

Discovery Working Group Meeting

University Librarian's Conference Room

Monday, December 12, 2016

10:00am – 12:30pm

Present: Stephanie Bartz, Judy Cohn, Joseph Deodato, Rebecca Gardner, Rhonda Marker, Chad Mills, Gracemary Smulewitz, Ela Sosnowska, Bobbie Tipton, Mary Beth Weber, Yingting Zhang

Excused: Vibiana Cvetkovic

1. Link Resolver Recommendations

The link resolver recommendations adopted at the last meeting were reviewed and finalized. Discussion focused on concerns related to recommendation #1. Suggested edits will be incorporated into a revised draft and distributed for final approval.

2. Improving Access to Ebooks

The group began discussion on its next goal: to create a single point of access to ebooks regardless of provider. Deodato presented an overview of common library practices for facilitating ebook discovery and the pros and cons of each approach.

Vendor Platforms	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ebook holdings are managed by vendors rather than the library• Offer advanced search features and discipline-specific limiters
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patrons must search multiple platforms to identify ebook holdings• Print and electronic holdings are managed separately• Patrons must create a separate account for each platform• Each platform has different interface, policies, and technical requirements• Library must provide platform-specific support and documentation

Library Knowledge Base	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers a single point of discovery for all ebooks• Allows ebooks to be discoverable via the library's link resolver
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very limited descriptive information (title, author, publisher, ISBN, subject)• Lack of advanced search features, subject headings, and authority control• Not well suited for topical searching• Print and electronic holdings are managed separately• Access still requires users to be familiar with different vendor platforms

Library Catalog	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a single point of discovery for all ebooks • Allows print and electronic holdings for a title be found together
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited availability of MARC records • Low quality of vendor-supplied records • Requires regular catalog maintenance as titles are added and withdrawn • Cost of adding records to ILS • Access still requires users to be familiar with different vendor platforms

Discovery Service	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a single point of discovery for all ebooks • Allows ebooks to be found together with other types of library materials
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No discovery service indexes all ebooks; need to load custom collections • Quality of metadata varies according to source • Print and electronic versions of a title appear as separate records • Lack of advanced search features, subject headings, and authority control • Access still requires users to be familiar with different vendor platforms

Custom Library Platform	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a single point of discovery for all ebooks • Ebooks are purchased rather than licensed resulting in fewer restrictions • All ebook content is accessed on a single, library-hosted platform
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires advanced technical expertise and infrastructure • Requires negotiating perpetual licenses with publishers • Limited availability of content and MARC records • Low quality of vendor-supplied records • Concerns regarding scalability and sustainability

Ultimately, none of the above approaches is without flaw. In fact, many libraries rely on more than one system for complete coverage of their entire ebook collection. The two most commonly used practices – library catalog and discovery service – face unique local obstacles that must be addressed before either can be successfully employed at Rutgers. Loading ebooks into the catalog could be costly as it may require increasing our record threshold with our ILS provider. Meanwhile, (properly) loading ebooks into EDS would require us to reconfigure and rebrand Articles+ to function as a full web-scale discovery service. That said, Rutgers has recently spent a lot of money on ebook collections and we want our users to be able to find them. To address this need, the working group believes it would be best to consider both short- and long-term solutions.

Long term, the group sees ebooks being discovered alongside other types of content within a unified discovery environment. Until then, one temporary stop-gap solution would be to create a separate profile in EDS (distinct from Articles+) designed specifically for locating ebooks. This would give users a specific place to find ebooks without altering the functionality of Articles+ or forcing a mid-semester redesign of the library website. Although far from perfect, a custom EDS search portal offers a quick fix for the ebook problem until a more stable long-term discovery solution can be developed.

In order to make an informed recommendation, the working group will need to develop a clear understanding of the Libraries' ebook collection:

- What constitutes an ebook (monograph, pamphlet, gov doc, dissertation, etc.)?
- Who provides this content and how is it acquired?
- What unique challenges do users face in finding and accessing this content?

Toward this end, Smulewitz will prepare a list of all current ebook collections, including provider, availability of MARC records, and indexing within EDS. The list will help members better understand the scope of the collection and options for discovery.

3. Next Steps

Deodato will be on sabbatical from January until July. A substitute to replace him as chair has not yet been appointed. Marker will inform the group once a convener has been selected and to schedule future meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm
Submitted by Joseph Deodato