The submissions for this assignment are posts in the assignment's discussion. Below are the discussion posts for Inna Gogina, or you can view the full discussion.

from Next-gen Library Catalogs (9/15-9/21)  Sep 16, 2015 11:20pm

Please critically discuss the features of one library system that is very familiar to you, in terms of its advanced or "next-gen" features. Take into account the users of the library system if possible, as well as the frameworks for better service discussed in this week's course materials.

The University of Southern California Libraries are among the oldest private academic research libraries in California. The main user groups include USC students, faculty, and staff. The core library functions—developing deep, relevant collections; providing efficient and comprehensive access tools; and delivering services that connect USC students, faculty, and staff with credible resources—are realized through 23 USC libraries and information centers, and the USC Digital Library. As California's oldest private research university, the USC has been very actively engaged in implementing innovative next-generation features across all of its library systems and services, including providing better information content, improving ways of information discovery, and streamlining better information delivery.

Better information content

Electronic resources. In addition to the traditional, print, library resources (4,979,848 volumes and 3,779,312 titles held), the USC Libraries provide access to 890,258 electronic books and 95,451 electronic journals.

Special collections. The library Department of Special Collections is another example of the library's effort to diversify the information content: it preserves and provides access, both onsite and online, to more than 200,000 rare book and manuscripts, more than 1000 archival collections, and more than 2 million historic photographs.

USC Digital Library. Of particular note, as the next-generation feature providing better information content, and making it available online, is the USC Digital Library (USCDL). Spanning a wide range of visual media, the USC Digital Library offers information in a wide range of formats, including digital images of drawings, illuminated manuscripts, maps, photographs, posters, prints, rare illustrated books, as well as audio and video recordings, data sets, and 'born digital' documents. "Content made available by the USCDL facilitates new and creative opportunities for scholarship and teaching in providing enhanced access to materials that would otherwise have limited or no public availability," the library points out (University of Southern California, 2015).

Better information discovery

The USC Libraries continue to enhance services to provide users' ability to discover the library resources.

Enriched content. USC library catalog provides additional content categories in bibliographic record's item display view, such as Brief Record, A Look Inside, Related Items, Browse the Shelf, and Full Record.
Federated Search - Serials Solutions Summon™. In 2009, USC launched the Serials Solutions Summon™ unified discovery service (https://libraries.usc.edu/). "This new web-scale discovery service provides instant access to the breadth of collections—digital and print, audio and video, single articles to entire e-journals, and every format in between—instantly through a single search box," Shoaf notes (2009). Later that year, USC released the new and improved Serials Solutions® 360 Search (Figure 1). "This new service combines the best of 360 Search and WebFeat® into the single most powerful federated search solution available, and represents over 10 years of experience in helping patrons find the right result," Shoaf explains (ibid.). In November 2011, Summon rolled out Direct Linking to full-text, bypassing the OpenURL link resolver.

Figure 1. USC Libraries Summon™ 360 Search

Faceted search. The USC Library catalog also provides the ability to perform faceted search. There are a variety of facets to limit and refine search results, similar to Amazon and database providers like ESBCOhost and ProQuest. Each time users turn a facet on or off, their search is repeated and they will see a new set of results. Most facets will reduce the number of search results. Activating the Add results beyond your library's collection option will always increase the number of results. For example, search for "automated library systems" within the library collection returned 1,705,952 results, adding results beyond the library increased the number up to 1,954,548.

Relevance filter. The results of federated search are ordered by relevance – a popular choice in federated search, "given the dominance of this approach in the major Internet search engines," according to Breeding (2007, p.8).

RSS feed for search results. USC library catalog offers the RSS 2.0 for current search feature allowing users to subscribe to a feed for their current search (Figure 2). “Offering search results as an RSS feed provides the ability to list relevant items within other portal environments, such as in a class page within the university’s courseware application,” Breeding explains (2007, p. 14). Once new resources relevant to the current search become available in the library, users get notified via RSS of the new addition to their search results feed.

