

Frequently Asked Questions

Next steps for WorldCat Discovery and FirstSearch

24 March 2017

Since the release of WorldCat Discovery, OCLC members have reinforced how much they value the unique capabilities of FirstSearch for precision searching of WorldCat, and OCLC has listened. We will continue to deliver the precise, full-featured WorldCat searching valued in FirstSearch with an improved WorldCat search experience separate from WorldCat Discovery. WorldCat Discovery development continues, adding features essential to delivering a full discovery experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q. When will these changes occur?

A. We are now adding more features to WorldCat Discovery in parallel with gathering feedback about how to best develop an improved WorldCat search experience. Access to the current FirstSearch interface will continue as this work proceeds.

Q. When do I have to choose whether I want to subscribe to FirstSearch or WorldCat Discovery?

A. Your existing FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscription provides access to both FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery, and will continue to do so with your FY17 subscription renewal (a renewal made between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017).

Q. How do the FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery services compare?

A. FirstSearch: Precise, full-featured searching of WorldCat required by library staff and expert users.

WorldCat Discovery: Discovery service that lets people search the electronic, digital and physical resources in library collections through a single search of WorldCat and a central index of thousands of e-content collections.

BOTH meet users where they start their research by increasing visibility of library collections on popular websites

FirstSearch

- Searches WorldCat + former FirstSearch Base Package databases
- Displays all library holdings from WorldCat
- Enables use of precision search features required by library staff and experienced searchers
- Displays “unclustered” view of editions and formats
- Complements, but does not replace, a library’s existing discovery service

WorldCat Discovery/WMS user interface

- Searches WorldCat + central index of >2,400 e-content collections + > 200 million article records in WorldCat.org
- Displays all library holdings from WorldCat
- Enables use of a single search box preferred by many users. Searchers may select advanced search.
- “Clusters” editions and formats in search results
- Includes access to precision search features in the FirstSearch interface

Q. How should I decide which service best meets the needs of my library and our users?

A. A FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscription currently provides access to the FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery interfaces. As you consider your future use of these services, think about your users’ needs.

- **Choose FirstSearch** if the primary need is for specific, precise searching of WorldCat.
- **Choose WorldCat Discovery** to provide users with single-search access to your library’s resources, including licensed content collections.

Use FirstSearch if...	Use WorldCat Discovery if...
You want to provide precise, full-featured searching of WorldCat for library staff and library users.	You want to give users single-search access to your library’s electronic, digital and physical collections, including materials represented in WorldCat and e-content collections you provide. This includes current WorldCat Local subscribers.
Your library already has a discovery service and you want to provide searching of WorldCat as a complement to that service.	You wish to use WorldCat Discovery as your library’s discovery service or as the user-facing interface to OCLC’s WorldShare Management Services.
Your users need to quickly see which libraries own materials not available in your collections.	Your users primarily want to see what is in your library’s collections.

Q. My library searches WorldCat at no charge through WorldCat.org. Why should I subscribe to FirstSearch or WorldCat Discovery?

A. FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery provide access to more content and functionality than WorldCat.org.

	WorldCat.org	FirstSearch	WorldCat Discovery
Content searched	WorldCat + 200+ million article-level records (includes some former Base Package databases)	WorldCat + former Base Package databases	Everything in WorldCat.org + central index of > 2,400 e-content collections
Library holdings display	Displays holdings of libraries with	All holdings in WorldCat	All holdings in WorldCat

	FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscription		
Search experience	Single search box + Advanced search	Precision search features w/ detailed results	Single search box + advanced search
Interface adapts to user devices	No	Current service: No Future service: TBD	Yes
New search algorithm w/more relevant results?	No	No	Yes, with ongoing enhancements
Access to online full text	Link to local resolver	Link to local resolver	Integrated OpenURL resolver via WorldCat knowledge base or link to local resolver
No-charge use of CONTENTdm “quick start”	No	No	Yes
WorldCat Search API	No	Yes	Yes
WorldCat Discovery API (in beta)	No	No	Yes
Display MARC record	No	No	Yes (for library staff)
Display OCLC symbols	No	Yes	Yes (for library staff)
Display OCLC record numbers	Yes	Yes	Yes (for library staff)

SUBSCRIPTIONS/PRICING

Q. Which service will new subscribers receive when they purchase a FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscription today?

A. Current FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscriptions provide access to the FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery interfaces (without WorldCat Discovery options).

Q. Do I need to decide whether to subscribe to FirstSearch or WorldCat Discovery with my next subscription renewal?

A. Subscription renewals placed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018 give you the following:

- FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscription: Use of FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery interfaces
- WorldCat Discovery: Use of WorldCat Discovery with all options that have been sold as additional subscriptions (item location and real-time availability, group views, remote database search and course reserves/reading lists).

If you want to subscribe to WorldCat Discovery, you may take advantage of a promotional price that will be available through June 30, 2018. Contact your OCLC Library Services Consultant or Orders@oclc.org for subscription details.

