



Smart Libraries™

Formerly Library Systems Newsletter™

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Smarter Libraries through Technology

by Marshall Breeding

It's Time to Focus on User-Facing Technologies

It's clear that in today's library technology scene, the products and services that impact library users directly attract strategic interest more than those directed toward behind-the-scenes functions. The realities of the current economic situation dictate that librarians have far



fewer resources than we need to invest in all of the technologies necessary to support all the varied aspects of library operations. More than ever, we have to make difficult choices about what we choose to fund and what to defer when it comes to technology infrastructure. At least for the short term, user-facing technologies take precedence over back-room automation.

These circumstances paint the context for the key trend playing out today in the library automation industry: products and services that face the public users of the library attract intense interest in terms of development initiatives,

new products, and adoption by libraries. I'm finding that more of the industry news in recent times involves discovery services and other products that enhance the experience of the library's end-users.

Core library automation products such as the ILS continue to be essential and today's deferrals may turn into a surge of activity down the road. In addition to the continuous improvement of the mainstay ILS products, I see some interesting projects brewing—products like Quali OLE and Ex Libris URM, that work toward a long term goal of providing a infrastructure that will help library staff operate in a way more in tune with the essence of libraries today and the future, where the management of digital resources will represent increasing proportions of our work. OCLC's Webscale Management System, mentioned in this issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*, also presents a new conceptual approach to library automation under development. We will be in trouble if we don't eventually gain transformational improvements to the automation support libraries dealing with ever diminishing physical resources require.

Still, the demands of the public are increasing, with ever higher expectations set by the broader realm of today's Web environment. A web dominated by highly interactive and collaborative destinations makes the need to offer library services to our users in radically

A web dominated by highly interactive and collaborative destinations makes the need to offer library services to our users in radically better ways urgent.

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better ways an urgent one. While it would be great to refresh both the tools used by library staff and the customer-facing interfaces, I'm fine with deferring advancements that benefit the former for the latter when resources aren't available to do everything on the library's technology wish list.

My observations of the technologies showcased at the ALA Annual Conference held in Washington DC support this trend. To me it seemed like the majority of the new products and services emphasized involve some aspect of customer-facing functionality. Examples include LS2 PAC from The Library Corporation; SirsiDynix Enterprise; Primo, Primo Central, and bX recommender service from Ex Libris; Summon and AquaBrowser from Serials Solutions; Cognite, a new learning management system for K-12 Schools; and Encore Synergy from Innovative Interfaces. While I don't follow the publishing industry as closely, I noticed several new interface platforms, including a new consolidated platform from ProQuest and the new Wiley Online Library.

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I'm delighted to see significant advancements in the state of the art of library resource discovery and other user-oriented technologies. This issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter* highlights some of them. As an example in this area, it's interesting to watch the formidable competition in play between Primo from Ex Libris and Summon from Serials Solutions in creating the best technology platforms and most comprehensive indexes for academic and research libraries. Both companies seem to embrace a similar vision of what a discovery service for a research library should deliver, though their

respective products employ quite different strategies and technologies.

I hope that brighter days lie ahead when libraries have more abundant resources to build up or refresh all their strategic technology components. But in these times of sparse resources, libraries need to make targeted strategic investments, which today tend to be skewed toward revitalization of the technologies that directly engage our patrons.

Ex Libris Advances its Discovery and Recommendation Products

Ex Libris continues to make significant gains with Primo, its discovery platform for research libraries. There have been new developments in terms of the production and release of Primo Central, new libraries selecting Primo, and completed installations.

The company launched Primo as its strategic discovery platform in 2006, designed especially for research libraries with large and complex collections (See *Smart Libraries Newsletter* March 2006). From the start, Primo specialized in receiving metadata from a variety of different sources to provide a normalized, comprehensive index that provided rapid access to library collections. The content represented in this local index would include materials managed within the library's integrated library system, institutional repositories, digital collections, and other sources available to the library for local indexing, especially those available through the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH). Primo provided access to the collections of articles through an integrated federated search component, based on MetaLib. This approach to

discovery within the body of article collections provides the advantage of access through a single interface, but requires the user to launch an additional search, with results returned much slower than the content indexed locally in Primo.

To overcome the limitations of searching articles through federated search and to strengthen its position against competitive products like Summon from Serials Solutions, in July 2009 Ex Libris announced its intentions to extend Primo with a large consolidated index of mostly article-level content that would provide the same degree of speed and ease of use as with the materials indexed locally. This new component, named Primo Central, has been under development for the last year, with Ex Libris not only developing the technology platform for this hosted service, but also in making agreements with publishers to index their content.

