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Nick Ruest | Digital Strategies Librarian

### The Kirtas Solution

With four libraries, more than two million visitors, and a combined total of more than two million books, McMaster University in Ontario, Canada is a top ranked research establishment in Canada and it is considered one of the leading research institutions in the world.

The Library's William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, houses extensive archives including those of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), the British philosopher, logician, essayist, and renowned peace advocate; and a noteworthy collection of 18th century literature.

Like so many other institutes of higher learning, McMaster University Library faced the challenge of providing online, digital access to content that is currently only available by making a visit to the library in person.

The library has some experience bringing books from its rare collections into the digital world through a manual scanning process, but the project proved to be a slow, arduous task. McMaster University Library began searching for state-of-the-art equipment that would enable its books to be released to the world and viewed electronically on a daily basis by its end users.

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

The main 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™.

“Previously, we had a number of flatbed scanners and a copy stand, which were able to scan some of our materials for digitizing,” said Digital Strategies Librarian, Nick Ruest. “This process was manual and time consuming. The Kirtas scanner has streamlined the process so that we can scan books more quickly.”

The Library plans to digitize much of its rare book collection (pre-1800 publications), as well as selections from the Bertrand Russell Library and the Library's general collection. The ultimate



purpose is to make the collections more accessible to McMaster students and faculty and to outside users, through both online and print-on-demand services.

### Books to Bytes

So what does the future hold for the Library and their digitization efforts?

“We are exploring the possibility of putting a scan-on-demand service in place,” continued Wade Wyckoff, the project lead at McMaster. “A scan-on-demand service would help us to be extremely user-centered as we would be able to quickly and efficiently scan requested items while simultaneously building up our library of scanned materials.”

The Library hopes to partner with other institutions to help them digitize their unique collections, as well.

### ...and Back Again

The Library is also taking part in Kirtas’ Scan and Print on Demand (SPOD) program. Imagine owning a copy of Galileo’s 1632 book, *Dialogo di Galileo Galilei* (Galileo’s Dialogue), challenging the traditional thinking that the universe revolves around the earth.

Or perhaps a first-edition autographed copy of H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine* is a more suitable choice for your own personal library?

SPOD will enable the Library to offer these books and others 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 McMaster University’s Library receives royalties for each copy printed.

“In addition, digital copies from the rare book collection and the Bertrand Russell Library will be used in online Web exhibits promoting the collections” said Archivist Librarian, Rick Stapleton. “Print copies of certain titles will also be made available as gifts to visiting dignitaries.”



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