge number of benefits, it is recognised that moving to an 'open' library can initially bring up some concerns, however, these concerns are often eliminated once the solution is in place. Anita comments: “We were naturally concerned that we would encounter vandalism

when we first introduced the concept and left the library to the patrons, however, there have been no problems at all with anybody mistreating the library when we are not there. In essence we are giving the library back to the community, and they have been taking really good care of it. In fact, the only time we actually had an issue with vandalism or anything like that was when the library was open and fully staffed.”

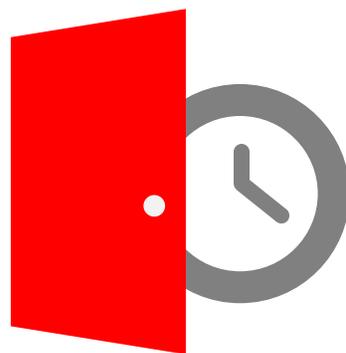
Results

The open+ solution has been very well received by Hareskov Public Library and its local community; combining the manned and unmanned hours the library is now able to open from 08:00 to 22:00 each day – meaning that its facilities are now accessible to community members over 40 hours more a week than they were previously and at no extra daily cost! Jimmy Sebastian Caspersen, Librarian at Hareskov Public Library, has been overwhelmed by the reception received from members of the community on the new service “the solution has been a great success as it has allowed us to extend both our hours and access to our facilities – which we wouldn't normally be able to do. We have received so much positive feedback from the community on how they can now use this local resource a lot more than they otherwise could. Having a library that closes at 17:00 is not ideal for most people, with the new hours this library now works for everyone in the community.”

One of the major advantages that Hareskov has gained from the solution is that staff members can be better utilised and distributed throughout the library's network to undertake other duties, together with being more accessible to patrons during busier time periods, Anita states: “open+ has allowed us to get more value from our staff. With the solution we have been able to relocate staff members to other locations or reassign them to different working hours during manned library times. I think there may be some misconceptions that library staff are not needed with an open library, but that is not the case, library books still need to be put back on the shelves and the library still has to be maintained, an open library cannot run itself – it still needs staff involvement. The open+ solution has enabled us to extend the services we provide to our community and make better use of our staff.”



'staffless' mode can be activated before staff leave the building



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