# WorldCat Local

OCLC made a foray into the online catalog arena with the launch of WorldCat Local, a version of WorldCat designed to replace the online catalog delivered as part of a library's ILS. WorldCat Local competes among the emerging genre of next-generation library interfaces that includes AquaBrowser from Medialab Solutions, Endeca ProFind, Primo from Ex Libris, and Encore from Innovative Interfaces, as well as the online catalogs delivered as part of each ILS.

OCLC has long been the major bibliographic database for libraries and currently represents the holdings of over 10,000 libraries throughout the world. OCLC members use OCLC as a source for catalog records as they add records to their local catalogs. Each record in the OCLC bibliographic database includes information on which libraries own that title. From the time that WorldCat first went online in 1971, this bibliographic database functioned as a behind-the-scenes tool for libraries, facilitating cataloging and interlibrary loan operations. More recently, OCLC has developed it as a product for library users.

OCLC launched WorldCat.org in August 2006, allowing users to conveniently search this vast database.[1] WorldCat.org stands as the largest library-oriented bibliographic database in the world. WorldCat.org currently includes over 84 million records, representing about a billion individual library holdings.[2] An important part of WorldCat.org involves its ability to direct users to local libraries. Once a user identifies an item of interest and enters a postal code or other geographic information, WorldCat.org will display where it might be available in nearby libraries. WorldCat includes links to the catalogs of local libraries, presenting a list of the libraries that own an item. Clicking on the library name will launch a search for that item in the local catalog, providing a convenient way to see the current status of that item in that library.

WorldCat Local makes use of the interface and database of WorldCat.org, customizing it for the users of a specific library or consortium. WorldCat Local prominently presents the logo and other branding of the local library, rather than OCLC's own branding carried by WorldCat.org. From the user's perspective, an instance of WorldCat Local functions as the catalog for that specific library.

## WorldCat Local Pilot Underway

Following a period of behind-the-scenes planning and development, OCLC launched the initial version of WorldCat Local in April 2007. The pilot phase for WorldCat Local includes the University of Washington and the Peninsula Library System in California. A number of libraries in Illinois will participate in the pilot, including the University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign; Northeastern Illinois University; public libraries in Glendale Heights, Springfield, Hoopeston, and Mattoon; high school libraries in Champaign and Williamsville; the 26 libraries of the Cooperative Computer Services Consortium; the Lincoln Trails Library System office; the Illinois State Museum; and the Illinois State Library.[3]

In addition to these libraries, the 10 libraries in the University of California system will pilot WorldCat Local as a new platform for Melvyl, the union catalog that spans the holdings of these libraries. Melvyl is currently powered by ALEPH 500 from Ex Libris, which has been in place only since April 2003, replacing an earlier locally developed version.[4]

The University of Washington was the first of this group of libraries to make its implementation of WorldCat Local publicly available, launched April 30, 2007. The

UW version of WorldCat Local provides the first public viewing of this product. This initial version still bears the "beta" designation, indicating that the product is ready for production use, but still under active development.

## Expanded Scope of Search

WorldCat Local leverages the expansive content of the OCLC WorldCat database as it provides a search interface for a library. In a traditional library catalog environment, the scope of the initial search includes only the holdings in the local library or consortium. This approach provides no convenient way for users to know about materials available beyond the library's own collection. If the search fails to locate the desired item, a persistent user would then need to go to an interlibrary loan system in order to locate and request the item.

Since it searches the entire WorldCat database, WorldCat Local helps users become aware of a much broader universe of content that matches their interests, regardless of whether it happens to be in their library's collection.

WorldCat Local follows a search model based on broad results that can be narrowed to the local collection, as opposed to the traditional online catalog scenario, which begins with a narrow search of the library's collection that can be expanded to wider resources through separate search utilities.

WorldCat Local provides information beyond books, extending the search universe to include a large number of article citations. OCLC has indexed over 30 million article-records and includes them in the WorldCat.org search results, including records from the public domain GPO, PubMed, and ERIC databases as well as its own ArticleFirst resource.[5] While the records of all four databases appear in WorldCat, OCLC continues to offer ArticleFirst as a separate product through its FirstSearch service, which uses a specialized interface for article databases.

