

Smart Libraries Newsletter

News and Analysis in Library Technology Developments



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Smarter Libraries through Technology

OCLC Expands and Strengthens Its Services

By Marshall Breeding

In the last year or so, OCLC has made several moves to expand its position in its core areas of service: resource sharing and resource management.

Resource sharing has been one of OCLC's core services since its inception. Once its cooperative cataloging service was in operation in 1971, it introduced its interlibrary loan service in 1979. Through the subsequent four decades, OCLC has continually expanded its resource sharing products and services. In recent years, OCLC has consolidated its position in this sector. Its acquisition of Relais International in January 2017 brought the leading peer-to-peer direct consortial platforms into its fold. This category of product enables library consortia to save costs and gain efficiencies by lending materials among its members. OCLC's CBS (Central Bibliographic System) also provides a platform for resource sharing for national and regional library networks. The combination of WorldShare ILL, Relais D2D, and CBS give OCLC a globally dominant position in the realm of resource sharing.

OCLC has a less dominant position in the realm of resource management systems, including both integrated library systems

(ILS) and library services platforms. Its WorldShare Management Services (WMS) holds a secondary place to Alma from Ex Libris among the library services platforms oriented to academic libraries. Over the last two decades OCLC has also acquired a number of ILS products, primarily from European providers, such as LBS from PICA, Fretwell-Downing, Sisis Informations-systeme, Amlib, BOND, and most recently HKA (Huijsmans en Kuijpers Automatisering). Until recently, these products seemed to represent a fragmented slate of ILS products, each serving a specific country or region. WMS has proven to be a strong product for academic libraries that has attracted academic libraries from almost all global regions. Around 500 libraries have adopted the product to date. In the same way that WMS represents OCLC's strategic offering for academic and national libraries, the Wise platform acquired through HKA has emerged as its strategic offering for public libraries. Although OCLC made some tentative efforts to market WMS to public libraries, it has seen limited results. The combination of WMS and Wise give OCLC strong offerings for resource management across all types of libraries.

This issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter* features two recent initiatives from OCLC. We take a closer look at OCLC Wise and its launch to US public libraries as well as the new Syndeo suite of services that will enable WorldCat to provide customized capabilities for union catalogs and resource sharing according to the needs of national and regional networks.

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OCLC to Launch a New Product for US Public Libraries

OCLC has announced a new product specifically designed for public libraries that will be launched in the US in summer 2018. Branded OCLC Wise, this new platform centers on the library user and enables the library to deliver personalized services. This product builds on technology OCLC acquired from the Dutch company HKA in 2013, which has been enhanced and tailored to meet the expectations of public libraries in the US, increasingly seeking technologies that strengthen engagement with their communities.

Focus on Public Libraries

OCLC reports that it conducted extensive research into the needs of public libraries in the last year as it shaped the design of this new product. Its research revealed strong interest in a new type of platform that breaks away from the traditional ILSs that seem stagnant to a platform that is well suited to support libraries in their interest in delivering more engaging services. (The capabilities described for OCLC Wise bear many similarities to those described in the feature “Customer Relationship Management,” in *Smart Libraries Newsletter* 38, no. 2 [February 2018]: 1-3).

The launch of OCLC Wise reflects a separation of the organization’s product strategy between public and other types of libraries. WorldShare Management Services, with its strong bibliographic orientation, best serves academic, national, and special libraries. OCLC Wise has been designed specifically for public libraries. The increasingly divergent needs of these types of libraries cannot easily be fulfilled by a single product.

A Patron-Centered Design

This new offering addresses a much broader scope of services for public libraries than the traditional ILS. OCLC positions this product as a community engagement platform, layering a broad set of marketing, personalization, and analytics components on top of a core set of resource management and discovery features. Although it includes core services for print collections such as cataloging, circulation, and acquisitions, its design centers on customer relationship management and marketing services.

The conceptual design of OCLC Wise centers on the user profile rather than the bibliographic record. This approach enables the product to operate much like a customer

relationship management system to accumulate data able to drive personalized services. OCLC Wise will provide built-in analytics and data-driven outreach capabilities, such as the ability to deliver personalized messaging and to support marketing campaigns.

Comprehensive Library Portal

The library portal component of the product provides the functionality to stand in as the library’s complete web presence. The library controls the presentation, content, and services presented through the portal. One of the components enables the library to highlight featured materials in a carousel of cover images.

