

Discovery Notes:

Community-built database recommendations replace and improve remote searching

By Jay Holloway, Product Manager – 15 April 2019

User experience is the cornerstone of our product development, and we are constantly evaluating ways to enhance the value and usability of WorldCat Discovery. Some of the new features our users like most are conceived in response to their direct feedback when using the service. But before I tell you about an upcoming enhancement that illustrates how your voice leads to meaningful change, I want to share our formula for success.

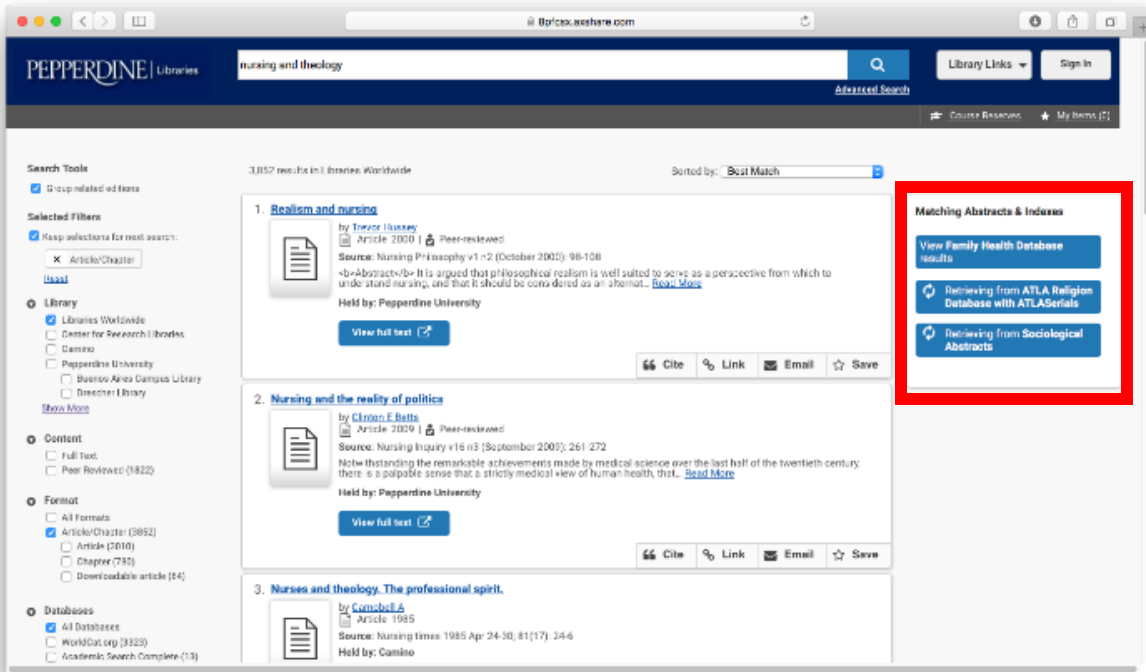
In the previous Discovery Notes, Senior Product Manager Tom Haney discussed [continuous improvement through user collaboration](#). This is where our (not yours, not mine—*our*) success begins. As a product manager, my role is to understand and make sense of user needs, and to develop solutions with the WorldCat Discovery development team. To successfully develop and deliver these solutions, participation from our community of users (that's you!) must occur throughout the entire process, from requirements assessment and usability testing to feature design and user validation. While the formula itself becomes complicated, the main ingredient is very simple: we need your collaboration.

In May, we will release a database recommendation feature that gives users a consistent way to search remote A&I databases from EBSCO and ProQuest not included in the WorldCat Discovery central index. These database recommendations eliminate current remote search issues, such as timeouts, incomplete results, or incomplete/poorly formatted metadata from remote databases.

