Database Interface Group (DIG) Report on Ethnographic Study
Comments on Vendor and Federated Search Issues

Since many of the same general comments appeared under both vendor and federated search issues, the review of these two areas yielded similar results. The most constant and consistent comment and/or request made by both undergraduate and graduate students related to searching and retrieving full-text articles. Students find the current article search and retrieval process at RUL confusing, difficult and time-consuming. They want to get articles easily and quickly and for the library web pages and databases to work like the Google (Scholar) search which brings them links to articles directly and immediately. Generally, students lack patience and interest in learning how the information is organized and delivered.

VENDOR ISSUES

PART I: BRIEF OVERALL STATEMENTS OR COMMENTS:

- Average users oftentimes find our systems too complex.
- Users need more instruction in the use of specific databases.
- Users are unable to determine which database to use.
  Users, especially undergraduates, are overwhelmed by the subject breakdown pages and more so by the lengthy alphabetical listing.
- Users often do not know what we have. They asked for things like style formats (APA, MLA etc.) embedded in databases. This feature is in many of our resources already.
- Users do not understand how the Serials Solutions interface links to full-text items.
  Users are unable to use the Serials Solutions screen properly, and it appears that they are clicking on the "JOURNAL" instead of "ARTICLE" when full text is available. This error upsets them since they have to search again within the journal to find the article text.
- Users want every single database search hit to result in a full-text article immediately.
- Users confused about access to journal articles we have in print. Awareness of Article Delivery seems low.
- Users dissatisfied with the number of browser windows that are required to get to the full text of an article.
PART II: RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE RUL WEBSITE

- Design easier way to select databases
  - Easy access to Google Scholar
    Display a link along with information about how to effectively utilize it, as well as information about the undisclosed sources of information it is searching.
  - Easy access to JSTOR
  - Make selection of databases for advanced searching less confusing
  - Provide short description next to each database title
- Provide a link in databases for Serials Solutions that says: *Get it or Find It at Rutgers*.
- Provide page with remote access information which addresses the issue that users do not have to pay for resources that Rutgers owns if they are logged into the RUL website (e.g., *Why Pay? Use Us!*)
- Make *LOGIN* at the RUL home page more visible
- Create library mobile optimized website
- Make *SEARCH BOOKS/IRIS* option easier to identify
- Make search options for Ebooks, videos/films, and dissertations more visible

Other Recommended Changes:
- Make *Electronic Access* links for articles in the IRIS record simpler and shorter. Include only the year range and vendor info should be enough
- Make no time out or longer view time for IRIS

PART III: OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

- Continue to monitor and review database default settings. (DIG is currently doing this.)
FEDERATED SEARCHING
PART I: BRIEF OVERALL STATEMENTS OR COMMENTS:

• Users like the concept of federated searching.
• Users are confused about how to select the appropriate resource to meet their needs.
• Users want:
  ✓ Federated searching
  ✓ Natural Language searching capabilities
  ✓ Relevance algorithms
  ✓ Customizable/personalization library page like a “my library page”
  ✓ In context help
  ✓ Easier way to directly link to full text
• Users seem totally unconcerned with which databases are included in a Searchlight search. They are similarly unconcerned with which sources are included in Google Scholar results.
• Users prefer fewer browser windows and tabs as they do their research.
• Users are unclear about how to properly use the Serials Solutions page. They don’t realize that the "Search ISSN" and "Search Title" link to IRIS to see if Rutgers has print holdings.

PART II: RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE RUL WEBSITE

• Design easier way to select databases.
  ✓ Easy access to Google Scholar
      Display a link along with information about how to effectively utilize it, as well as information about the undisclosed sources of information it is searching.
  ✓ Easy access to JSTOR
  ✓ Make selection of databases for advanced searching less confusing
  ✓ Provide short description next to each database title
• Provide page with remote access information which addresses the issue that users do not have to pay for resources that Rutgers owns if they are logged into the RUL website (e.g., Why Pay? Use Us!).
• Provide a link in databases for Serials Solutions that says: Get it or Find It at Rutgers.
• Provide a clear indication of whether or not Rutgers has electronic access or if ILL is needed.
✓ "Get it@Rutgers” results are labeled as Online and Print. One click on the Online will retrieve the full-text (without additional clicks). One click on Print button will show the print holdings and locations (without additional clicks).
✓ One click on ILL button will open the ILL form and the citation elements are entered into the ILL form directly and automatically.
✓ Make one ILL form for all types of ILLs.

- Provide faster searching in federated searches.
- Provide interface that is customizable for pushing information to users (e.g., alerts can be set up, set of selected databases for their specified subject areas, etc.).
  ✓ Incorporate a "You have recently viewed this" feature.
- Searchlight default search is a keyword title search. Because of the single search box, users are led to believe that this is a general keyword search. Change language describing the quick search to reflect this or change the default search.
- Reduce the number of windows/tabs required to get from the initial article citation to a full-text article in a different database. Perhaps the full-text links on the Serials Solutions page should not open in the same window/tab.
- Incorporate education on the functionality of products like Article Linker -- a 'point of access' instruction such as a video that walks the user through a context specific example.

PART III: OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE

- Emphasize how to find full text in library instruction classes. (This is currently done.)
- Continue to investigate changes in Searchlight. (DIG is currently doing this.)
- Continue to monitor the available technology and review potential new products for facilitating our users’ work.

Submitted by:

Jeris Cassel, Convener
Susan Beck
Melissa Gasporotto
Dave Hoover
Cathy Pecoraro
Wen Ren
Gracemary Smulewitz
Bob Warwick