

Introduction

There have been many discussions in the library community on grand topics such as the future of the catalog, discovery to delivery, working at the network level, and syndication of information.¹

The University of Washington Libraries used these same ideas as a springboard for internal conversations that brought together staff from across the system. As part of our strategic planning process, we thought about these topics and the needs of our users. We've long had concerns about our how well our users were able to find our rich array of resources, both print and online.

The 2005 OCLC report *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* found that 84% of users start their information search with a search engine and only 2% start at a library page.² We know from our user assessments that UW library users frequently start their information search in environments outside the library, particularly Google. Google works for users, so they continue to use it. Library staff members often express the sentiment that it's bad for people to use Google: "If only they knew how to find and then search our complex systems, they'd get much better information." The reality is that users are reaching out to Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo! for their information needs, and we have to change our systems to make working at the network level (of Google, Microsoft, etc.) a success for our users.

One of the strategic directions of the UW Libraries Vision 2010 Strategic Plan is "Enhance user services."³ Our goal is to "meet user needs by providing access to resources and services at the point of need and in the users' environments." We strive to meet this goal through this initiative: "Build or integrate new tools and services for information discovery and delivery." We wanted a tool that

- provides a user-centric discovery interface
- provides access to resources beyond the physical walls of the library by representing institution, group, and WorldCat holdings
- incorporates library work flows without confusing the user
- syndicates content to other user environments

We knew that creating such a tool required partnership beyond the UW Libraries. In the summer of 2006, the UW Libraries approached OCLC to gauge interest in a project to address the discovery-to-delivery issue. Could we create a service that would integrate our discovery "silos," the catalog and article citations, and our delivery systems? OCLC was very interested in the idea, and we agreed to pilot a new discovery and delivery platform that became known as WorldCat Local.

Notes

1. Karen Calhoun, *The Changing Nature of the Catalog and Its Integration with Other Discovery Tools*, report prepared for the Library of Congress, March 17, 2006, www.loc.gov/catdir/calhoun-report-final.pdf (accessed May 20, 2008); Marshall Breeding, "Next-Generation Library Catalogs," *Library Technology Reports*, July/Aug. 2007, Vol. 43 Issue 4 (Chicago, IL.: ALA TechSource, 2007); Lorcan Dempsey, "The Library Catalogue in the New Discovery Environment: Some Thoughts," July 2006, in *Ariadne*, issue 48, www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue48/dempsey (accessed May 28, 2008); Robin Murray, "Library Systems: Synthesise, Specialise, Mobilise," July 2006, in *Ariadne*, issue 48, www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue48/murray (accessed May 28, 2008); Lorcan

Dempsey, "Discover, Locate, . . . Vertical and Horizontal Integration," Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, Nov. 20, 2005, orweblog.oclc.org/archives/000865.html (accessed May 28, 2008); Lorcan Dempsey, "Discovery Happens Elsewhere," Lorcan Dempsey's Weblog, Sept. 16, 2007, orweblog.oclc.org/archives/001430.html (accessed May 28, 2008).

2. Cathy De Rosa, *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership*, 2005, www.oclc.org/reports/2005perceptions.htm (accessed May 28, 2008).
3. University of Washington Libraries, "Vision 2010: The Libraries' 2006-2010 Strategic Plan," www.lib.washington.edu/about/vision2010 (accessed May 28, 2008).