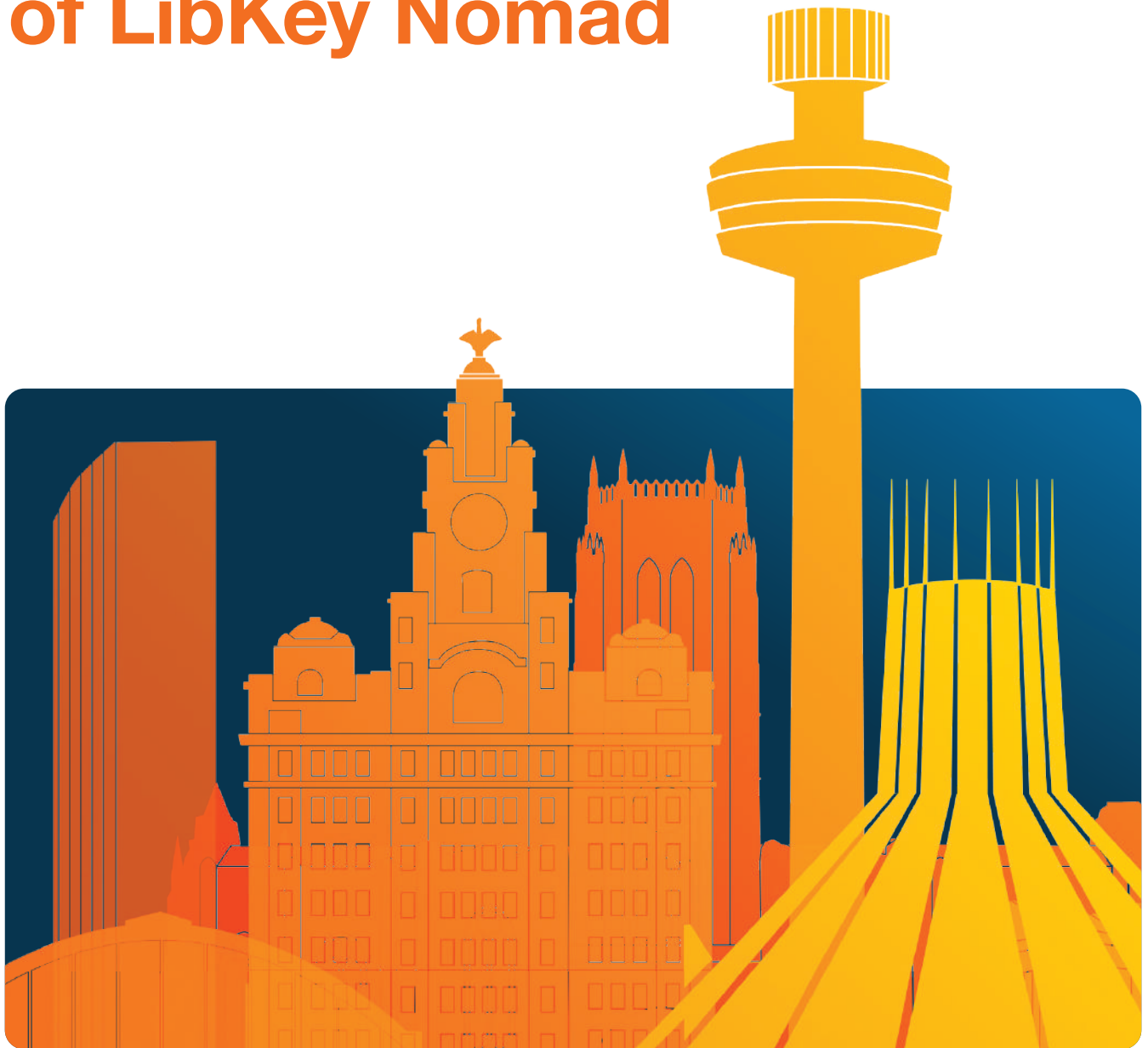# Why Liverpool John Moores University library completed a site-wide installation of LibKey Nomad

Third Iron
advanced library technologies

Liverpool John Moores University

OVER 27,000 STUDENTS

1,305 ACADEMIC TEACHING STAFF AND PROFESSORS

Intro

The Digital Content team at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) Library is on a journey. The team's leader, Heather Da Vanzo relates how the user research they conducted revealed access barriers patrons were encountering in their workflow.

"We worked with our business school and looked at how they're accessing material. We found there were barriers in place. It was very apparent. Even the academics were frustrated with how many clicks, sign-ins, and other things that were required to access material, and that's why I say that we're on a journey," she said.

Barriers often mean that patrons don't stay in the system and use the resources the university has spent significant money on.