The patron interface of the platform provides features and services to replace the library’s entire website, with an integrated discovery component. This approach resembles the combination of BiblioCommons BiblioWeb and BiblioCore, though with Wise these components are deployed as part of a holistic platform rather than as integrations of third-party products.

Data-Driven Personalized Services

A fundamental quality of OCLC Wise builds on the increasing expectation for personalized services. The ability for the product to deliver on this expectation depends on enabling enriched data to be recorded on each patron profile. This data includes demographic information as well as any data generated through any interactions with the system such as items checked out or events attended. The accumulation of personally identifiable data is governed through a detailed set of privacy options that can be selected by the library according to their policies. By default, the platform will capture usage data with the ability for patrons to opt out.

Marketing and Engagement

The product includes a Marketing Workbench module that a library can use to design and execute personalized messages or marketing campaigns. Features include the ability to select groups of patrons based on demographic data or use patterns, to create and send messages, and to view reports related to patron use and marketing activities. Individualized messages can be triggered by events such as birthdays or borrowing card

expiration. More complex marketing campaigns can be based on a variety of other drivers.

Leverages User-Supplied Content

OCLC Wise provides a variety of dynamic user interactions for the items displayed through its discovery component. Each item display includes user-generated content, such as tags, ratings, reviews, lists, and services to share items on social media. Item displays for physical materials can include a mapping visualization indicating its shelf location. OCLC is developing interoperability with e-book lending platforms to fully integrate the discovery and viewing of digital materials.

Data-Driven Collection Management

The data-driven design of the product carries over to its collection management features. OCLC Wise has built-in tools to help the library develop and manage its collection in response to use patterns. The product relies on its internal, real-time data rather than having to rely on exports to a third-party service. This data enables libraries to selectively implement floating collections, to transfer items, or balance items among branches. Acquisition recommendations can be generated for any given branch or shelving location based on subject coverage. These automated processes are based on policies and thresholds set by the library, which can be updated as needed. These processes result in a customer-driven collection development strategy.

Bibliographic WorkFlows

OCLC Wise, unlike WorldShare Management Services, does not integrate directly with WorldCat. Each organization implementing the product will have its own bibliographic database. Cataloging workflows can be implemented according to the bibliographic services used by the library. If a library catalogs its materials through OCLC Cataloging, records can be automatically ingested into their local database. Libraries can also receive bibliographic records through shelf-ready services, such as from Baker & Taylor. When records are loaded into OCLC Wise from external sources, libraries can opt to have their holdings automatically set on WorldCat.

Deployed through a New Platform

OCLC Wise is delivered through a multi-tenant, cloud-based platform. Libraries implementing OCLC Wise share a single codebase, with some flexibility. OCLC also offers a hybrid

solution that enables libraries with more complex customizations to deploy an instance of the software in which they control the deployment of updates.

Unlike other new products developed by OCLC, this new product has not been developed on the WorldShare platform. Instead, OCLC Wise builds on the technology it acquired in 2013 from the Dutch company HKA, a dominant provider of automation systems in The Netherlands. HKA has steadily evolved its ILS for public libraries since its initial introduction in 1983. At the time of its acquisition by OCLC, its bicatWise ILS was used in around two-thirds of the public libraries in The Netherlands, which has since grown to about 75 percent. (See “OCLC Acquires the Dutch ILS Provider HKA,” *Smart Libraries Newsletter* 33, no. 11 [November 2013]: 2-5). OCLC Wise incorporates and extends the rich functionality developed by HKA over its 35-year history of providing library management systems to libraries. Its technology platform has been thoroughly re-engineered from its roots in client/server architectures into a modern web-native multi-tenant platform.

Availability

OCLC will launch OCLC Wise in the United States in the Summer of 2018. Earlier versions of the product are currently in use in The Netherlands and a new deployment is underway for a consortium in Belgium. OCLC anticipates that it will offer the product in other regions and countries in the future, following additional research and development regarding public library services and functional expectations in each locality.

Competitive Environment

OCLC will be launching this new product into the very challenging market of US public libraries. This sector can be considered as saturated, with all major libraries already using a full-featured ILS product, either open source or proprietary. The turnover of ILS products in recent years has been sluggish, possibly attributable to the lack of options well differentiated from their incumbent systems. While some libraries have made lateral moves from one major ILS to another, most continue to remain with their current systems.

Public libraries also have exhibited strong demand for additional services that can be used in conjunction with their ILS products to enhance their virtual presence and strengthen community engagement. Organizations such as BiblioCommons, ChiliFresh, LibraryThing, OrangeBoy, Third Chapter Partners, and CollectionHQ all aim to strike the cords of personalized and data-driven services. OCLC Wise, as a product

that holistically incorporates these characteristics, may spark interest.

