

Linnaeus University

Streamlining Student
Access to Course
Resources



Accurate data on course resources is essential to support instructors and students. Getting it was a challenge for the Linnaeus University library staff — and one they are overcoming with Leganto. Now, they can make more-informed purchasing decisions, and build stronger relationships with instructors.

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Emelie Uggla Waldenström, Linnaeus University



About Linnaeus University

With 33,000 registered students, Linnaeus University in the south of Sweden is the country's seventh-largest university in terms of number of students. It is also one of the youngest, founded in 2010 when two schools merged. Linnaeus offers more than 150-degree programs and 1300 single-subject courses, spanning arts and humanities, health and life sciences, the social sciences, the natural sciences, technology, and business and economics.

A Need for Correct Course List Data

When an instructor specifies that a reading is part of the coursework, students at Linnaeus University naturally expect the library to provide access to it. Yet, meeting this expectation used to require a complex series of actions for the library staff at Linnaeus.

“We have a local regulation here at Linnaeus that says that the reading list must be a part of the syllabus,” explains Librarian Emelie Uggla Waldenström. “Key information about course materials is stored along with the syllabus in a system that is outside of the library. We had to access that system to see the reading lists that were coming, so we could make informed decisions about purchasing course literature.” As a workaround, the library put together a system that flagged any changes to the course resources in the syllabi, so staff could spot new titles and procure them, if necessary.

There were data quality issues as well. “The syllabi readings many times include sources that contain the wrong title or no ISBN,” Waldenström reveals. The library staff often had to solve the problems for the students, something that we are always happy to do, but what a waste of time for the students!” Moreover, “The course information does not hold the name of the instructor, so if we had questions about the readings, the task to try to find out who to contact was pretty time consuming.”

Understanding What Instructors Need

In the middle of 2018, the university became the first in Sweden to adopt Ex Libris Leganto course resource list management system. Waldenström was chosen to manage the adoption effort and lead the project group. “We did a preparatory study, where we spoke to students and administrators,” she recounts. “Most importantly, we interviewed 15 instructors. To help them, we needed to understand their needs. We identified their workflows and developed knowledge of their pedagogical views of the course resources. A key factor for success was the need to integrate course resource management into our Learning Management System.”

“We tapped a few of the instructors who were most-interested in the Leganto project to test it. They told their colleagues about Leganto, and the word started to spread.”

As the momentum for Leganto was building, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the landscape changed.

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Emelie Ugglä Waldenström, Linnaeus University

Speeding Adoption During the Pandemic Supporting Information Literacy

According to Waldenström, Linnaeus has always had a large number of distance-learning students, but this year the entire university went mostly online due to COVID-19. The switch to distance learning became an opportunity to ramp up the use of Leganto for some segments of the university. “When the pandemic hit, we had about 20 student assistants working at the library,” she recalls. “I taught them how to use Leganto and they created about 300 lists for the Arts and Humanities faculty. Our idea is that eventually, teaching staff will maintain their own lists in Leganto. When we make this transition, it will be easier for them because their current lists are already there.”

Building Better Relationships Through Leganto

Waldenström reports that the reception has been positive among those who are using Leganto. “The students love the direct access to e-materials. Among the teaching staff, those that most like Leganto are teaching distance courses that use a lot of e-books. On the other hand, the nursing program has a lot of physical books, and that entire program is using Leganto and liking it, too. Overall, the teachers we’ve talked to know that Leganto is good for the students.”

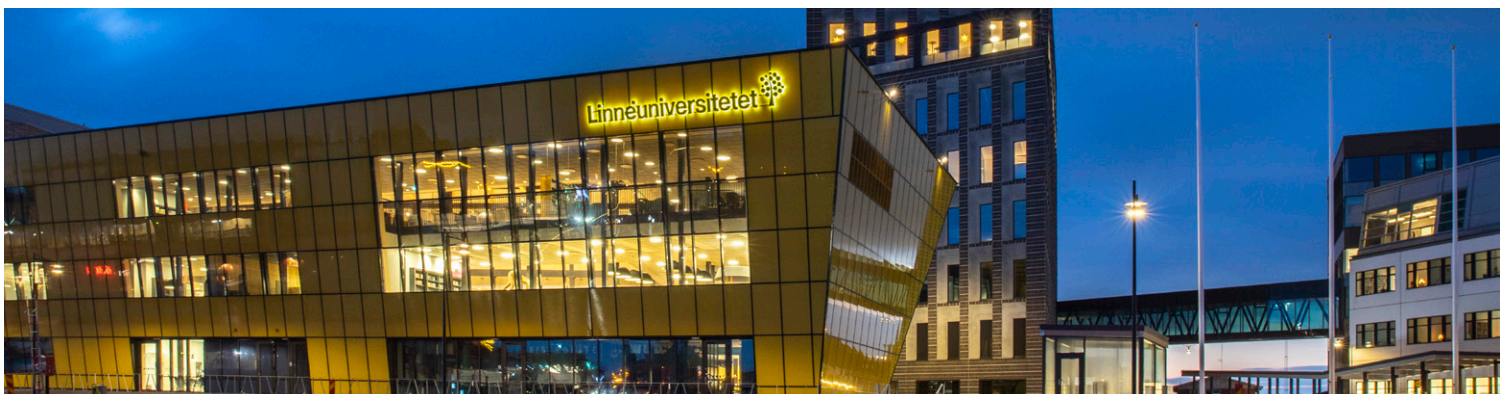
Moreover, Leganto provides an opportunity for library staff to create new relationships with instructors. As Waldenström explains, “I work in the media and acquisitions department and we haven’t had any natural contacts with teaching staff before. With Leganto, you see which instructor has made the list and can communicate with him or her. We get to know the instructors needs better. We can talk to each other about the library at a new level.”

Leganto also plays a role in fostering information literacy.

“When you give students a Leganto link that points to the library resources, you point them to where they can find scientific and other materials on their own,” Waldenström declares. She admits that some instructors are reluctant to provide links because they are concerned that students won’t develop the skills to search by themselves. But, as she reveals, “Since many students just go and buy their course readings, they are sometimes unaware of what the Library has to offer until later on in their education. I believe that Leganto greatly complements the library classes, where student learns to build search skills and information literacy in a scientific context. Instructors who turn to the library to help students develop these skills understand the value Leganto in promoting information literacy.”

Continuity Through a Time of Transition

As if dealing with a global pandemic isn’t enough, one of Linnaeus two libraries is moving to a new building and campus location. These days, when students are distance learners and may not have a physical library to visit for a time, having Leganto in place helps to keep the teaching and learning continuing on. “You have to find other ways to serve the students,” states Waldenström. That means pushing out the information they need, in a way that works for them, even amid all the upheaval. “You have to like a good challenge, right?” shares Waldenström. “The fact is, each day we’re moving further ahead with Leganto.”



About Ex Libris

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