

“The technology made available by Kirtas will allow us to reveal the treasures of McGill Library to the world and enable sophisticated means of resource discovery.”

- Janine Schmidt | Trenholme Director of Libraries at McGill University

The McGill University Library system includes more than six million items in its collections. It has 13 branch libraries, several specialist collections that are open to the public, and five million information resources. The collections are wide-ranging and include rare books and manuscripts.

Like many university libraries, McGill understands the significance and importance of providing digital access to the highly sought after rare books and manuscripts in its collections. In fact, McGill Library is somewhat of a pioneer in the practice of digitization. The library was an early adopter of digitizing books—their efforts began in 1996—but there was never a solution providing the ability to accommodate large-scale, mass digitization...until now.

The Kirtas Solution

Together with their Canadian reseller Ristech, Kirtas Technologies was able to provide the solution McGill University Library was looking for. The library determined that the Kirtas APT 2400RA was best suited to meet their needs.

The appeal of the Kirtas solution is its speed and ability to handle books more gently than the human hand. The APT system is unique in that the binding does not have to be removed or forced open 180 degrees under glass for digitizing. Instead, special page-turning technology gently advances each page with the SureTurn™ robotic arm and safely holds the book in a continuous, height-adjusting 110 degree SmartCradle™.

“This is a wonderful example of enabling technology that allows libraries to make a huge leap in service,” said Louise O’Neill, associate director, library technology services. “We can now

provide easy, rapid worldwide access to the valuable information and unique titles that live in the McGill Library, which would previously have required travel and on-site research for many.”

Among the 300,000 titles housed in Rare Books and Special Collections at McGill University Library are collections of art and architecture, Canadiana, history, literature, philosophy (including an outstanding David Hume Collection), travel and exploration, and the history of the book.

The library is also taking part in Kirtas’ Scan and Print on Demand (SPOD) program. SPOD will enable McGill Library to offer the books from their digitized collection on major online retail sites, such as Lulu.com and Amazon.com. Customers are able to search for and purchase titles from the collection, and McGill University’s Library receives royalties for each copy printed.

“The technology made available by Kirtas will allow us to reveal the treasures of McGill Library to the world and enable sophisticated means of resource discovery,” noted Janine Schmidt, Trenholme Director of Libraries at McGill University.



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