## Making It Local

In order to function as the library's local catalog, the basic WorlCat.org has been extended to interact with some of the components of the library's local automation environment. As the interface displays items, it needs to be able to latch on to the local ILS in order to display the items' current shelf status, make requests, or perform other services expected from the library's online catalog.

As part of the pilot project, OCLC has developed interoperability with automation systems from Innovative Interface, SirsiDynix, and Ex Libris. For physical items, WorldCat Local interacts with the ILS and any interlibrary loan system used by the library.

As search results display in the initial brief listing, WorldCat Local indicates those held by the local library or consortium: "Held by: University of Washington Libraries" (see figure 18). When the user clicks through to view the detailed record for a locally owned item, the system dynamically retrieves information regarding the location and availability from the local ILS. For each relevant holding library, the item's location, call number, and circulation status are listed. This holdings lookup takes place only for items with holdings in OCLC that match the local library.

As WorldCat Local is extended, it will allow delivery options specific to the local library to place requests for the physical delivery of items, to make interlibrary loan requests, or to gain online access to electronic content.

Although WorldCat Local searches the entire WorldCat database, it gives preferential access to the holdings of the local library. When comparing the results list on WorldCat Local versus WorldCat.org, one can see differences in the ordering and presentation of the results from a given search request. WorldCat Local consistently gives exactly the same number of results as the same search entered in WorldCat.org. As the search engine determines the relevancy ranking of a search result, it gives additional weight to items owned by the local library. Items ranked highly in WorldCat.org fall much lower in the search results if they are not owned by the local library. In the University of Washington's implementation, results from the University of Washington display first, followed by "Summit Libraries" (the name of the catalog of the Orbis Cascade Alliance consortium, in which UW participates), followed by "WorldCat Libraries."

Several aspects of the brief- and full-record presentations have been enhanced to emphasize the local library. The brief view includes an additional line that describes the closest library where the item is available, which will hopefully be the local library for the items listed first.
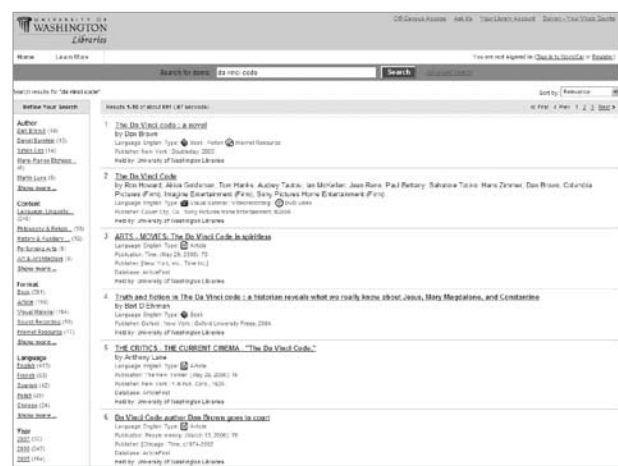


**Figure 18:**
View of search results from the WorldCat Local implementation at the University of Washington.

In the detailed view of an item, a Libraries tab displays a list of the libraries that offer the item, beginning with those closest to the location of the user. A box prompts for a location, which can be entered as a postal code, state, province, or country. Once the user enters a postal code, it is remembered in future sessions. Each holding library displays, along with its distance from the user's location. Clicking on the library name launches a search for that item in that library's online catalog (see figure 19).

## Delivery Options

With the detailed listing for a book, WorldCat.org offers a link that allows the user to buy the item from Amazon.com. In WorldCat Local, a button in the same position, labeled "Request Item," links into the local library's ILS or interlibrary loan system. In the case of University of Washington, it links into the Orbis Cascade Alliance union catalog. If the item is available in one of the libraries in the consortium, the user can request that the item be delivered to the local library.

If the item is an article, the delivery placeholder is labeled "Check for Online Access." This button, in the upper right corner of the full-record display, helps the user view the item by invoking the library's OpenURL resolver. For UW, the button launches the Innovative Interfaces WebBridge linker (see figure 20).

