



Brenda Lemon
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Chapman Unified School
District 473
Chapman, KS

“The biggest plus of being cloud-hosted is the peace of mind in knowing your data is in a more secure location than a single school building.”

Protecting District Data with Cloud Hosting

In June 2008, a tornado hit Chapman, Kansas, a rural town in the middle of the Sunflower State. It destroyed homes, businesses, and all three school buildings. District Librarian Brenda Lemon – the only librarian in the district – was tasked with leading a monumental cleanup effort.

“All I had was my school laptop computer and boxes and boxes of books, but nothing else,” Lemon said. “There was no circulation or catalog records remaining. In fact, there was no OPAC at all. So not only did I have to reorganize what was salvageable into some type of temporary storage, but I had to completely reprocess every single book, patron record, and more. I basically had to start from scratch.”

Lemon is grateful to the many volunteers who showed up from around the state to help. As they sifted through the wreckage, they recovered as many library books as they could. Lemon estimates they salvaged approximately 60-70% of the books from the high school library and the district bookmobile, which was stored in a barn attached to the combined elementary/middle school.

“With school supposed to start only a little bit over a month away, everyone was thrust into a position of trying to get things ready as quickly as possible,” Lemon said. “At the time, our school internet and software were on servers stored at the board office. This included any backup tapes as well. When the tornado hit, the school building was completely hit, and hardly anything could be salvaged. It took about a month or more to get as many books processed as possible to start allowing students to do circulation.”



She recalled how a group of volunteers from a local university arrived with their own laptops and started processing books as fast as they could. They had one printer, one roll of tape, and one pair of scissors until one volunteer went to Walmart to purchase more supplies.



“By the end of the year, all the books we could salvage were back into the system,” Lemon said. “In addition, we added many of the donated books as well. I would never have been able to do it if it hadn’t been for the volunteers that I had. Also, being able to use the Z-Sources to add MARC records into Destiny was a lifesaver.”

Switching to Cloud Hosting

When Lemon and her colleagues first discussed moving to Follett Destiny® Cloud, they expected cost to be a barrier. However, after the district technology director created a chart comparing the cost of purchasing a server, daily and yearly upkeep, and all other aspects related to storing information locally versus cloud-hosting, they discovered the difference was minimal. It would also save the team time while providing reliability and peace of mind. To districts that might be on the fence about switching, Lemon says, “Compare the cost of replacing a server and annual maintenance for that server with the cost of cloud hosting.”



Lemon said making the switch was easy, logistically. “When it came time to set up Destiny cloud hosting, it was simple, as we had to start from scratch,” Lemon said. “I didn’t have to upload any data as there was nothing to upload to begin with.” A school librarian came to the district to walk her and her team through the setup and helped familiarize them with the program. Once they were up and running, if she had a question, she soon realized all she had to do was ask.

While the staff, students, and families in Chapman Unified School District 473 hope to avoid future tornados and other catastrophes, they know recovering district data will be easier now that it is on the cloud.

“I know customer support is there whenever I need it.”

“I know that natural disasters occur all over the world and could impact Follett’s storage facilities as well, but there is peace of mind in knowing a business will have your back when the worst happens to your own little piece of the world,” Lemon said.

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