

3M Library Systems and Material Flow Management*

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Καλησπέρα!

That is about the end of my Greek language knowledge so I hope you'll bear me. I'll try to keep this presentation as short as possible and if you have any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

3M is probably a company that you may know of. We have different products starting from Scotch, videos, tapes and all different kinds of things. One of them is also the Library Security Systems (Library Systems is just one part of it all), so I will just go on now with our Security Systems. The brief agenda is this and includes 3 different points: where do we come from, a brief review of what we mean by Material's Flow Management and general information about the 3M Self-check System.

The Library Security has been our key systems in quite a number of years. We have been active in the business for over 25 years. At least 3 billion items have been protected with the Security strips of our data tapes. That means that we have probably protected more items around the world than anybody else.

(Μικρό κενό)

... the 3M that you have a company that is future proof and a company that invests a lot in your area and someone who you know will be there for a long time to come.

The Material's Flow Management is a term that a lot of people would wonder what it really means. Well, we decide and say this is our understanding of a process of optimising the handling, the Security and the process of materials into, out, off and throughout your Library. But still, this may not mean anything to you at all. And I will come back to discuss it, in a little more detail at later time.

We have been working in this market for a long time and we always try to keep a close ear of what is happening in the market. We have been told by a lot of our customers -and I'm sure that is not anything new- about some of the challenges that you are facing which include budget cuts or squeezed budgets and increased demand from your customers. More people want to go to libraries to learn more, to get more books etc.

Still your staff can not be increased that much and of course that makes the security of your items, of what you have today, all the more important. You have to protect your staff the way it is today. Another challenge is the growing need for technology. As you can see, there are Opac Systems, Catalogue Systems, the Internet's growing need all over the place and of course, even your staff would like to have something more, to do a more productive job, something that would be of more interest to them.

We think we have a solution and the solution is what we call "The Material's Flow Management". This is where we'd like to be your consultants, to help you to raise your staff productivity, to relieve the pressure on your budget, to provide you with the solution in every aspect of your Library. We want you to improve your services, to make you a more attractive place where people would like to come, sit down and feel at home. And of course, we would like to help the staff so that they have a better feeling of the work they are doing.

One of the products that we have over here is the 3M Service Shelf-check System which some of you may have seen. Here in this photograph it is probably a little older already: We have a new system outside today. So how does the System work? I will go on with some detail about that. It is a very basic and simple system and has just two basic requirements. First you need to have a circulation system where you can check your books out and in to the Library, using a bar-code, pattern cards etc. A full catalogue system only will not be sufficient. The second one is the need for what we call the "Standard Interface Protocol". This is a very simple protocol which will connect the Library Circulation Software to our System. So, what are the advantages of having such an interface? We have been working together in the past 3 years now since the product has been introduced with a lot of different Software Companies and in fact, the protocol can almost be called de facto standard among the industries. We have all 45 different Software Companies like Ex-Libris, American Dynix, GEAC, PICA etc., just a name of few that are already working together with us and have implemented this protocol. Technics life easier for you, for us and for the Software Companies. And also we provide a complete test and certification process so that when you install a shelf-check system, you know that this will work without any hit jobs and without too many problems.

And of course, another of the key advantages is that the Software Company can continue to build up their own Software, bring out new releases and change features, if they want to, without affecting the way the 3M Self-check works and that we can continue to do it ourselves. So both companies are independent of each other and you will have the benefit of development from both companies at the same time.

And now we're going to talk a little bit about the system functionalities. So, how does the Shelf-check really work? Like I said, it is a very simple system. It has yet 4 steps. It will scan the pattern of the student card, scan the item

card and desensitize the data tape strip and print a receipt. Very simple and working all on the basis of the standard protocol.

The very important part of the Self-check is also the user interface. Our focus is to make the system as simple and as successful and for that we have a full colour information display with the pattern been let through each step. If something goes wrong, then you'll be told what has gone wrong, why to do or not to do something and of course, the staff will be advised. So if your System goes down, you're out of paper, whatever may happen, you will have the right messaging. Messaging that may come from within the 3M Software. All messages come from the Circulation Company itself.

Some other flexibilities of the system include local language, of course, and in fact even Dewey language, so you have the possibility to have a system where you have Greek and English as a combination (the pattern ID-card or other identification as such will be very flexible). You can have it as a magnetic card, a bar-code, a combination of both or just the entry on the PIN. And of course, you can even have 16 different types of bar-codes: code 39, code 128 etc., all the standard industry bar-codes that are available today. Even the bar-code placement is very flexible within the system. You can have bar-codes on the front-cover, inside, on the back, wherever they are today. It does not really matter to the system.

The key thing about disholding is that our system should be as flexible so you can fit into your library environment. We make the changes and it should fit it into your library the way your library is today. Receipts are also something very important to people. You can have a completely customisable receipt where you can change messages, give item information to staff etc. The advantages of the System is that it will practically set-up itself that it offers very easy pool-down menus based on Windows, like you people are all familiar with, and of course the connectivity itself. You can have a simple serial connection or you can have a TCP/IP connection if you have INTERNET within your library.

So the security features of the System are also key to the system that are multiple book protection. So, if somebody tries to take out two books together or places books side by side, they will be detected and we will stop the transaction. Or, if somebody tries to switch books, puts the first book in, takes out, puts the second book in and tries to deactivate the second, they will also be detected. So, that is what we call "The suspicious pattern handling" so we can stop somebody from trying to fool with the system.

Then, if somebody leaves his card in the system, message will be sent to your Software. The pattern card that has been left will be disable so nobody else can use it and check books out of that card. And of course, the last part is the PIN capability where if you have a PIN number, like on the bankcard, you can use that also.

The information that is provided to you is of vital importance to statistics, so you have two separate portions. One part of the item statistics, is how many books have been checked out, and how many people have used the system. Or in the case of malfunction, how many people will refuse because of it. So, you have a complete detail of the numbers and you know, how well the system has been used. And of course, self-diagnostics. So, if something goes wrong the system will create, will keep diagnostics of data and we can then trace back and find out the reasons.

That is not only as far as the System is concerned but it also includes now a video checkout. So, if you have videos within your library, a pattern can come in with books and videos and the system will still be used without problems. So, what else does it give you? It gives your staff benefits where the staff can now devote their time to providing a better service to the customers, to be able to guide them through the library, to answer questions and give them better support and some simple mundane task of just activity of tag and stamping a date can then be handled by a system like the shelf-check. And of course, it also gives the students benefit on the issue of privacy where students can check out their own books and eliminate the lines and help your Library give a general far better basic service to your customers.

The Shelf-check System is now a global product. It has been sold, from what I'm told last, over 1.000 times world-wide as a production unit and not as a proper type out of the laboratory. But of course, there is more to it than to put it in the corner and wait for all these things to happen. We have found that there are some key success factors to this and they include complete commitment of the management but also of the staff. You have to have a buy and of everybody, you have to support the system so that everybody wants to have it, you have to have your Library policy to be as acceptable to everybody as possible. So, if there are too many blocks that could create an initial slow-down the way the system works. Also, the location is very important. We had some bad experiences when somebody had placed the system next to the men's room and it was used as a convenient cold tanker in the wintertime. So, it is important to look at where you will put your system. We will be glad to help you to promote the system. We have different promotions where we will invite your students to come and use the system, we will show them how to use it. That user-training is very important especially in the initial one week of when you introduce the system.

So, all in all, the System is a simple System we always continue to work on developing new products and this is one of them. So if you have any questions, I'd be glad to answer them now.