

# Opening a world of search possibilities in a Web workspace

*A local library transforms into a global information presence*



## Situation

Like many libraries today, the Cuyahoga County Public Library (CCPL) discovered that an increasing amount of its searches were coming from Web users outside of its registered user base. A new generation of Web-based users is growing accustomed to instant access, plenty of search options and more ways to expand their search outside of the traditional library environment. CCPL identified a way to help bring its library's collection wider exposure on the Web, even to those casual searchers who typically don't use the library, but instead rely on the Internet for information.

## Solution

When CCPL staff wanted to reach further beyond their registered library users, they chose OCLC's WorldCat platform. WorldCat is the destination Web site for access to library collections and services. Web searchers discover "Find in a Library" results for library-owned materials. It lets a broad range of people inside and outside the library environment discover and use the resources of WorldCat libraries. And, it helps CCPL promote the value of its collections. It's the place where any Web user can go to search the complete WorldCat database and link to online catalog records and services.

Open WorldCat is one of two ways to access WorldCat from outside the library. It makes records of library-owned materials in OCLC's WorldCat database available to Web users on popular Internet search, bibliographic and bookselling sites. Links to content in library collections appear alongside links to traditional Web content. The returned search results include a result, along with the

## AT A GLANCE

### A typical month for Cuyahoga County Public Library:

- 1,606,501 Web page views
- 532,968 catalog searches from within the library
- 519,705 remote Web users searching the catalog

***"When I tell people about WorldCat, they are amazed. It keeps us relevant."***

phrase "Find in a Library," that links them to the WorldCat record for that item.

The other way Web searchers can access WorldCat from outside the library is through WorldCat.org. From WorldCat.org, any Web user can easily install a free WorldCat search box on a personal or commercial Web page. This allows even more people to discover WorldCat library content and perform searches anytime they are online.

Many searches begin outside of the library Web page, but using WorldCat a searcher doesn't have to go through an actual library Web page log-in screen. CCPL staff enabled direct linking to the WorldCat.org database from their online catalog. By embedding search terms into the link they place on their search results page, they make it easy for Web users to search the same keyword or phrase in WorldCat. CCPL takes its searchers from a local library catalog into the bigger WorldCat database.

Regardless of where their searches begin, direct links allow Web searchers to click right to the items they seek. Each linked search result leads to the WorldCat information page for an individual item. There the Web searcher can

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enter geographic information, receive a list of nearby WorldCat libraries that own the item, and link right to a library's online catalog record to borrow the item or access electronic content directly. Search results include the complete WorldCat database and identify materials within the collections of participating libraries. Links to content in library collections-books, DVDs, serials, digital images and many other formats-appear alongside links to traditional Web content. OCLC's WorldCat helps libraries assist Web users to expand their searching beyond locally-held items to all of WorldCat.

This screen displays a list resulting from a search on 'Civil War,' a book titled Surgeon on Horseback that has a large number of subject headings. The catalog generates a list of all the subjects as shown in the drop-down menu to the right. This allows a user to do a much more targeted search than could be done manually and, it adds more functionality to any catalog search.

WorldCat allows libraries-and especially smaller libraries that might not have the resources to run a lot of additional software-to create a more robust search environment.

"There is so much on the Web now that lets people do their own searching and really target what they want to find, that this is a necessary function that libraries must address and now there is an easy way to do that," says Greg Weller, Internet Specialist for CCPL. "When I tell people about WorldCat, they are amazed. It keeps us relevant."

## Results

Every day WorldCat points more people-even those who don't typically visit libraries-to library collections as a first source of information. It promotes the value of libraries on a scale greater than any library or group could achieve alone. WorldCat-participating libraries are more visible on the Web, and their collections are more accessible from outside the library where many people start their search for information. Libraries get greater exposure to Web searchers in and outside the library environment, as

well as increased use of their online catalogs, electronic content and other Web-based services. CCPL staff made their local records available to searchers anywhere on the Web, helping them provide a fast, convenient service to current and potential library users. And, CCPL branch staff benefit by being able to link to WorldCat because it helps them help their own users searching for items not in their collection.