

JIBS User Group Workshop: How to compete with Google: simple resource discovery systems for libraries

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A discussion on the 'lis-infoliteracy' list between February and April this year¹ highlighted one of the major dilemmas currently facing academic libraries: is information literacy training essential for students to get the best out of their library resources or should we just be making our resource discovery systems easier to use?

This was sparked by the release of the CIBER report². One of the CIBER conclusions was: 'We know that younger scholars especially have only a very limited knowledge of the many library-sponsored services that are on offer to them. The problem is one of both raising awareness of this expensive and valuable content and making the interfaces much more standard and easier to use'.

Academic libraries provide their users with a bewildering array of bibliographic databases, commonly accessed via lengthy lists on web pages: there are over 150 databases on such a list at the University of Bath. The introduction of federated search engines such as MetaLib has provided (in theory at least) a single search box solution to discovering journal articles. However, for most libraries an integrated search solution encompassing both print and electronic sources and a variety of formats (books, journals, conference papers, images, websites, etc.) is still some way off.

A number of new 'one-stop shop' library products are beginning to be introduced into libraries in the UK, for example, Primo, Aquabrowser (*reviewed in this issue*) and Encore. These products work with a variety of LMS and federated search

and linking services to provide a single interface for access to the library catalogue and local and remote databases. They also provide greatly improved search functionality compared with a standard library management system. However, as Nick Lewis³ points out: 'One of the key challenges yet to be met by any of these products is the true integration of local and remote resources'. Metadata from remote resources is generally presented in a separate frame or tab, as it will be slower to appear than local data.

An alternative system, ELIN (Electronic Library Information Navigator) (*reviewed in this issue*), from the University of Lund, aims to gather resources together onto a single server before the search takes place, and is thus able to present results more quickly. The ELIN database contains metadata for articles from over 14,000 journals. Libraries can import their own book and journal records into this database, to present a single interface solution.

The JIBS workshop 'How to compete with Google: simple resource discovery systems for libraries' will present a summary of the lis-infoliteracy debate by one of its protagonists, Mark Hepworth, from University of Loughborough. Maggie Fieldhouse of UCL (which produced the CIBER report) will provide an insight into the information-seeking behaviour of students and researchers. We will then explore a range of new 'one-stop shop' library products: Primo, Aquabrowser, ELIN and Encore, and discuss whether they will truly provide an alternative to information literacy teaching.

Further details and a full programme are available from the JIBS website:
<http://www.jibs.ac.uk/events/>

References

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