Catalogs and Portals: Models and Tools for Discovery and Access

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Prepared for “The Portals Puzzle”
ALCTS Catalog and Form and Function IG
June 27, 2004

What Do Users Want?

• Faculty and students do more work and study away from campus
• Loyal to the library, but library is only one element in complex information structure
• Print still important, but almost half of undergraduates say they rely exclusively or almost exclusively on electronic materials
• Seamless linking from one information object to another is expected

Do you use electronic sources all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, or none of the time?

Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of the time/most of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>None of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Graduate</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More: What Do Users Want?

Open Sez Me!

What Do Libraries Want?

- Share the wealth of their resources with their communities
- Remain a vital resource to their communities
- Leverage investments in their collections
- Make the best use of limited budgets
- Be highly visible on the Web
- Harness new technologies
- Successfully compete with other information services
- Stay funded (and fundable)
Toward a New Library Information Space

- **Objectives**
  - Unite print, digital and e-collections
  - Integrate access to all library resources
  - Simplify digital and e-resource management (lower costs AND improve service)

- **Methods and tools**
  - Web-accessible lists
  - New role for catalogs
  - Portals
  - Reference linking (OpenURL)
  - E-resource management systems

**Levels of Access**

- Web-accessible lists
  - Browsing
  - Searching
  - Both
- Online catalog
- Portals
- Reference linking
Virtues of the Catalog, and Other Virtues

- Catalogs
  - Serve a defined community (focused)
  - Access to structured, quality collection (credible)
  - Consistency of descriptions (predictable)
  - Preserved and maintained (dependable)
- Internet portals
  - Tend to lack catalog’s virtues, but …
    - Prolific and current search results
    - Better search engines and ranked displays
    - Lots of full text
    - Seamless linking from object to object
    - More audio and images
    - **Convenient**

The Dream: A Unifying System Model

Unified Web Interface ("Google-like")

Authentication layer

Portal: an Integrating System

- Other Libraries Catalogs
- Local Library Catalog
- Digital Collections
- Licensed Databases
- Other (e.g., DSpace)

Many diverse, separate interfaces
What’s a Portal

- Help users easily discover what resources are available
- Help users discover what resources are most useful for their topics
- Provide cross-collection searching
- Integrate and manage search results
- Link search results to full text when possible; to services if not
- Authenticate and authorize or block user access

“Resource discovery across heterogeneous objects …”

- You pays your money and you takes your chances
  - **Metadata repository**
    - Extension of the idea of a union catalog
    - Combines metadata from many collections
    - Harversted (OAI protocol) or directly contributed
    - Example: National Science Digital Library (NSDL)
  - **Federated searching**
    - New products from ILS vendors (generally speaking)
    - Licensed resources (generally speaking)
    - Example: Cornell University Library “Find Articles”
**Cornell’s Portal Implementation:**
Part Migration, Part New Functionality

**EXISTING:** “FIND DATABASES” & “FIND E-JOURNALS”

- Search e-Reference metadata
- Go to database from search results
- Browse by subject
- Authenticate users for restricted resources
- Search for e-journal titles

**PLUS:** “FIND ARTICLES”

- Search at article level
- Based on federated search model
- Simultaneous search across multiple databases
- Reference linking

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**Project Status**

- ENCompass-based system in production May 2003
- Removed links to legacy system August 2003
- Project Web site, FAQs
  - [http://encompass.library.cornell.edu/](http://encompass.library.cornell.edu/)
What's Good

ALCTS "Portals Puzzle" Program

ALA Annual Conference Orlando

www.ala.org/alcts
Find It At Cornell

Citation Information
Article Title: Architecture and life: a Takisian continuum
Source: Frank Lloyd Wright quarterly. Volume: 13; Issue: 4; Date: 2002

Cornell University Online Catalog
Find this Journal at Cornell
Find this Title at Cornell
Find this Issue at Cornell
Find this Title by the Author

CUL Catalog Record View 1
Database Name: Cornell University Library
Search Request: Simple Search = Frank Lloyd Wright quarterly
Search Results: Displaying 1 of 1 entries

Database: Cornell University Library
Title: Frank Lloyd Wright quarterly
Published: Scottsdale, AZ. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
Description: v. : ill. ; 28 cm.
Location: Fine Arts Library (Sibley Hall)
Call Number: NA777.955 W9545
Status: Not Checked
Recent Issues: v. 14, no. 2 (1993 Spring)
v. 14, no. 1 (1993 Winter)
Volumes: v.5-6 (1991-1994)
v. 6-12 (1994-2002)
What’s Missing

- Many enhancements (esp. to linking services)
- Better interaction with library catalog and acquisitions data
- Integration with CU learning management systems
- Integration with university portal (as it develops)

More What’s Missing

- Response time comparatively slow
- Practical limits to number of databases that can be:
  - Configured for searching
  - Searched at once
- Incomplete search results (also due to practical limits)
- Lack of control over what is returned in search result sets
- Order of search results displays not as useful as they should be
- Other limitations on what can (or can’t) be displayed
- Integration of the catalog is fraught with problems
Limitations of Reference Linking

- Knowledge base is incorrect or out of date
- Inconsistent metadata within a database and across databases
- Bad metadata
- Varied application of citation standards; non-use of citation standards
- Library has full text for journal but not the volume/issue the user wants
- Full text availability lags behind citation availability
- No alternative to “get full text” presented
- And on and on

What Do We Need to Do?

- Seek creative solutions; be nimble
- Libraries and librarians cannot win if they do not play
Riding the Strawberry Roan

He says this here's one pony that's never been rode,
And the man that gets on him is bound to get threwed.
I got all het up and I asked what he'd pay
To ride this old nag for a couple of days.
Well, he offered me ten, and I says, "I'm your man,
For the bronc isn't living that I couldn't fan."
He says, "Get your saddle, I'll give you the chance."
So we hopped in his buckboard and rode to his ranch.

Summary: Pros and Cons of 4 Levels of Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method/Tool</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web-accessible lists</td>
<td>• Many ways to produce one</td>
<td>• Often incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accessible to in-house solutions</td>
<td>• Have to look in multiple places for holdings info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can use services like SerialsSolutions, Titelrollo</td>
<td>• Can require dual maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Users like them, some say users prefer them</td>
<td>• Static lists can be hard to maintain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Saves staff and user time</td>
<td>• Access to journal only (not direct to articles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy and convenient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can provide other services as well as full text linking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can make print collection more visible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This is how users want to work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog access (via single or separate record technique)</td>
<td>• One place to look (provided all are cataloged)</td>
<td>• Can be incomplete (if not all cataloged)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Many ways to find (title, keyword, subject)</td>
<td>• Can be expensive and slow</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Access to journals only (not direct to articles)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some users find catalog searching/reords complex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portal</td>
<td>• Unified access to many discrete resources via one interface</td>
<td>• Response time comparatively slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Federated search saves time</td>
<td>• Limits on number of databases that can be searched at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good for discovery</td>
<td>• Limits of number of hits returned (searches not comprehensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access at article level</td>
<td>• Same searches return different results from different databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can link search results to full text</td>
<td>• Order of search results displays not as useful as they should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference linking</td>
<td>• This is how users want to work</td>
<td>• To maximize usefulness, need link resolver and knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Saves staff and user time</td>
<td>• OPACs don't always work (see list in presentation)</td>
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Thank You!

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