

Discovery Working Group Meeting

University Librarian's Conference Room

September 15, 2016, 2:00pm

Present: Stephanie Bartz, Judy Cohn, Joseph Deodato, Rebecca Gardner, Christie Lutz, Rhonda Marker (Guest), Chad Mills, Gracemary Smulewitz, Ela Sosnowska, Bobbi Tipton

Excused: Vibiana Cvetkovic, Yingting Zhang

1. Discovery Plan Recap

The group briefly recapped the discussion from the previous meeting about RUL's existing plans to use VuFind as its primary discovery layer. Using an open source option offers two major benefits: 1) It gives the library greater control over the experience of end users because the interface can be more easily customized to suit local needs, and 2) It reduces the library's reliance on commercial vendors because individual licensed products can be easily replaced on the back end without fundamentally disrupting the appearance of things on the front end. That said, the discovery landscape continues to change at a rapid pace. It may be too soon for the group to decide whether or not to continue with the existing plan. Instead it should be considered as one option among many. Group members were encouraged to look at other institutions for ideas and inspiration.

2. RUL Discovery Diagram

Deodato presented a diagram illustrating the various systems that make up RUL's current discovery environment. The goal is to provide a schematic overview of RUL's current discovery architecture and give group members a general idea of how these systems relate to one another. The diagram shows each pool of indexed data (ILS, knowledgebase, institutional repository, etc.) and the interfaces currently used to make that data discoverable by end users. The document is intended as a rough concept draft and is available for review on Sakai. Group members are encouraged to review and suggest modifications. Additional diagrams may be created to explore specific aspects of system functionality and interoperability.

3. Review of LibQual Comments

LibQual comments were analyzed in order to identify the most common user pain points within the discovery process. The goal was to create a prioritized list of problems for the working group to address. Teams were assigned to review and code comments related to search, the catalog, the library website, and interlibrary loan. General observations about the comments were:

- User comments were often not specific enough to identify the nature of the problem (i.e., "the website sucks")
- Given the complexity of library systems, it was not always clear which product or resource to which the user was referring
- Comments often expressed a variety of concerns requiring them to be classified in more than one category
- Statements made in comments were sometimes incorrect or misinformed (although such misunderstandings can themselves be an indication of a usability problem)

Each team was asked to summarize the top three themes expressed in users' comments:

Search

- 1) Link Resolver – difficulties using Get it @ R and locating full text
- 2) Finding Articles – difficulties finding articles and identifying relevant databases
- 3) Discovery Process – difficulties knowing where to start; # of steps needed to find something

Website

- 1) General – comments too general or vague to categorize
- 2) Navigation – difficulties finding specific information (hours, services, resources, etc.)
- 3) Remote Access – difficulties accessing licensed content from off campus

Library Catalog

- 1) Search – difficulties using search options, interpreting results, and locating known titles
- 2) Navigation – difficulties navigating between search screen, results, and item records
- 3) Other – scattered comments related to account management, holdings, and record displays

Interlibrary Loan

- 1) Collections – comments about gaps in library collection
- 2) Ease of use – difficulties requesting items or knowing which option to use
- 3) Loan periods – comments related to length of loan period or restrictions on renewals

Deodato will review and consolidate the collected data, merging and revising categories in order to bring themes into sharper focus. He will draft a summary report for the group's review and approval before the next meeting.

4. Cabinet Liaison Report

Rhonda Marker, who attended the first hour of the meeting, was introduced. In light of Rhonda's new role leading Shared User Services, the unit will have a central role related to website and discovery, in addition to digital projects, central reference support and chat. As Rhonda's unit will ultimately be responsible for implementing aspects of the approved recommendations made by the Discovery WG, we're fortunate she's joining our team.

It's expected that there will be both short and longer term plans implemented by the Discovery WG. Aspects of individual unit priorities across RUL will be responsive to the needs and approved recommendations from our group. An ongoing review of the Committee Concept Map is taking place in Cabinet; which groups and committees remain active, which need to be transitioned or sunsetted, and those which are faculty committees versus working groups or other task forces. Discovery WG should call upon the expertise of others in RUL who can provide needed input. Expectations for steps to improve information control – making our resources easily discoverable, our search box retrieving needed content for users, and improving performance of our link resolver are well within our charge.

5. Announcements/Next Meeting

Anyone wishing to communicate with the group can use the group mailing list dwg@sakai.rutgers.edu.

The next meeting will be held October 6th at 2pm in the TSB Conference Room. The agenda will include a review of the draft report on the LibQual comments and a discussion of working group goals and priorities.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm

Submitted by Joseph Deodato