When a serial title is displayed, a button labeled "Access Online" appears in the same position. Clicking this button will display a page that lists all the online versions of the serial or periodical from the local library or consortium. This page has a Check for Online Access link that invokes the library's link resolver.
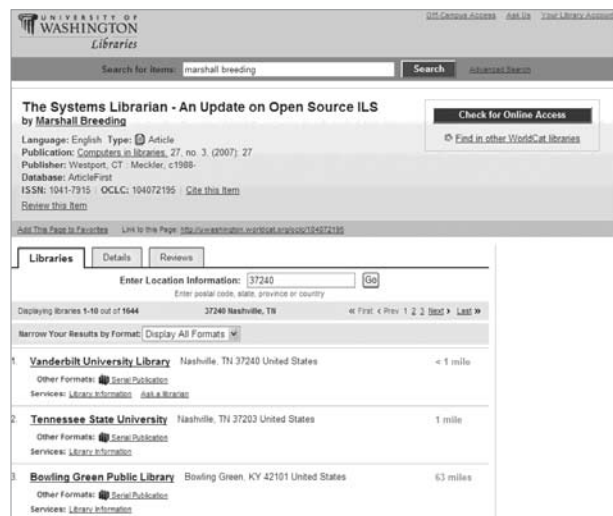
## Synchronicity with WorldCat

One of the key issues for WorldCat Local is how accurately the OCLC database represents the library's collection. The ability for WorldCat Local to function as the local catalog depends on the library's collection being comprehensively represented in WorldCat and all holdings set accurately. In most cases, the most complete and up-to-date representation of a library's collection resides in its local automation system. Though OCLC member libraries theoretically obtain their records from OCLC and update holdings during the cataloging process, there are many opportunities for the local system to be out of synch with WorldCat. If a library obtains records from other sources, for example, those holding may not be set in OCLC. In order for WorldCat Local to serve as an effective substitute for a local catalog, some work may be needed to synchronize the library's holdings with OCLC.

In the initial launch of WorldCat Local at the University of Washington, for example, users are advised of what's not included, such as some large online collections (Eighteenth Century Collections Online and Early English Books Online), some journal titles, and some materials in special collections.

## Enriched Content and Display

The display of records goes beyond a textual display based on MARC records. WorldCat enhances the visual presentation through the use of book jacket images when they are available. While WorldCat allows for user-submitted reviews and ratings, the records are not prepopulated with summaries, reviews, or other supplemental content from third-party sources.
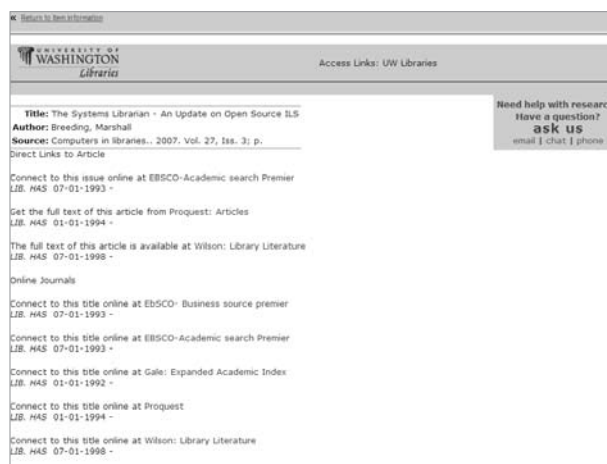


**Figure 19:**
Detailed view of record showing holding libraries.



**Figure 20:**
Online access of an article through WorldCat Local.

## User-Submitted Content

WorldCat provides several opportunities for users to provide input and contribute content. Each full record includes tables that display any existing reviews and invite users to "Write a review of this item and share your opinions with others." A user must be registered and signed in to use this feature. In writing a review, a user can select an overall rating from a drop-down selection tool (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor), give the review a short title, and provide a narrative of up to 20,000 characters in length. Under the Details section, users can contribute notes or tables of contents for an item (see figure 21).

