Federated searching and academic libraries: One size fits all?

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Federated Searching

Limitations:
- Less refined searching
- Lowest common denominator for databases
- Not for the advanced PhD student/faculty member

Benefits:
- Works well for novice users
- Serves as introduction to useful databases
Find Databases has replaced the e-Reference Collection

The e-Reference Collection has migrated to a new system, Find Articles/Find Databases. Find Databases (this page) functions in a similar fashion to the e-Reference Collection, while Find Articles incorporates new functionality.

General Interest and Reference

- Almanacs, Dictionaries and Encyclopedias
- Biographies
- Directories
- Grants and Foundations
- Greatest Hits

Arts and Humanities

- Art and Architecture
- History
- Linguistics, Language and Literature

Science and Technology

Library Catalogs
Newspapers, Magazines and Current Events
Publishers Catalogs
Statistical Information

Music
Philosophy and Religion
Usability Tests

- Conducted fall semester 2002
- Student and faculty focus groups
Usage Log Analysis

Questions we had:

- *Who* is using the Find Databases/Find Articles system?
- *How* are they using the system?
- Will people only go to Find Articles?
Methodology

- ENCompasse Oracle usage log MS Access queries
- Apache log MS Access queries
- Perl script combining the two
- Exported to Excel for statistical analysis
Findings

- Top three databases in each module
- Percentage split of modules
- Limitations to analysis
- Implications for future usability tests
Conclusion

- More experienced users go to Find Databases
- Less experienced users go to Find Articles
- Neither module is used exclusively
- Determining how the system is used requires more qualitative analysis, such as usability testing.
What now?

- Refine stats collections and queries
- Set up methodology for library system to follow
- Suggest new usability tests
Questions?

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