Figure 2. RSS feed – Search results
Better information delivery

“In the expansive view of the next-generation library catalog, discovering items of interest forms only the first half of the process. The second half involves putting the actual content in front of the user through the online viewing of electronic content or services related to providing physical materials to the user,” Breeding maintains (2007, p. 8). USC Libraries next-generation catalog provides several features to ensure better delivery of information to the users.

Ebook Library. In addition to obtaining print books in the library locations, as well as paging books from one library location to another, more convenient location for pick-up, users can download E-books from Ebook Library (http://libguides.usc.edu/go.php?c=9232665) (EBL) to mobile devices, such as iPad, iPhone, etc. Some books are downloadable for 14 days at a time.

Electronic reserves allow users to access materials via their online USC accounts from any computer with internet access. Items on electronic reserve may be accessed from a library kiosk, computer lab, campus dormitory or off-campus remote location. Formats of electronic reserves range from PDFs, Word documents, and web links to full text journal articles, and personal uploads such as syllabi.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL). The Add results beyond your library’s collection option in the faceted search, mentioned above, allows users to see all content that is indexed on a given topic and submit an Interlibrary Loan (http://www.usc.edu/libraries/illiad) request for items to which USC does not have full text access. In March 2013, USC added an ILL button to Summon, resulting in a 25% increase in new ILL accounts thereafter (Levin-Clark, McDonald, & Price, 2014).

References


Thank you for your feedback, Elise! I think you are right - for the resources that are available locally in print, users get redirected to the USC Libraries' Homer Catalog, allowing to search physical holdings of the university libraries, and see their exact location, status, etc. Users can also use a Library Location filter, if they are interested in checking out what's available in a particular USC library location, e.g. in the USC Doheny Library:

Users can also use the Map It feature, allowing them to see the exact location of the item:
Otherwise, if the items are available online, users can access them directly from the USC Libraries Serials Solutions Summon™ unified discovery interface.

Hi Danielle! The Fairfax County Public Library seems to be running on the same ILS as the library of my workplace, at USC—SirsiDynix, so I was interested to check it out. As a public library, I believe the FCPL is particularly instrumental in offering not only the catalog next-generation features you have presented so well in your post, but also additional services to the users, introducing them to these new features and promoting the user information and digital literacy skills. The Getting Started with Library eBooks (http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/reading/gettingstartedwiththebooks.htm) section, for example, provides some very helpful information on using OverDrive, the library’s eBook service, step-by-step instructions for iOS, Kindle, Nook, and OverDrive Mobile App users, as well as the workshops hosted by the library for eBook users.

I find the “You might also like these...” item display page feature quite helpful, as well. I haven't been able to use it, perhaps because I am not a registered library user at the FCPL, whereas this feature might be available to the users once they log into their account—according to Breeding: “a Web site can offer additional features to users willing to register and sign in” (2010, p. 22). The USC library (https://libraries.usc.edu) has a similar feature on the search results page—“Related Topics,” and users don't have to sign in in order to take advantage of it. Recommendations and related materials is a next-generation catalog feature "envisioned as promoting reading and learning by making recommendations of additional related materials to patrons," Yang and Hofmann point out (2010, p. 143).

I, too, am intrigued as to how the catalog is making the "you might also like these" suggestions, especially because unlike private corporations (Amazon, etc.), libraries cannot
use the user navigation data, circulation data, or any other data related to the user privacy, as Dr. Dickey mentions on this discussion thread. Amazon, for example, is known to record a user’s searches and selections and then, during subsequent user visits to the site, suggests items based upon the previous choices. Breeding explains that these “recommendations could be based on other recent works by the same author, frequently circulated items within the same classification scheme, or other triggers that provide some indication that the user might find the item worthwhile” (2010, p. 22).

References


Thank you for the great feedback, Lisa! I do enjoy using all the features the USC Libraries search functionality has to offer. I think that with the main user audience in mind, that of a major research university, the prominence of the main search supported by the USC Libraries Serials Solutions Summon™ unified discovery interface, is very user friendly, indeed. I forgot to mention in the main post, the additional discovery features accessible from the library home page. They are featured immediately under the main search: Archives, Databases, Journals, and Research Guides. Through the Archives search, for example, users can explore 1,364 archival collections housed at USC.