A number of libraries have been involved with testing and evaluation of Primo Central, including Brigham Young University, the Cooperative Library Network of Berlin-Brandenburg,

Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, Oxford University, the University of New South Wales in Australia, Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, and Vanderbilt University. With this cycle of testing complete, Primo Central was announced as a production product in June 2010 and available in general release.

Ex Libris has also completed Primo Version 3.0, a major revision of the product with many new significant features. Some of the capabilities new of this version include integration with Primo Central, a redesign of the user interface that presents more details on the initial results listings lessening the need to click through to the full display, more search options such as left-anchor or “begins with,” and more flexible sorting. Primo Version 3.0 brings many of the user services features directly into the discovery interface, avoiding a hand-off to the Web-based catalog of the ILS for tasks such as those related to renewals, holds, fines, recalls, and user profile updates. These features make use of the more advanced levels of the Integrated Library System-Discovery Interface protocol produced by the Digital Library Federation. (For more on the ILS-DI protocol, see: ISQ Summer 2008 “Progress on the DLF ILS Discovery Interface API, the Berkeley Accord.) This version also offers an optional recommendation service for scholarly articles through integration with the bX service (covered in detail in the June 2009 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*).

As of June 2010, a total of 280 libraries have selected Primo. Libraries recently acquiring it include Monash University in Australia, Atlanta University Center in Atlanta, GA, the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, the library of the Parliament of Hungary, Coventry University, Aberystwyth University in the United Kingdom, and the University of the West Indies. The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), a

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major Ex Libris site in Switzerland, announced that it has now put Primo into production use.

In addition to the integration of bX into Primo mentioned above, Ex Libris has seen a high level of interest in this service, delivered primarily as a feature within SFX. Since its initial release in January 2009, a total of 271 libraries have purchased subscriptions to the service. Until recently, the bX recommendation service has been used by libraries involved with SFX, the company's own link resolver. As of June 2010 two librar-

ies, Washington University in St. Louis and Claremont Colleges, have implemented bX with the 360 suite of products from Serials Solutions through the APIs available through the two respective platforms. These initial integrations between bX and competing linking and discovery products pave the way the adoption of the service by a wider range of libraries. Ex Libris has consistently been able to expand its business by placing its products in libraries outside its own direct customer base.

—Marshall Breeding

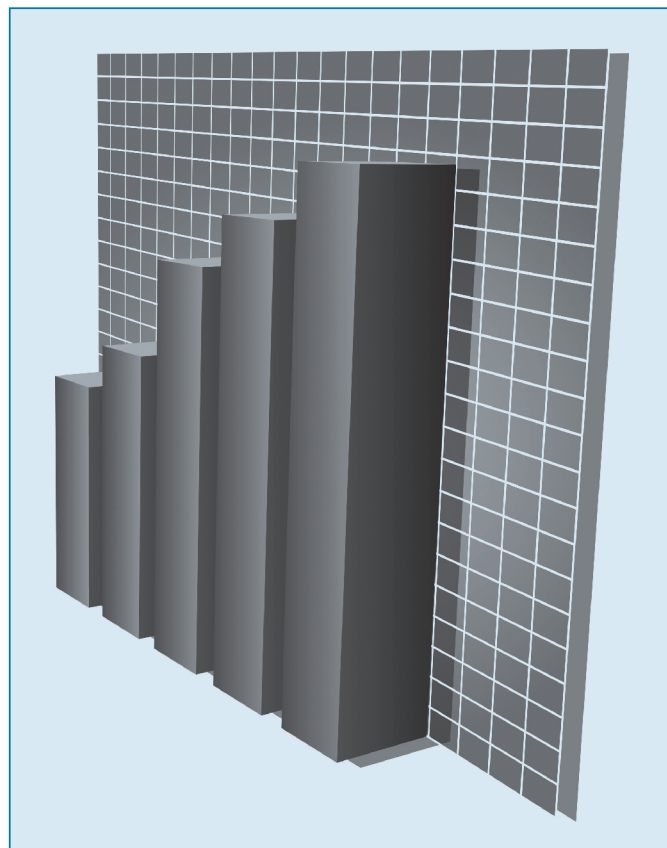
Serials Solution Continues to Build on Summon Success

June 2010 marks the tenth anniversary for Serials solutions. The company has grown into a major competitor in the library automation industry, demonstrating remarkable growth from its quite humble beginnings. Now a business unit of ProQuest with 175 employees, Serials Solutions began as a project of Peter McCracken, with the goal of organizing and managing the electronic holdings of the library at East Carolina University and later at the University of Washington. In 2000 McCracken launched Serials Solutions as a 4-person company, which has since developed an arsenal of products to manage and provide access to electronic resources. ProQuest acquired Serials Solutions in July 2004, and subsequently built a broad suite of products centered on the e-journal knowledgebase originally conceived and created by McCracken. Most recently, Serials Solutions created Summon as a discovery service for all aspects of library collections, including print.

