

How Community and Technology Revitalized a School Library in Just 14 Days

CASE STUDY AT A GLANCE:



K-8 • 125 students • 15,000 books • 5 Libraries
Install date 7/31/24 • Open date 8/14/2024



St. Simon the Apostle Catholic School in St. Louis, Missouri, was facing a challenge - the school library needed new life and reading scores needed a boost. Housed in a dark room, the space had not been cataloged in years. With no full-time librarian, much of what was in the collection remained unknown and was not easily accessible.

In early 2024, Alex Foerstel, newly promoted Director of School and Youth Development, and his team were inspired by these challenges. Tasked with revitalizing the school environment, they envisioned a brighter, more welcoming library that could inspire both reading and learning. The old computer lab, much larger and with room to grow, was identified as the ideal location for the new library. The plan was set: rethink, remodel, and rebuild.

The Solution: Accessit to the Rescue

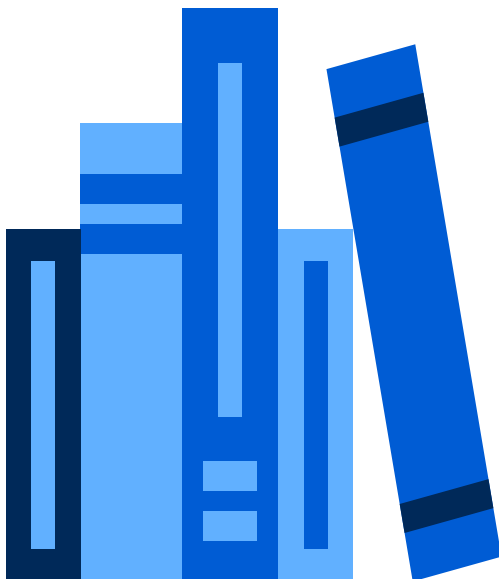
Once the St. Simon team secured approval to proceed, their first priority was to find a robust library management system (LMS) to organize the collection. The previous system had failed to provide usable data, so they sought recommendations from fellow librarians and family members. After comparing options, the St. Simon team found the perfect match for their collection of close to 10,000 books: **Accessit Library**.

Accessit's flexibility means it works no matter the size of the school, so a small school of only 150 students like St. Simon found it to be the perfect fit. St. Simon's team praised the user-friendly interface and the exceptional customer support, which helped streamline the transition. Within the first week, over 6,500 titles were barcoded and scanned into the new system, bringing structure to the once-chaotic collection.



"Every training session, whether a Zoom call or one-on-one, was incredibly informative and simple to follow," Alex said. "The system is so intuitive, I wasn't afraid to explore and figure things out."

One key advantage of Accessit was its ability to assist with purchasing decisions. By providing clear insights into the collection through its dashboard, St. Simon could easily identify gaps, track circulation trends, and ensure the library stocked the books students wanted.



"The ongoing support has been fantastic. Anytime I run into an issue or forget a step, someone from Accessit is ready to help with clear instructions. It's made the whole process so much easier."

ALEX FOERSTEL

Director of School and Youth Development
St. Simon the Apostle Catholic School



Results: A Library for the Future

On July 31, 2024, Accessit was fully installed, and just two weeks later, on August 14, the doors to the new library opened. The change was immediate and palpable. Students were immediately excited to explore the library. Accessit allowed each age group to have their own front-facing catalog, giving students an interactive way to browse genres and subjects tailored to their interests.

"We've integrated the catalog into our library media lessons," Alex shared. "Students log in, set preferences, and the system sends them personalized recommendations. It's been incredibly rewarding to see the kids so engaged and excited."

The improvements haven't just been cosmetic - reading engagement, checkouts, book holds, and requests for new titles are already on the rise, and students are now frequent visitors to their new library. The space is lively and inviting, and the collection is thoughtfully curated.

Next on St. Simon's agenda is to roll out Accessit to teachers, helping them use the system as an instructional tool in the classroom. For now, though, St. Simon's new library stands as a testament to what can be achieved when a community unites behind a common cause.

A Community Comes Together

While the library's new software was essential, the transformation of the physical space required a community effort. In the summer of 2024, Alex, along with parents, teachers, and local volunteers, began renovating the old computer lab. As a small parish with limited funds, they had to rely on creativity and generosity to make it happen.

Unexpected acts of kindness spurred community involvement. Teachers, volunteers, the school secretary, the school nurse, and parents all pitched in - tearing up old carpet, installing new flooring, painting the walls, and setting up new shelving and furniture. Community donations helped St. Simon increase activity in the space by furnishing a podcast and broadcast studio connected to the new library.

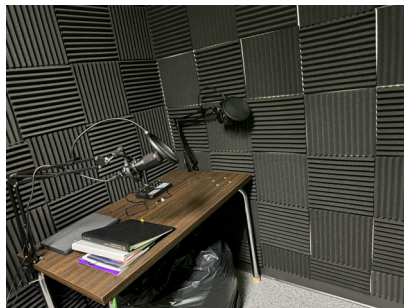
"It was truly a gift to the school," Alex reflected. "Seeing so many people come together to support this project was incredible."



A Bright Future Ahead

Thanks to Accessit and the combined efforts of the St. Simon community, the school's library has been transformed into a vibrant center for learning. What began as an outdated space is now a beacon of growth, where students and teachers alike can discover new books, engage with technology, and nurture a love for reading.

“The library is more than just a room with books - it's a gift to our students and our future.”



The story of St. Simon the Apostle Catholic School's library transformation shows the power of community, innovation, and determination to make a lasting impact. If your school is looking to revitalize its library and inspire a new generation of readers, Accessit Library could be the perfect solution to bring your vision to life. Discover how Accessit's powerful tools and dedicated support can turn any library into a thriving learning space. Let **Follett Software** and **Accessit** help you create a library that empowers students, engages the community, and builds a brighter future.

Reach out today! »



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