US public libraries have also been slow to embrace products from unfamiliar providers. While HKA falls into this category, OCLC is one of the strongest brands in the library community. On the international scene, Axiell's new Quria platform for public libraries bears some similarities through

its digital-first design, though it has not yet been marketed in the US.

Although the market of US public libraries presents significant challenges for any new product, OCLC Wise enters at an opportune time. Public libraries may resonate with a new technology product that can amplify engagement with their communities.

OCLC Introduces Syndeo

OCLC has created a new suite of services and tools, branded as Syndeo, to meet the needs of national and regional union catalogs and resource sharing networks. This initiative adds an additional layer of tools and customizations to the global WorldCat platform. National libraries or regional networks often provide bibliographic services or union catalogs with specific authority files, record ingestion or distribution mechanisms, or other customized workflows. WorldCat, as a global resource, may not easily accommodate these customized requirements.

Syndeo represents an initiative to enable WorldCat to adopt to national and regional practices, providing tools, content components, and metadata management services as needed. Syndeo services are deployed through the WorldShare platform, which also supports other major applications, such as WorldShare Management Services.

The recent launch of the Violà national union catalog for Library and Archives Canada demonstrates the benefit of Syndeo services. LAC had selected OCLC's WorldCat as its new platform for its national catalog to replace the aging

Amicus that the library had developed internally. Through Syndeo services, Violà will be enhanced with the French-Canadian authority records in addition to the English headings already provided through the global WorldCat platform. In addition to providing the Violà catalog via WorldCat, LAC is implementing WorldShare Management Services to manage its internal collection and operations.

OCLC has longstanding involvement in working with national and regional libraries for union catalogs and inter-library loan networks. Many of these implementations have been accomplished using the CBS (Central Bibliographic System) platform the organization gained through its acquisition of PICA. As part of Syndeo, the latest generation of CBS can be installed, populated, and customized according to the needs of each organization, tightly connected to WorldCat. Syndeo enables WorldCat to provide highly-customized capabilities. This initiative also further strengthens OCLC's resource sharing capacity, consistent with other recent events, such as its acquisition of Relais International and the launch of the Tipasa interlibrary loan management application.

Bepress and SSRN

Bepress, formerly known as the Berkeley Electronic Press, offers Digital Commons, a commercial publishing platform used to support institutional repositories for universities and related organizations. In a move that explores synergies among the acquisitions of products related to the workflows surrounding scholarly publishing by Elsevier, bepress has announced a pilot project to integrate Digital Commons institutional repositories powered by bepress with its SSRN collaborative platform for sharing research papers.

Over 500 institutions have adopted Digital Commons. Many law schools use the platform to publish law reviews. Digital Commons competes among a field of open source repository platforms, such as DSpace, Fedora, Samvera, and Invenio. Institutional repositories have become an important aspect of the scholarly publishing ecosystem, providing a vehicle for institutions to deposit open access copies of preprints, working papers, or other materials.

Since its acquisition by Elsevier, bepress has continued

its operations as an independent, wholly owned subsidiary with its leadership and personnel intact. The transition has not been without controversy. Institutional repositories were established as an open access outlet for scholarly works in addition to, or in some cases, instead of the proprietary publishers. The insertion of bepress into Elsevier's ecosystem produced some cognitive tension between open access ideals and the perceptions of proprietary publishers. Elsevier has also embraced open access publishing, with increasing numbers of articles published based on up-front article processing charges rather than through paywalled subscriptions. The transition has not resulted in a decline in the number of organizations using Digital Commons, though there have been some defections. The Penn Libraries, for example, announced in October 2017 that they would seek an open source solution to power their ScholarlyCommons repository to replace bepress. (See the September 2017 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter* for more information on the acquisition of bepress by Elsevier).

SSRN, or the Social Science Research Network, an open access repository for scholars to share preprints of research papers among groups and colleagues with similar interests, was acquired by Elsevier in May 2016. Elsevier has also acquired other platforms related to scholarly communications workflows and analytics, such as the Mendeley reference manager, the Pure research management platform, NewsFlo service for tracking media coverage of research, and Plum Analytics for measuring the impact of institutional research.