The Summon Service from Serials Solutions continues to gain strength as a major competitor in the discovery arena. Since the original product announcement in Jan 2009 and its launch as a production service in July 2009, Serials Solutions has continually expanded the content represented in the index and has attracted a steady stream of libraries adopting this hosted service. Some of the libraries publicly announced as subscribers include Dartmouth College, Oklahoma State University, Grand Valley State University, University of Huddersfield (UK), and Bucknell University. (See March 2009 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter* for more details on Summon.) The Bibliotheca Alexandria in Cairo, Egypt also selected Summon in recent weeks.

Grand Valley State University adopted Summon in July 2009, following an in-depth evaluation to determine the extent to which their holdings were represented. Subsequent to implementation, the GVSU Library conducted studies to assess the impact of their new discovery service on the use of library

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resources. Serials Solutions provides a promotional case study which includes selected findings that reports significant increases in the use of specific electronic holdings. For example: “Academic Search Premier saw a usage increase of 92%, General OneFile increased 179% and ABI/INFORM rose 354%” and “after the Summon implementation (completed in August 2009), GVSU’s top 100 journals showed an average usage increase of 48%, while the top 1000 had increased usage of 82%.” (see: <http://www.serialssolutions.com/assets/publications/GVSU-Summon-Case-Study.pdf>)

Another important development involves the selection of Summon by the European university that created Summa, one of the earliest discovery platforms

based on a consolidated index. In July 2010, the State and University Library (Statsbiblioteket, Universitetsparken) in Aarhus, Denmark announced that it has become a partner with Serials Solutions for Summon. This announcement stands out because this library has gained significant attention for its development of the Summa discovery platform. The collaboration with Serials Solutions will bring together the strengths of the Summa project and Summon. Summa involves a large consolidated index of metadata from Danish research publications and cultural heritage collections, resulting in an extremely powerful search capability.

Development of Summa began at the State and University Library beginning in 2005 as an open source discov-

ery platform based on the Lucene search engine, programmed in Java. It has been adopted by other libraries beyond the original development site including the Silkeborg Public Library and the Odense Public Library, both also in Denmark.

In addition to Summon, the State and University Library has subscribed to a full suite of Serials Solutions products including 360 Link, (OpenURL link resolver), 360 Resource Manager for electronic resource management, 360 Counter for assessing use of electronic resources, and 360 Core, the central knowledgebase services related to e-journal subscriptions.

—Marshall Breeding

OCLC Webscale Management Services Reaches Critical Milestones

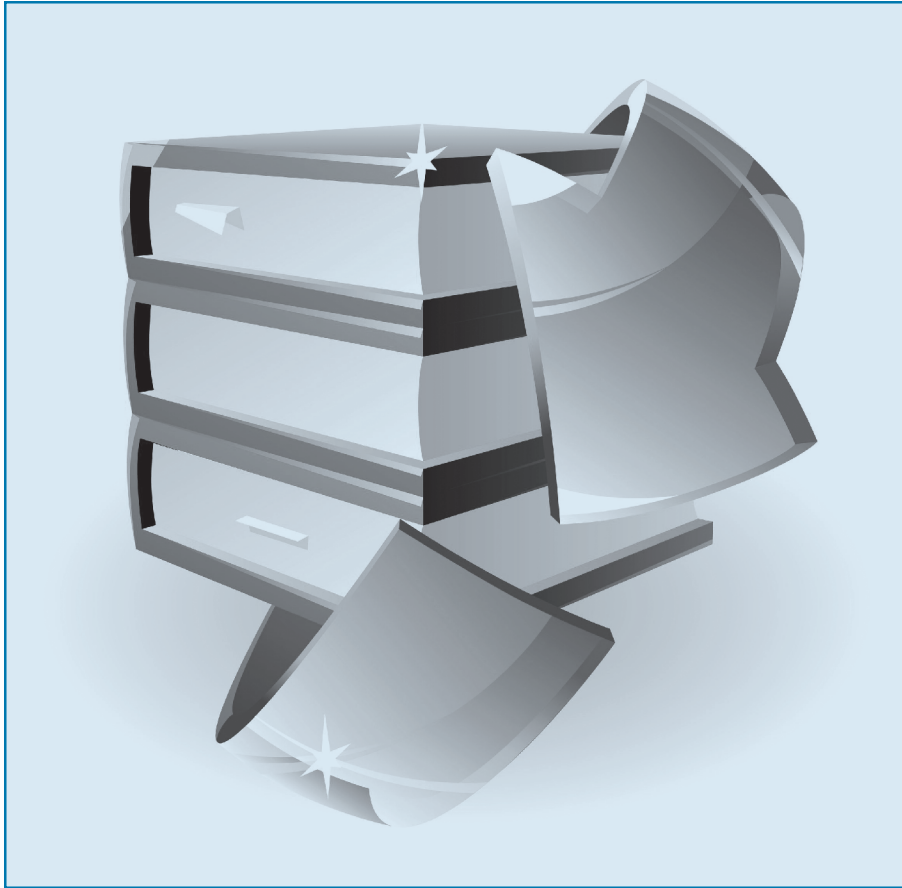
In April 2009, OCLC announced its ambitions to deliver a new approach to library automation based on its global WorldCat platform. The vision of Webscale Management Services (WMS) involves adding new categories of functionality to WorldCat which will enable it to support the full range of automation, freeing libraries from the need to operate individual integrated library systems. OCLC has delivered cataloging capacity from its very inception; resource sharing has been in place for many years, and recent efforts have positioned WorldCat Local as an end-user discovery tool. WMS builds on the massive WorldCat database and provides the existing functionality for automation support for the remaining areas of library operations including circulation, acquisitions, and license man-

