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Could Your Library Courier Benefit from a Courier Management System?

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<http://quipugroup.com>

For most people the acronym CMS refers to a system that manages website content updates. However, for those who use Quipu Group's Library2Library software the term refers to a courier management system. Developed in 2007, Library2Library is a web-based tool used to manage the daily activities of a library courier service. Gone are the multiple Excel spreadsheets, Access databases, sticky notes, and paper files used to track material and payments. Libraries can move beyond lists with courier code addresses, antiquated web forms and email used to communicate problems to the courier manager. These methods were labor intensive, costly, and subject to human error.

Melissa Stockton, Quipu Group partner and principle project analyst describes the flexibility of Library2Library as, "a highly scalable courier management and materials transportation system. Designed specifically to help libraries with the business of in-transit resource management, Library2Library allows institutions to focus on running an efficient courier system, saving both time and dollars for staff and member libraries. And everything can be accessed online." Library2Library uses a single database and web interface to store and manage the data. Libraries using the courier service can locate routing codes and print routing slips, report lost or damaged items, find contact information for other libraries and communicate with the courier manager. The courier manager can identify problem routes, track issues, and quickly find information to make the courier run smoothly and efficiently. Some functions are accessed from the home page while other functions have restricted access and require a user to enter a username and password.

The first significant upgrade to Library2Library is expected in May 2009. Many library delivery systems require signed, paper-based service agreements between each library and the entity managing the courier. A new module will mechanize the service agreement process eliminating the need to mail blank agreements, fax completed agreements, perform time-consuming updates to the database, and store the paper agreements. Libraries will complete a service agreement online which will be pre-populated with information already stored in the system. Service agreements will be approved online and errors easily identified and corrected.

Research suggests there are no competing products on the market. Review of a system without a comparison product can be difficult, but an analysis of the implementation of the system at the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC), found that Quipu Group's courier management system is a great time and expense saver. Kira Zimmerman, Courier Manager for Colorado Library Consortium sums up how CMS has affected her work, "I spend a large amount of time communicating with libraries; CMS has put their courier and library information at my fingertips. My ability to assist and manage the courier effectively is greatly increased by the amount of information I have available to me through CMS." The software design is clean and adaptable and requires little or no user training. Quipu Group has proven to be a company that meets its obligations and timetable. The price is affordable; CLiC met its return on investment within 18 months of implementation. I would recommend this product to other consortium providing courier management services to their members. View the home page for the Colorado Library Consortium's version of Library2Library at <http://courier.clicweb.org>.