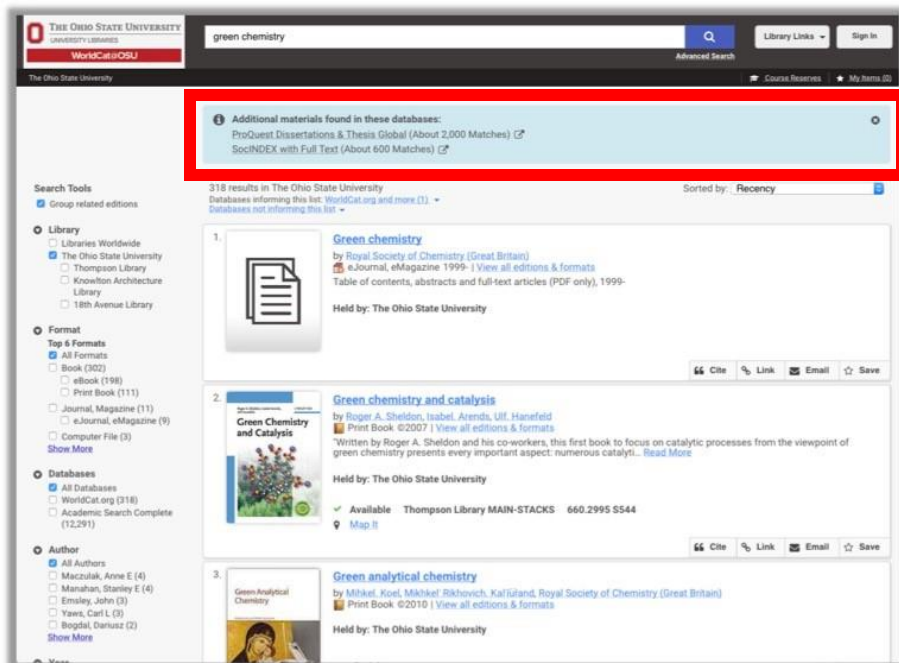
When we set off on the journey to change the way remote databases are accessed, we engaged both library staff and end users during each phase of our development cycle. We conducted three focus groups and two end-user research studies, each resulting in an evolution of the design and user experience. After many iterations, we arrived at a solution that significantly improved the user experience, eliminated existing technological problems, and ultimately made the act of remote database searching more productive, intuitive, and enjoyable—and it was all made possible through your input and collaboration.



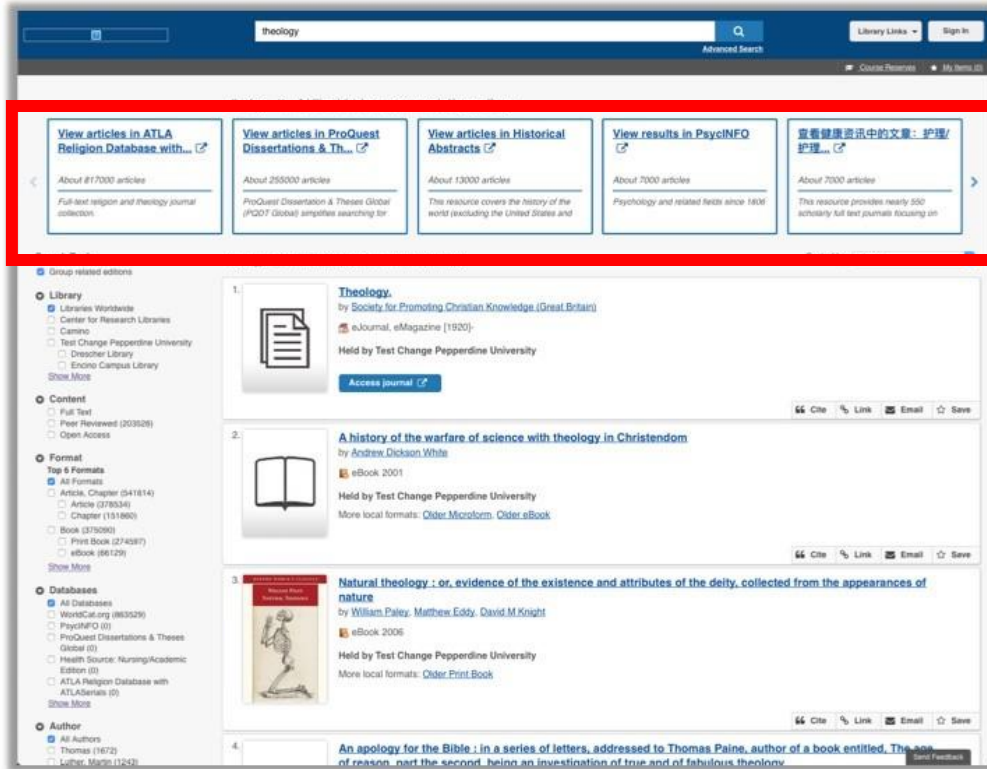
Much like your optometrist will serially ask “Better one? Better two?”, we rely on user feedback to iterate on enhancements to WorldCat Discovery that offer the perfect lens on library collections worldwide.