Heather and her team have taken a number of steps to increase ease of access, including implementing OpenAthens to provide single sign on authentication and adopting Ex Libris Primo to provide a single search box experience.

But Heather observes that as important as these steps have been, the main obstacle has been getting people to start their search in Library services. "It can be a hard sell to direct users to the Library's Discovery search. Well-versed, educated users of a library will go, 'Oh, your library catalog...' But if you sit amongst the students, that isn't really the language they're using. They're saying, 'I'm just going to Google this,'" she said.

"Saying 'Use your filters,' you know, all those normal library terms. It's quite a hard sell to students. They are used to using Amazon and other well-designed search interfaces, which are much more intuitive than what our library catalogue system is."

Heather Da Vanzo
Digital Content Team Leader,
Liverpool John Moores
University Library

In addition, they have been attempting to reduce the number of clicks patrons have to navigate in order to get to resources. Their user research also showed that when the number of clicks are reduced, users tended to stay on the platform longer and conduct their searches there. "We've done some internal research, and in the wider library research environment, there's lots of data to say, if you can reduce the clicks for a user, then they're more likely to either stay with your platform or product because they feel like they're getting what they need quickly," she said.

Using LibKey Nomad to improve usability

As part of this overall journey to improve the user experience, especially for those who start their research on the open web, LJMU library adopted LibKey which includes the LibKey Nomad browser extension. LibKey Nomad identifies article citations found on webpages like PubMed and Wikipedia. It then provides a direct link to the full text article as it's available from subscribed, aggregator, or Open Access sources. In doing so, LibKey Nomad clearly identifies what content is available, and brings users directly to it in one click.

Initially the Library developed a LibAnswers webpage to promote awareness of LibKey Nomad and to encourage students and other patrons to install LibKey Nomad themselves on their own device browsers. But Heather didn't think that was enough on its own, since it relied on students choosing to download the browser extension: some people would do it, but most wouldn't even know it was an option. Heather could see the benefits of LibKey Nomad but leaving it to users to install wasn't as direct as she wanted. "It's very passive, isn't it?" she said.

When a Third Iron staff member suggested to Heather that they could deploy LibKey Nomad on all their University's computers and devices and learned many other libraries had seen success in doing so, she knew that was the way she wanted to go.

Heather Da Vanzo
Digital Content Team Leader,
Liverpool John Moores
University Library

"I'm all about world domination with our tools. We could be much more active in getting in student's faces."

Deployment

The Library started with a small test deployment—just the computers of ten library staff who then ran LibKey Nomad through several test scenarios. After the testing, "Everyone said, 'Oh, that works. This is good,'" she said.

Heather says she's fortunate because she has a very supportive Manager and Director and got help from Third Iron staff in communicating technical details to the Library's IT staff. "The University's IT staff" she says, "are justifiably curious about third party products, so it was a huge relief they felt so confident rolling out the extension. I put this down to what Third Iron had sent us; their technical fact sheet. All of the IT team's questions were answered, and they were completely happy to test it, and pilot it."

Two weeks later the LibKey Nomad deployment was completed.

"I literally have never worked on such a smooth rollout," Heather said. "The IT team didn't see it as being a monumental change that was going to disrupt students or academics or anything. It was only two weeks later after the pilot test; they just rolled it off across all of our equipment on-site. So, I was absolutely amazed, it went really, really well."

Results

The feedback from Students has been very positive. "The feedback has just been so good," Heather said.

The Library staff have also seen a number of benefits they appreciate. "It's only been positive. Especially the inter-library loan team and the acquisitions team. If they get queries about content, they'll just go search Google, and it will be clear as well," she said.

It's even helped them improve indexing. "And we've been able to, as a team, search things and then go back to publishers and say, 'Oh, this is an inaccurate indexing.' So we can investigate our own indexing queries better as well."

Other teams like LibKey Nomad too. "The research engagement team looks after PhD students and researchers at the institution. They find it a massive benefit for all the Open-Access material, just as a good blanket search for content. They really appreciate the Open-Access material being in there," she said.

And Heather says students just take to it naturally due to the LibKey Nomad icon and the Liverpool John Moores branding they see in search results. "And then the students. As I say, we've done some promotional work around LibKey Nomad, but they just seem to take it as read, 'This is great,' they say. It's got a little Liverpool John Moores logo on it, and they feel confident accessing the material," she said.