The vision of Webscale Management Services (WMS) involves adding new categories of functionality to WorldCat which will enable it to support the full range of automation, freeing libraries from the need to operate individual integrated library systems.

agement. Circulation presents quite a challenge for this model of automation since it involves critical real-time transactions.

OCLC has enhanced the WorldCat platform for the greater scalability of performance and reliability required for WMS to serve as a viable automation platform for these additional modules. (A more detailed description of what is now known as WMS was presented in the June 2009 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*.)

During this period of development, OCLC has engaged a number of libraries to serve as pilot sites for the service, providing development feedback and testing. Some of the WMS pilot sites announced included the Cooperative Information Network, a consortium of libraries sharing a Voyager system in Idaho, Pepperdine University in California (Voyager), Linfield College (Millennium), and the Orbis Cascade Alliance. Bringing to fruition of more than a year of development



and testing, OCLC announced that as of July 1, 2010 WMS will be available for libraries interested in becoming early adopters of a migration process for production use of the circulation and acquisitions modules. OCLC expects WMS availability as a routine subscription service by July 2011.

In a major early coup for this product, BIBSYS, a nationwide automation system supporting the major research and special libraries in Norway, including the National Library, has selected WMS as its new automation platform. BIBSYS operates under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Research

of the Norwegian national government, centered at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). The libraries participating in the centralized BIBSYS system cooperate and share the costs of developing and operating the system. Since its inception in 1972, BIBSYS has evolved through a series of computer platforms, beginning with mainframe systems up through the current Unix-based multi-tier architecture. According to the BIBSYS website, the current system manages almost 16 million items and 5.2 million unique titles across the 117 participating libraries.

According to the announcement issued by BIBSYS, a procurement process initiated in September 2009 elicited responses from six vendors; three were eliminated as not meeting the eligibility requirements. Of the three vendors receiving the detailed specifications, only Ex Libris and OCLC submitted proposals. The BIBSYS board selected OCLC's WMS as the preferred solution in their June 18, 2010, and will move forward to the contract negotiation phase. Though appeals of the selection may yet be submitted, this award asserts the organization's confidence in the potential of the OCLC WMS model.

The selection of WMS extends an existing relationship between BIBSYS and OCLC. In 2005 OCLC PICA won the contract to provide Web-based portals to BIBSYS member libraries, based on the SISIS Elektra platform.

—*Marshal Breeding*

McMaster University Will Implement SirsiDynix Symphony

SirsiDynix announced that the libraries of McMaster University will move from their Horizon system, in place since 1997, to Symphony through software-as-a-service (SaaS). McMaster, a major aca-

demic library in Hamilton, Ontario Canada will rank as the largest academic library to select the SirsiDynix SaaS offering and one of the larger academics to select Symphony in recent years. The selection of Symphony

comes after serious consideration of moving to an open source ILS.

McMaster has previously implemented a discovery interface based on technology from Endeca. Other librar-

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ies implementing Endeca-based catalogs include North Carolina State University, Phoenix Public Library, the University of Toronto, and the public university libraries in Florida associated with FCLA.

McMaster previously had been named as part of the Conifer consortium of academic libraries migrating to Evergreen which also included the University of Windsor, Laurentian University, Algoma University College and Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

According to University Librarian Jeffrey Trzeciak, the McMaster libraries have a number of technology-oriented initiatives underway, and implementing Symphony through the SaaS model allows the library to move to a new ILS without drawing excessively from the IT resources needed for these other more strategic projects. The university libraries, for example, are engaged in creating a new media commons center for undergraduates as well as a Center for Digital Scholarship.

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