Bepress launched a pilot project, announced in March

2018, to integrate content deposited on an institution's Digital Commons repository with SSRN. The pilot will explore multiple avenues for efficiently distributing articles across both platforms. Articles can be automatically transmitted to an institution's instance of Digital Commons from affiliated members of an SSRN community. This process can help a library accelerate the growth of content in its institutional repository. The integration will also aggregate the download statistics of an article when accessed via either platform. The project will also work toward the development of a submission tool that can simultaneously deposit an article on both Digital Commons and SSRN. Institutions participating with bepress in the project include two major academic law libraries—the Arthur W. Diamond Law Library at Columbia University and the Alexander Campbell King Law Library at the University of Georgia.

As these previously independent analytics and workflow platforms coalesce under the ownership of Elsevier, it is not unexpected that they will become increasingly interwoven. This pilot project can be seen as a relatively early example of the deeper integrations to expect among the products and services that have become part of Elsevier's content ecosystem. This move is consistent with the company positioning itself as a “global information analytics business” rather than as a scholarly publisher. Other organizations such as Clarivate Analytics and Digital Science have exhibited aspects of similar strategy and positioning. ProQuest, especially through its Ex Libris business, has increasingly moved into this sphere with its Esploro research management platform.

People in the News

Duncan Smith and **Roger Rohweder**, founders of the reader advisory service NoveList, have announced their retirement from their roles at EBSCO Information Services effective June 2018. The NoveList service was initially conceived in 1990 by librarian Duncan Smith who was involved with the continuing education services for librarians in North Carolina. Roger Rohweder and John Strickler led the development of NoveList, initially released in 1991. The product was acquired in 1994 by the Carl Corporation, which sold it to EBSCO Publishing in 1999. Duncan Smith has served as the General Manager and Product Manager for the NoveList division of EBSCO since its acquisition. Following his retirement, Smith

will continue involvement with EBSCO as its Chief Strategist, Public Libraries.

EBSCO has promoted **Danielle Borasky** to the level of Vice President, including leadership for NoveList. Borasky joined the NoveList team at EBSCO in 2011. Prior to her work for EBSCO, she was Associate Director for Information and Library Services at the University of North Carolina Institute on Aging.

[Sources include: Cassi Hall, “A Look Back with Duncan Smith,” NoveList – The Latest, March 10, 2017, <https://www.ebscohost.com/novelist-the-latest/blog-article/a-look-back-with-duncan-smith>.]

Yewno Discover Expands Multilingual Capabilities

Yewno announced a significant enhancement to its Yewno Discover product through the expansion of its content base to include German and Chinese documents in addition to the English materials previously ingested. Yewno's Discover product makes use of artificial intelligence, especially machine learning techniques, to extract concepts from texts and provide a visual interface to enable researchers to explore scholarly literature through the relationships of concepts that ultimately produce lists of articles or other documents of interest. The technology is based on concept extraction rather

than keyword indexing. Any given concept can be represented in multiple languages, providing the ability to explore and search across documents spanning these languages without translation or manually-encoded thesaurus vocabularies. Researchers can now enter queries in English, German, or Chinese to explore the entire corpus of material covered within the platform.

For more information on Yewno Discovery, see the April 2017 issue of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*.

Smart Libraries Q&A

Each issue, Marshall Breeding responds to questions submitted by readers. Have a question that you want answered? Email it to Samantha Imburgia, Associate Editor for ALA TechSource, at simburgia@ala.org.

With online content and subscriptions dominating our budgets in academic libraries, how can we ensure and encourage more usage of our electronic resources by our library users?

As noted, academic libraries make substantial investments in subscriptions to electronic resources. The proportions vary, but it is not unusual for a library associated with a major university to allocate more than 90 percent of its collection budget to subscriptions for electronic content products. The annual increases in subscription fees places even more pressure on collection budgets, often resulting in further diminishment in spending for print monographs or other types of materials.

Not all academic libraries devote such high percentages of funds to electronic resources. In some global regions, academic libraries continue to spend more on print resources. At a recent conference I attended in India, for example, many librarians mentioned that they spend less than half of their budgets on electronic resources and continue to purchase print books and journals.

Regardless of the relative proportions of investment, libraries expect a strong return in terms of use of these

electronic materials. Several techniques can be employed to strengthen usage levels.

Any electronic resource management strategy needs to be based on comprehensive and accurate use statistics and analytics. While it may not be possible to gather data under all the different use patterns, it is important to gain as much data as possible describing the use of electronic resources at the most granular level possible.

