University Of Plymouth
Case Study

Background:
The University of Plymouth is one of the UK's most prominent and dynamic universities with an educational history dating back to 1862. Consistently ranked as one of the top three modern universities, Plymouth serves over 30,000 students with a staff close to 3000 members.

With campuses in Plymouth, Exeter and Exmouth , their commitment to being accessible to a wide cross-section of the community is supported by flexible learning opportunities, and a broad portfolio of programmes, with strong academic and vocational emphasis. Plymouth has performed very well in all teaching reviews carried out by external bodies since 1996.

The University is committed to improving the experience of its students, demonstrated by a high level of investment in new facilities and technological updates.

Situation:
The University's "Information & Learning Service Department" serves both faculty and students. Library, Media and IT Computing services are all provided through the department staff. The huge volume of enquiries required a large staff to manage the face-to-face and telephone inquiries. As demands increased, the University considered the option of a self-help service to provide 24/7 support and free up department staff to perform other needed tasks.

Strategy:
The University of Plymouth evaluated and selected the Novo Knowledge Base System. With its easy deployment and intuitive editor tool, the knowledge base was up and running very quickly. No longer does staff need to understand html or update information in multiple areas across departments, now articles reside in one central repository for all to access. From the simple to the technical, university faculty and students are finding answers to their requests within the knowledge base system.

Results:
The transition to self help has been a big success. The department states that "the knowledge base is very stable and robust". End users are doing searches at a rate of 70,000 per month. Staff has been freed up and reassigned to other duties and users are very happy to be able to do the searches themselves. The system is now being used by the University's "Learning Development Team", who use it as an online resource for basic "how to" information on study skills.