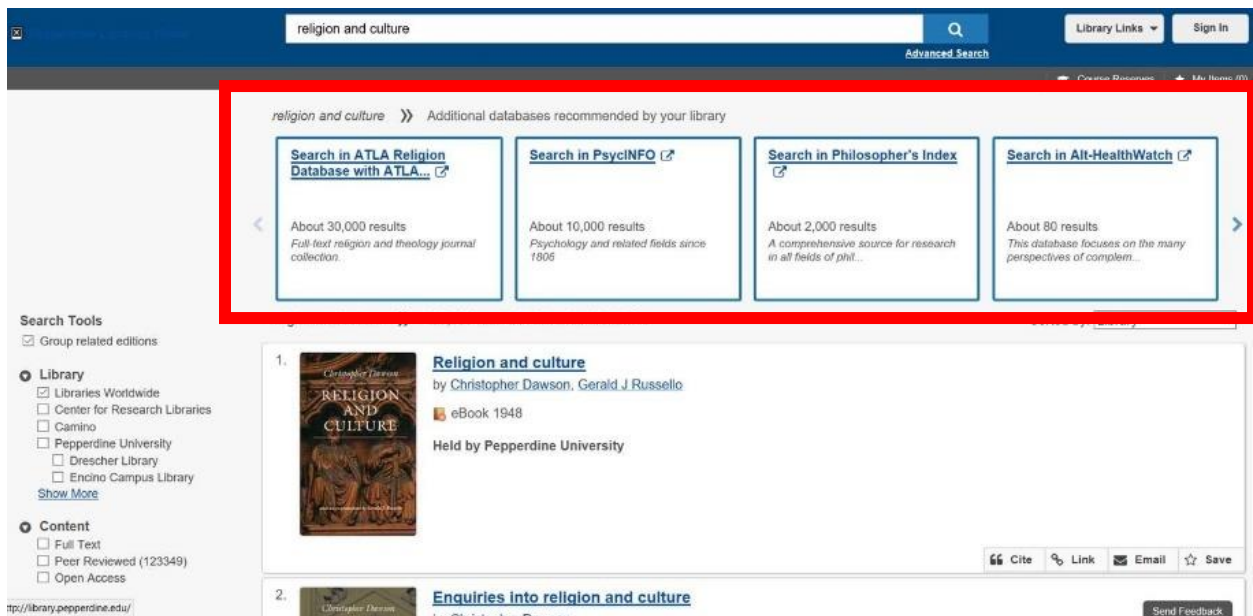
Iteration 1: Users were not seeing the feature, so we moved it up on the page.



Iteration 2: Users were seeing the feature, but perceived it to have little to no value.



Iteration 3: Users perceived the feature as valuable, but librarians found it was taking up too much space on the page.



Iteration 4: Users found this final iteration of the feature to be visually appealing and valuable in their search experience.

So how will it work? With the release, WorldCat Discovery search results will display approximate results for each configured remote database. Clicking on a recommended database will navigate the user to the database's native interface to continue searching. For EBSCO databases, following this link will also re-run the user's search terms automatically in the EBSCO interface. (We hoped to provide a similar experience when searching ProQuest databases, but we're dependent on ProQuest to make this happen.)

Our goal is to help you deliver access to as much curated content in your collections as possible through a single search in WorldCat Discovery. Because we don't license content, we are uniquely positioned to enable searching of A&I databases from both EBSCO and ProQuest without favoring content from any provider. Easy access to native database interfaces lets users complement search results from the WorldCat Discovery central index with results from databases maintained only on content provider websites.

For a preview of the database recommender feature, and to add your voice to the conversation, please plan to attend our April Product Insights session on Wednesday, April 18 at 12pm EDT. You can [register here](#).

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