

UKSG webinar – Thinking the Unthinkable: Doing Away with the Library Catalogue, 11 June 2014

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Should you have a question arising from the webinar and not answered in the recording or below, please e-mail Simone who will be happy to respond.

Questions arising from the Q&A session and the registration/feedback forms:

Google:

Q: You still have paid-for resources - web of science - are you tempted to cancel these and just use Google?

A: No, this is not a move to just use Google but a move away from a single (home grown or library-configured) discovery tool. We license many broad and specialised discovery solutions (e.g. also Scopus) next to Google's free services.

Q: Are there concerns about relying on a company? Google is in it for profit, universities at least shouldn't.

A: All discovery tools on the market are commercial (Ex Libris, Proquest, EBSCO etc.). We do try to make users aware of possible biases in whatever search engine they are using.

Q: Would your library continue using Google Scholar as a discovery tool if google scholar started charging for its services?

A: That depends on the price and the value added compared to the other search engines and databases we license.

Q: If you switch to Google Scholar what will you do if something goes wrong e.g. loss of access; no control or feedback mechanism for the look and feel of Google Scholar? Will you have customer service staff you can [rely] on at Google like you do with Aleph?

A: We would have to rely on the size of the global user community to give Google feedback on problems in its services. We are aware of Google Scholar's issues, but recognise that it suffices for the majority of our patron's needs, especially considering that do have Web of Science, Scopus, EMBase, MLA, Cab Abstracts, PsycInfo etc. at their disposal if they need more reliability or control over their searches.

Q: How do you measure your users in Google and Google Scholar? Only when they are on you own network?

A: The main source of user stats is our link resolver SFX that has been implemented in Google Scholar. We advise our students and faculty to use this link resolver enhanced version of Google Scholar. SFX statistics show the number of click-throughs from Scholar to providers of full text.



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Q: If you are using google scholar as your search engine: Why didn't you just put one google search box on the main web page and let the users enter the web from that point?

A: We do not want to force our users to use any single search engine, but want to make them aware of the options and choose wisely. The choice will depend on the specific type of information/publications they need or the specific search functionality they require (e.g. citation searching). Google Scholar is just overall the most frequently used search engine for journal articles, but if people move away from it and start preferring say PubMed, Microsoft Academic Search, Scopus or whatever, we won't stop them. But we will closely monitor their behaviour and the reasons for changes in that behaviour.

Q: Is Google Scholar tailored in any way to show only your subscriptions? If not, how do you manage turnaways?

A: No it is not, but we do have our link resolver in GS. We expect the only systems that have options to just show stuff licensed by us are Primo Central and a future implementation of WorldCat. We try to get our users to realise not to see turnaways as the end of the line with nowhere to go. We provide them with options to get what they need even if "the library does not have it. For instance take a look at this box present in many of our LibGuides:

<http://libguides.library.uu.nl/content.php?pid=363042&sid=2971030#10934305>

Q: Are your users happy to just use google scholar - have you had any push back from your users?

A: We are not forcing them to just use Google Scholar; they have many options at their disposal. Most push back on discontinuing our home-grown discovery tool has been in humanities. We are still researching the exact nature of problems humanities students and scholars are encountering. As a response to the push back, the team for the Humanities organised walk-in sessions for students and staff meeting presentations: Google Scholar was presented as the quick way to discover and get literature (Web of Science, Scopus can better be advised for interdisciplinary topics with disciplines outside of the Humanities). We advised each participant a set of licensed specialised discovery solutions for his/her own discipline for more in-depth research.

Q: How do you track your students in google scholar? Just through SFX or some other way?

A: Just sfx, but we cannot separate student from faculty usage.

WebOPAC:

Q: Can you explain why you didn't implement e.g. primor or eds or worldshare all of which will integrate (and replace if needs be) the OPAC and will have more quality content than google?

A: (1) We would like our users to also discover stuff we do not yet have; (2) for known item searches we think Google (Scholar) or WorldCat will suffice (3) for subject searches we believe combining Google Scholar with 1 or 2 scholarly search tools (e.g. Scopus or PsycInfo) will offer a search experience at least on par with the current discovery tools.



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Q: So they discontinued their discovery tool, but haven't yet deleted the webOPAC? The title of this presentation is quite misleading.

A: The WebOPAC as a search tool will be discontinued. But indeed the title should be interpreted as a library controlled/configured/built tool restricted to just what the library has in its collections. The catalogue is just what people think of when talking about the library search systems. Some users even called our home-grown search systems that we closed down (Omega) 'catalogue'.

About Utrecht:

Q: When she says 7 faculties, does she mean 7 faculty librarians?

A: No, just the 7 sections that together comprise our university (humanities, law & economics, geoscience, social science, science, medicine, veterinary science).

About the process:

Q: How did you improve/refine your delivery services?

A: We (1) invested in making sure as much as possible is activated in the SFX KB / (2) we did a project to remove any obstacles to finding 'our stuff' through WorldCat / (3) we introduced a bookmarklet to make it easier to get access to publications licensed by us when users are just surfing the web and encountering a paywall.

Outcomes:

Q: I'm concerned users will need to become even more skilled in their web searching than they may be at the moment to be able to quickly identify material in your library. Is this a concern?

A: Although for the bulk of known item searches the level of skill needed is very moderate, indeed for subject searching, author search or non-book/article material we realise that continued or even intensified focus on information literacy is necessary. But that will pay off anyway when students graduate and have to find their way in the increasingly complex information landscape.

Q: Now you don't control the way users can look on facets, years of publishing etc. Don't you bother?

A: No. We realise each search engine has its own way of doing that. Even if you provide a discovery tool that you configure, you cannot stop your users from using other tools. It seems a more viable route to just make students and faculty aware of how these systems work and how to get the most out of them. If you 'lock' them into one system you control they maybe ill-prepared for the 'wild world' out there.



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Technical questions:

Q: Do you offer your users PDA/DDA e-books? Will you offer them via National Catalogue /Word cat?

A: Yes and yes.

Q: Does this mean that in effect there would be no informed direct access to the shelves - only by a reservation system or will the users browse for material if they know the shelfmark/ or will your physical material will become remotely stored and accessed on a request basis only?

A: We do have direct access to shelves and will keep on providing that, although in science and social science especially a very large share of modern book titles is provided by us in e-book format only. We think virtual browsing of library collections by shelfmarks is only advisable in a very small percentage of use cases.

Q: Search engines by discipline - does this mean actual subscribed databases or only freely available web-search engines?

A: It includes subscribed databases. We invite you to take a look at our listing of search engines: <http://bibe.library.uu.nl/zoek/biblio/index.html>.

Miscellaneous:

Q: How does your discovery tool deal with foreign characters (Asian alphabets) where spellings may vary and alter search results?

A: We do not have a discovery tool anymore.

Q: If there is only delivery and no discovery, where is serendipity?

A: We think the presence of serendipity is not dependent on who is building or configuring the discovery tools. In fact, as we are advising people to use various tools based on their specific need, you may argue that introduces more serendipity than just using on library provided discovery tool.

Q: Does discovery out of the institution mean we should throw the library catalog away?

A: The library catalogue as an inventory/circulation system remains, but the publicly accessible search interface can indeed be phased out.

