

Students find the most creative ways to utilize their new discovery-to-delivery service

WorldCat Local makes locating library items much easier for university students



Situation

The staff of the Hugh M. Morris Library on the campus of the University of Delaware (UD) was facing a problem: How to get their library resources to the students of the university as quickly and efficiently as possible. But that was a big order because the University of Delaware library offers a large number of print, electronic and archival resources to more than 20,000 students. It had become increasingly difficult to convey this to users through DELCAT, the University of Delaware's online catalog.

"Over the years we've done Web sites, and we had lists of databases and we had the online catalog," explained Gregg A. Silvis, Assistant Director for Library Computing Systems at UD. "Interlibrary loan was a separate form, and there were no easy connections or ways for users to get resources. That was probably the biggest issue we were looking at."

Silvis and his staff conducted focus groups with university students to determine how they searched the library Web site for information, and they were surprised to discover that the students came up with "brilliant, but incredibly convoluted" ways of discovering if the library held a specific item.

"They would go into Google, type a search, find a journal title, then take the journal title and look it up in our eJournals database, see if we had the journal and then connect to the journal that way. It was not very direct."

Solution

As one of the main advocates in making the change to WorldCat Local, Silvis was an enthusiastic supporter and leader during the library's transition to its new discovery-and-delivery system. "I put together groups to help make the transition—

AT A GLANCE

The University of Delaware

- UD was founded in 1743 as a small, private academy. Today it serves approximately 20,000 students.
- The Hugh M. Morris Library on the university campus houses books, periodicals, electronic resources, microforms, government publications, databases, maps, manuscripts, media and access to information via the Internet.
- Library staff provide a wide range of in-person, online and telephone services, including reference assistance, circulation, interlibrary loan, instructional programs and assistance to users with disabilities.

"The great advantage of WorldCat Local is that it makes a huge amount of resources readily available in one search—in one place—and offers quality information to the user."

Gregg A. Silvis, Assistant Director for Library Computing Systems at the University of Delaware Library, Newark, DE



The branded WorldCat Local search box as it appears on the University of Delaware Library Web site (www.lib.udel.edu).

all the behind-the-scenes pieces of how the bib records displayed, the circulation status and all those little nuts-and-bolts features," he said. "Then I did a series of presentations open to all library staff to explain how it worked."

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One of the great advantages Silvis finds in WorldCat Local is how efficiently upgrades are handled by OCLC. “In the traditional ILS environment you do annual updates, which are a tremendous investment of staff and time,” he explained. “With WorldCat Local that aspect is taken out. The upgrades happen monthly, you get advance notice, things are fixed and you don’t have to deal with [library staff performing upgrades] anymore.”

Results

Silvis and his staff are extremely pleased with the results and efficiencies they have seen after adopting WorldCat Local. “I think it’s incredibly exciting,” he said. “Libraries do all this work and we’re duplicating effort and WorldCat Local—from a technical services point of view—does away with a lot of that duplication of effort.”

“Within the first day of placing WorldCat Local on our library homepage the students realized they could do interlibrary loan for things we didn’t have,” said Silvis. “One of the first things that was interlibrary loaned was Rosetta Stone Spanish.

Some public library had cataloged it and it was available for interlibrary loan and, you know, if it’s available we’ll get it for them. Students quickly found things that had never occurred to me they would go after.”

Silvis believes one of the great benefits of WorldCat Local is its ability to leverage the power of the WorldCat database. “This is what members get for being part of the cooperative,” he said. “We invest our money back into this and we get a product that we really need—one that helps us do what we need to do to serve our users. That’s the coolest part to me.”

There are many advantages to having WorldCat Local at the heart of any ILS, but Silvis believes that “the great advantage is that it has one search, and it makes a huge amount of resources readily accessible in one search—in one place—and offers quality information to the user.”

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