Conclusion

Heather says, **"We're still on that journey of trying to reduce the number of clicks for the user. It is almost hard to take myself back to where we were because we've come so far, and LibKey Nomad has really made us go that far very quickly."**

Getting students to use the resources is important, and LibKey Nomad has helped with that goal as well. "It really matters because we spend a fortune on resources. And it's actually letting students, users, academics, know that this is what we're spending the money on," she said.
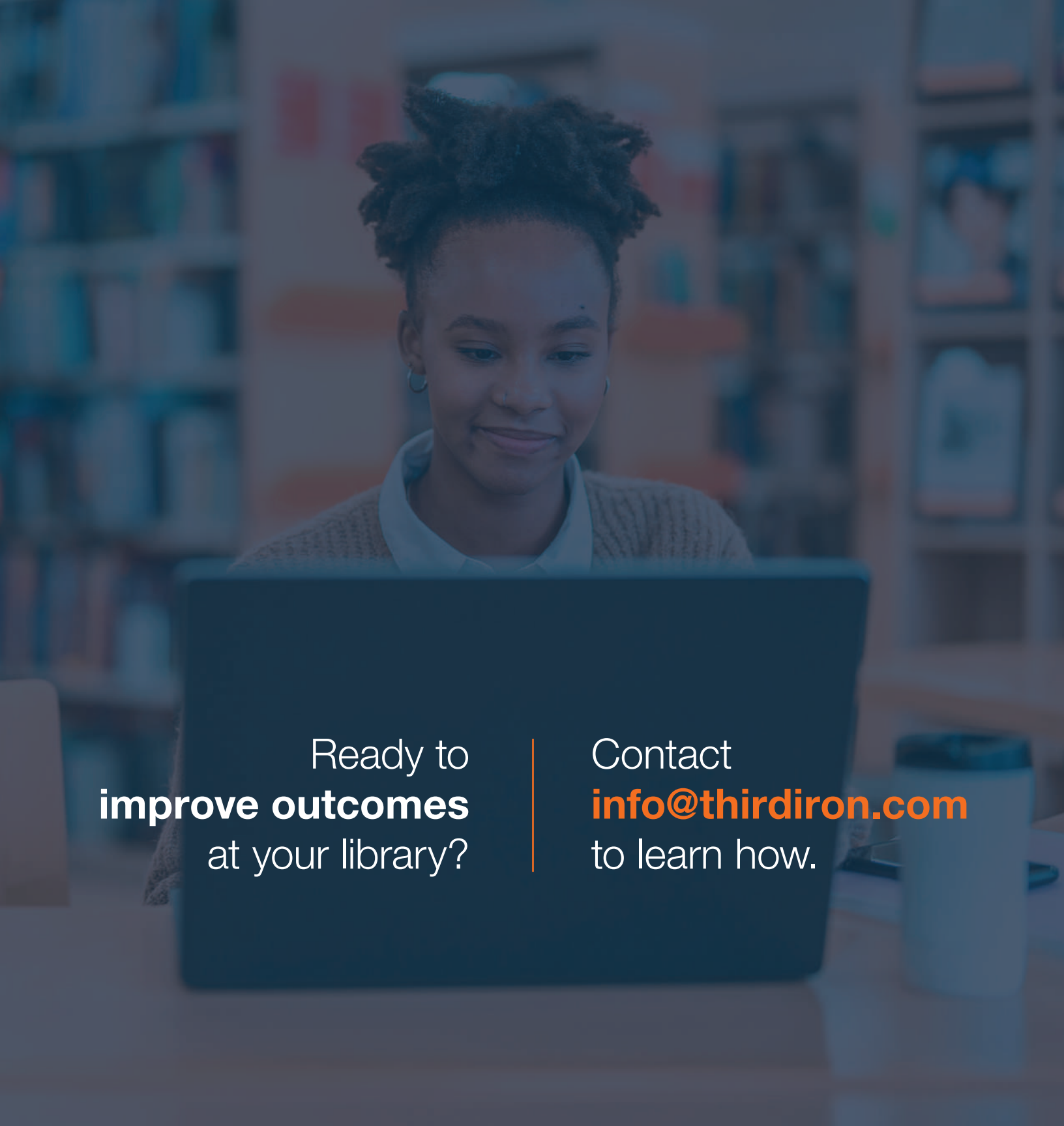
Their efforts and the use of LibKey Nomad also help instill confidence in users. "That's part of our role, we give them a bit of security that says, 'We've reviewed this, it's authentic, reliable, and timely data that you can use in your research. It's not just the Wild West of Googling.' And even the little references in Wikipedia, it's acknowledging and saying, 'Yeah, use Wikipedia. Brilliant, great starting point. But look, there's all those little references down at the bottom. And there's actually material you can read, that is academic in there.' It's nurturing them in the right direction, showing them what education research could be," Heather said.

Heather Da Vanzo
Digital Content Team Leader, Liverpool John Moores University Library

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