GROUP SUBSCRIBERS

Q. What kind of group pricing is planned for FirstSearch service and WorldCat Discovery and when will this information be shared with groups?

A. Group pricing will continue to be provided on a custom basis to reflect your group's composition and needs. Your OCLC Library Services Consultant will discuss future subscription decisions with you.

Q. My library group shares a subscription to WorldCat Discovery and has a group catalog. Will our group catalog be available in WorldCat Discovery and FirstSearch?

A. Yes, group catalogs will be available in both FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery.

CONTENT

Q. Are former Base Package databases individually searchable in FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery?

A. All former Base Package databases remain individually searchable in FirstSearch. These include: ArchiveGrid, ArticleFirst, CAMIO, Clase & Periódica, Electronic Books, Electronic Collections Online, ERIC, GPO Monthly Catalog, MEDLINE, OAlster, PapersFirst, ProceedingsFirst and WorldCat Dissertations and Theses.

In WorldCat Discovery, all former Base Package databases except Clase & Periódica are individually searchable.

Q. How can users find my library's e-books in FirstSearch and in WorldCat Discovery?

A. FirstSearch searches the WorldCat database, so if your e-book holdings are represented in WorldCat, they are included in search results.

The Ebook database of e-book records from WorldCat is also searchable in FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery.

WorldCat Discovery provides access to more than 20 million e-books discoverable through WorldCat plus a central index of more than 2,400 e-content collections. Many of the collections in the central index include metadata for e-books. When your library's e-books holdings are present in WorldCat and the WorldCat knowledge base, users can link directly to the e-books from search results. NOTE: [WorldShare Collection Manager](#) streamlines maintenance of your e-book holdings in WorldCat and the WorldCat knowledge base.

Q. Will WorldCat Discovery enhancements change the current requirement that libraries purchase the item location and real-time availability and remote database search options to enable access to EBSCO databases?

A. EBSCO's requirement will not change as part of upcoming WorldCat Discovery enhancements. Purchase of the item location and real-time availability and remote database search options is still required to enable access to EBSCO databases in WorldCat Discovery.

WORLDCAT LOCAL

Q. My library uses WorldCat Local, and we plan to begin using WorldCat Discovery when it contains the features we need. What features will be added to WorldCat Discovery next?

A. Areas of focus for near-term enhancements include:

- Increase the relevance of search results
 - Continue to enhance known-item searching
 - Weight results based on item currency
 - Improve person searches
- Transfer of course reserves data now in WorldCat Local to WorldCat Discovery
- Cite and export records in Harvard and Turabian styles
- Enhance the overall user experience

Consult the [WorldCat Discovery Community Center](#) for WorldCat Discovery enhancement plans.

Q. Will my WorldCat Local subscription price change when my library transitions to WorldCat Discovery?

A. Your WorldCat Local subscription price will not change. The subscription continues to support use of WorldCat Discovery with all available options.

Q. When should my WorldCat Local library move to WorldCat Discovery?

A. Many WorldCat Local subscribers plan to transition to WorldCat Discovery when the service offers features important to them. Early 2017 WorldCat Discovery enhancements will focus on popular features currently available in WorldCat Local, such as enabling access to temporary items in course reserves.

This is a good time to look at WorldCat Discovery, to familiarize yourself with the interface in preparation for your eventual move to the service. If you have not already done so, request your library's unique WorldCat Discovery URL at <http://oc.lc/RegDiscovery>.

SPECIFIC FEATURES

Q. Will FirstSearch maintain the functionality that exists in the current service?

A. It will include precision search features FirstSearch users have told us they rely on in the current service, in addition to functionality requested by OCLC members in focus groups, individual library consultations and requests submitted via OCLC Customer Support and the OCLC Community Center. A new FirstSearch Advisory Group will also assist with plans for FirstSearch.

As planning proceeds, OCLC will actively solicit input from members. Please continue to use the Enhancements tab of the [WorldCat Discovery Community Center](#) to submit enhancement suggestions and review suggestions from others. As we move forward with FirstSearch plans, we will also release a Community Center specific to FirstSearch.

Q. My library has purchased the availability option in WorldCat Discovery and our users appreciate this feature. Will our use of the availability option continue in WorldCat Discovery?

A. Yes. If your library has purchased the WorldCat Discovery availability option, your use of this option will continue in WorldCat Discovery as part of your subscription.

Q. My library lets our users submit interlibrary loan requests through FirstSearch. Will this feature continue to be available?

A. Yes. Your users may continue to submit interlibrary loan requests through FirstSearch. Patron-initiated ILL requests are also supported in WorldCat Discovery.

Q. What is the timeframe for releasing the WorldCat Discovery API (in beta) for broader use?

A. We are assessing the readiness of the WorldCat Discovery API for broader use by WorldCat Discovery subscribers, based on feedback received from users during the current beta. Once the assessment is complete, we will provide an update on broader use of this API.