## Grouping Related Material

In order to simplify the interface, it's often helpful to group related materials together in the initial display and to break out specific editions and other variations if the user asks for more detail. FRBR, or Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, represents one model for consolidating related material. FRBR involves thinking of related materials in a hierarchical relationship (work, expression, manifestation, and item). OCLC has applied the principles of FRBR to WorldCat. If one searches for "gone with the wind," the initial record displays the book version; once the book is selected, the Editions tab gives a long list of editions of the book, including ones issued by various publishers, large-print versions, and audio recordings of the text. Consistent with FRBR, the movie displays as a different top-level entry. Though it is based on the book, the movie represents a separate artistic work.
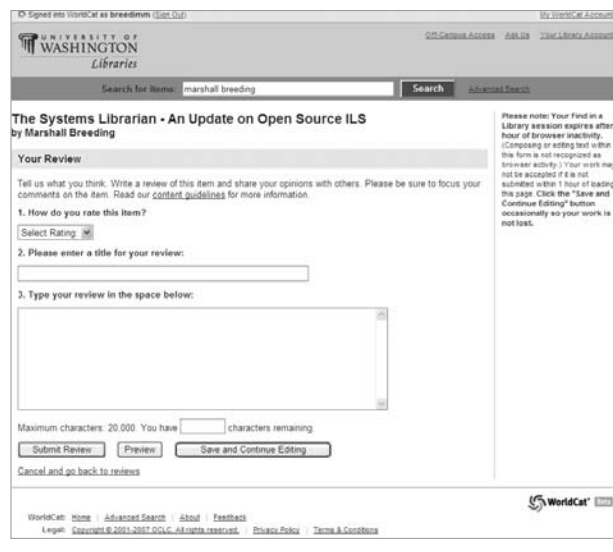


**Figure 21:**
Submitting a review in WorldCat Local.

## Spelling and Term Suggestions

WorldCat has not implemented a "did you mean" service. Misspellings with obvious alternatives return zero results.

## Logging In

One potential point of confusion with WorldCat Local is the possibility of needing two different login accounts, the one assigned by the local library and another for WorldCat-specific functions. In order to make requests or view online content, one must enter the library-assigned credentials; to perform WorldCat-specific activities, such as contributing reviews or ratings, one must establish a WorldCat account. In the UW implementation of WorldCat Local, one is labeled "My WorldCat Account" and the other "Your Library Account."

## Faceted Navigation

The WorldCat interface guides the user through the search process through faceted navigation. Once the user enters an initial search, the list of items returned displays in a wide column in the middle of the page. A narrow column of facets appear on the left, grouped into several categories: Author, Content, Format, Language, and Year. Following well-established conventions, the number of items associated with each facet selection appears after it in parentheses.

The interface maintains a trail of breadcrumb links corresponding to the facets selected. This allows the user to see the current path of terms used to narrow the results. Clicking on a link in the breadcrumb trail takes the user back to that point in the navigation, removing all the facet selections that followed.

## Other Interface Features

The WorldCat Local interface includes a number of other utility features that assist the user. A link labeled "Cite this item" launches a pop-up window showing the formatting of the item according to multiple styles, including APA, Chicago, Harvard, MLA, and Turabian, making it very easy to copy and paste the citation into a list of references. Each full-record display includes a persistent link that that can be used to refer back to this record in the future without having to search for it.

One aspect of navigation conspicuously missing is the ability to return to the results list from the full version of a record. The lack of such a navigational link can be especially problematic if the user has used any of the tabs

or other features on the detailed display so that multiple hits on the Back button are needed to return to the list. Facets and other navigational aids disappear once the full record is displayed.

## Funneling Users from the Web

Another key aspect of WorldCat.org involves the way that it interacts with the major Internet search engines. OCLC makes the bibliographic records available for inclusion in the indexes of Google, Yahoo, and the other major search engines. As users find books in the general Web search engines, they will encounter links to WorldCat.org, providing a mechanism that directs searchers to items in their local library.

## Notes

1. OCLC, "Web Users Can Now Search the Collections of the World's Libraries through the New WorldCat.org Site," press release, Aug. 8, 2006, available on the Library Technology Guides Web site, www.librarytechnology.org/ltg-displaytext.pl?RC=12137 (accessed June 1, 2007).
2. "Facts and Statistics," on the OCLC Web site, www.oclc.org/worldcat/statistics/default.asp (accessed June 1, 2007).
3. List of libraries courtesy of OCLC.
4. Ex Libris, "University of California Libraries Unveil New Melvyl Catalog," press release, Apr. 23, 2003, available on the Library Technology Guides Web site, www.librarytechnology.org/ltg-displaytext.pl?RC=10388 (accessed June 1, 2007).
5. OCLC, "OCLC to Pilot WorldCat Local," press release, Apr. 11, 2007, available on the Library Technology Guides Web site, www.librarytechnology.org/ltg-displaytext.pl?RC=12500 (accessed June 1, 2007).