

Liberal arts college chooses WorldCat Local as its discovery-to-delivery library service

DeWitt Wallace Library needed a more efficient retrieval system—fast!



Situation

Founded in 1874, Macalester College is a private liberal arts college occupying 53 picturesque acres near downtown St. Paul, MN. Affectionately known as Mac, the school has approximately 1,900 undergraduate students, and is the alma mater of former U.S. Vice President Walter F. Mondale and former Secretary General to the United Nations Kofi Annan.

The DeWitt Wallace library on the Macalester College campus—like so many other academic libraries—wanted a better, more efficient information retrieval system for its collections, and they wanted it quickly. The library staff was concerned that they were steadily losing users to Internet services such as Google and Yahoo, and wanted to make the library's collections easier for students to find. Macalester is part of an eight-school shared-catalog consortium, and they wanted to be able to implement this new information retrieval system without negatively impacting their cataloging partners.

Solution

Beginning in August 2008, the DeWitt Wallace Library made the switch to WorldCat Local™ as its discovery-and-delivery library service because it delivers a Web experience for information seekers who are used to beginning their searches on the Internet. “What appealed to us most about WorldCat Local,” says Angi Faiks, Associate Director, DeWitt Wallace Library, “was its ease of implementation. We were also drawn to WorldCat Local’s simple search box and the smooth transition available from ‘find’ to ‘get’ for retrieving information.”

Another reason the DeWitt Wallace Library decided to move forward with WorldCat Local was because it proved to be a

AT A GLANCE

Macalester College

- The DeWitt Wallace Library at Macalester College houses approximately 430,000 volumes reflecting the school's liberal arts curriculum
- The library serves approximately 1,900 undergraduate students, 170 faculty and 400 staff employees
- The DeWitt Wallace Library is part of an eight-library consortium in the St. Paul, MN, area called CLIC: Cooperating Libraries in Consortium.

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***Angi Faiks, Associate Director,
DeWitt Wallace Library,
Macalester College, St. Paul, MN***



The branded WorldCat Local search box as it appears on the DeWitt Wallace Library Web site.

minimal investment in both time and money for the library. “We had been following the development of WorldCat Local since its inception, and we were looking to improve

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the user experience,” said Faiks. “We saw WorldCat Local as the best option for us. It allowed us the luxury to start thinking creatively about the (library) system of our future. (With WorldCat Local) we believe that OCLC is embarking on a future that we want to be a part of.”

Results

Terri Fishel, Library Director, DeWitt Wallace Library, has been very pleased with the library’s transition to WorldCat Local. “I’m extremely grateful (to work with) a staff who are willing to embrace change, accept uncertainty, and move forward with eager anticipation as opposed to fear of the unknown,” said Fishel. “I consider this implementation to be a success.”

What the Mac faculty is saying about WorldCat Local

“It’s amazing what students are able to access.”

“I love that students are searching WorldCat automatically, and I don’t have to force them. This is so much better.”

“Wow, this is terrific! Makes my job much easier, and gives me faster access to more knowledge and an easier way to distribute it to students. Thanks!”

The reaction from Macalester College students has been equally positive. They are enjoying WorldCat Local’s search box, and they appreciate the ranked results. Faiks says that, at first, some students who were used to Macalester’s previous ILS interface weren’t sure about trying WorldCat Local, but after being shown how easy it is to use, they became hooked. And members of Mac’s faculty are hooked on WorldCat Local, too.

Beyond user satisfaction, Faiks says one benefit of WorldCat Local has been that many of the resources that make up the DeWitt Wallace Library holdings have seen an increase in use. “We think that because our holdings are displayed first in WorldCat Local,” says Faiks, “that people are finding and using our materials more often.”

When asked if she would recommend WorldCat Local to other libraries outside of their own library system, Faiks didn’t hesitate to respond. “Yes,” she said. “We love it!”

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For more information about WorldCat Local, please visit our Web site at www.oclc.org/worldcatlocal, or contact your OCLC Library Services representative at libservices@oclc.org. To download the WorldCat Local Planning Guide, please visit www.oclc.org/services/brochures.