The most reliable measure of use of electronic resources comes from the publisher's content delivery platform. Only the publisher can reliably count the number of access requests for restricted content items made from researchers associated with any given subscribing institution. To gain access to restricted subscribed resources, researchers must authenticate themselves and their institutional affiliation passed to their content delivery platforms. Publishers are then able to provide statistics to each subscribing institution regarding the number of searches and document downloads, preferably using the formats and delivery mechanisms specified by Project COUNTER. The SUSHI protocol for harvesting COUNTER statistics can be implemented in an electronic resource management system to automate the otherwise tedious process of gathering statistics from all of the library's suppliers of electronic content.

COUNTER continually enhances the formats for reporting use statistics. Release 5 of the COUNTER Code of Practice has recently been issued (<https://www.projectcounter.org/>)

friendly-guide-release-5-librarians/). With each new release of the Code of Practice, publishers and libraries need to update their statistical platforms to accommodate changes. To facilitate the adoption of this new release, COUNTER issued a Request for Proposals for validation and harvesting tools in March 2018 that can then be shared with the broader publishing and library communities (see: <https://www.projectcounter.org/request-proposals-tools-support-counter-community/>).

Once the raw statistics have been collected from all the content providers, a library can begin producing reports and analysis that describe patterns of use. The analysis will reveal content packages that may not be as heavily used as expected or other scenarios that may warrant attention or action. A library often enters a contract with a publisher that gives access to a very large portfolio of materials at a set cost, rather than subscribing to titles individually. These “Big Deals” will naturally include some titles of high interest as well as others that may not attract high usage statistics. One of the analytical exercises that a library may want to periodically perform would assess whether the cost of the comprehensive package compares well to individual subscriptions of the high-interest titles. Other forms of analysis can determine the “cost per use” of any given title, which may be important information to inform renewal or cancellation decisions.

Armed with a complete assortment of usage data, reports, and analytical tools, an electronic resources librarian can begin taking measures to improve the performance of collection items. Strategies to improve the use of resources include adjusting the selections of content components to identify and eliminate those of lower interest, ensuring that the profile of disciplines covered aligns well with the research and teaching disciplines of the institution, and optimizing the library’s discovery environment.

Usage statistics and performance analytics can help inform the procurement decisions that ultimately determine the shape of the collection. Since library budget increases rarely keep up with annual increases in subscription fees, libraries must continually pare items of lesser interest from their collections. These cancellations also make room for new subscriptions to resources of stronger potential interest or those that have been specifically requested by researchers. Each cycle of cancellations, renewals, and new acquisitions can potentially result in strengthening the performance of the overall collection when informed by sufficient data of prior use and predictive analytics. Regardless of these efforts, however, use patterns across the collection will likely be uneven and require continuous adjustments.

These techniques may not apply as well to the gradually increasing realm of open access materials. These resources are available without restriction, and therefore it may not be possible to comprehensively track all use by members of a given institution. Usage statistics of these materials can at least be partially captured by other means, but the overall strategies for assessing collection performance will increasingly need to take into consideration the impact of open access resources.

The discovery services employed by the library can also make an impact on the use of electronic resources. It is important to note that only a portion of access to the electronic resources a library provides take place through the discovery tools it provides and controls. A large portion of uses will gain access to resources within the library’s body of subscriptions through global services, such as Google Scholar, or may connect directly with publisher content platforms, both of which bypass library-provided discovery tools. That said, the library’s discovery service stands as one of the important layers used to gain access to electronic resources. Any gaps in coverage in a discovery services central index can make an impact on usage levels. When statistical analysis reveals underperforming content, whether individual titles or across the broad holdings of a given publisher, the library should test the availability of these materials through its discovery service. If lapses are revealed, possible corrective measures would include validation that the items are activated in the discovery service or issues with the coverage in its central index. Some issues may need to be addressed by the provider of the discovery service. While coverage of resources in the major discovery products can be considered quite broad, gaps remain. Libraries might consider urging the developer of their discovery product and all of their content providers to follow the Recommended Practice of the Open Discovery Initiative (<http://www.niso.org/standards-committees/odi>) to foster more complete representation of resources through library-provided discovery services.

These techniques, based on leveraging data and sophisticated analytical and resource management tools represent one aspect of monitoring and optimizing the performance of a library’s collection of electronic resources. These technical approaches will not work in isolation of other aspects of a broader strategy. Conversations between librarians and researchers or instructors in their respective disciplines, outreach activities that heighten awareness of key resources, and other professional activities can also lead to improvements in collection usage patterns. As with almost any aspect of library work, positive results depend both on adequate technologies and on the expertise and efforts of library personnel.



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Marshall Breeding's expert coverage of the library automation industry.

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