

■ IMPLEMENTING OCLC WORLDCAT LOCAL AT YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

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Zusammenfassung: Die York St John Universität hat als erste akademische Bibliothek des Vereinigten Königreichs WorldCat Local, das Suchmaschineninterface von OCLC, implementiert. Dieser Beitrag behandelt die technische Implementierung sowie die Usability der Suchoberfläche, betrachtet die Gründe für die Einführung von WorldCat Local und die dabei aufgetretenen Probleme. Für vertiefende Informationen werden Links zum Projekt sowie die durch das JISC finanzierte ausführliche Fallstudie zur Implementierung und Usability des Produktes angeführt.

Schlagwörter: WorldCat Local, York St John Universität, Suchmaschinentechnologie, OCLC

Abstract: York St John University was the first academic library in the UK to implement the resource discovery interface, OCLC WorldCat Local. Here the technical implementation and usability of the interface is discussed, along with the reasons that led to the decision to implement WorldCat Local, the processes involved and some of the problems encountered. Links are provided to further information on the project which attracted JISC funding to produce an in depth case study of the implementation and the usability of the product.

Keywords: WorldCat Local, York St John University, Web-scale discovery, OCLC

York St John University is a small UK higher education institution of approximately 6.000 students. It currently shares its SirsiDynix Symphony system with the City of York Council library. Since the existing OPAC catalogue was somewhat old-fashioned and not very user friendly, and since also there was a desire to implement federated searching across the databases subscribed to by Library and Information Services, the decision was made in 2009 to look for a suitable resource discovery interface. It was hoped that by making the search process easier, user confidence would be increased and the user experience improved. Being a small university, capital funding is not readily available so despite having demonstrations of the main interfaces, e.g. AquaBrowser, Primo, Encore the cost of such interfaces was too high. Then along came OCLC WorldCat Local.

OCLC WorldCat Local is in use in over 600 installations in North America and is now being introduced to the UK and Europe, so York St John is an early adopter of the product and was in fact the first academic institution in the UK to implement it. It operates on an annual subscription basis with an implementation fee, and was therefore very affordable for us, since there was no capital outlay, and it was felt it could be budgeted for from recurrent funds. Library and Information Services has subscribed to OCLC databases including WorldCat over the years, and apart from cost, reasons for choosing OCLC WorldCat Local were the reputation of OCLC in the library world as a provider of cataloguing and database products and services. Indeed due to necessary budget cuts elsewhere in library services there was a danger that access to WorldCat as a database resource would be lost, were it not for the decision to implement WorldCat Local.

To implement WorldCat Local it is necessary to be cataloguing members of OCLC. Resources are uploaded to OCLC either individually or in batch so that they are searchable by WorldCat libraries worldwide as well as locally. Decisions therefore had to be made about changing the way cataloguing is done and records downloaded, as well as reviewing the impact of the implementation on other processes in Library and Information Services. The project began with the export of data to OCLC and re-import of OCLC numbers into the catalogue records. Since such a large number of records was involved this was done in a batch process. Forms have to be filled out for this and other processes with OCLC, a difficult task when one is not familiar with the product. Again for a small university with limited technical expertise, the reimport of data proved somewhat of a headache, since it required API knowledge that the systems team did not have. Luckily there was help at hand in the user community in North America and processes for reimporting the data were developed and implemented, using Perl scripts and downloaded open source MARC:PM and MARC:BATCH software (<http://marcpm.sourceforge.net/>).

Technical implementation involved setting up Z39.50 access to the underlying LMS, a task largely performed by OCLC but with input on the systems side from York St John. The web interface was set up by OCLC with input from York St John, and is managed through the service configuration that allows changes to be made to user interface options, search results, full-text open URL resolvers, place hold/request buttons, OPAC statuses, locations and circulation policies, licensed content and databases and ILS support and maintenance. Of these perhaps one of the most important and potentially difficult to manage, depending on your underlying LMS, is the OPAC statuses, locations and circulation policies. There are quarterly

updates to the configuration and different features can be set up dependent on the library requirements. A „sandbox“ or test web site can also be set up to test functionality before it is made live, although this has to be manually configured. A web search box can be configured for insertion into library web pages or the institutional VLE, in our case Moodle.



Abbildung 1: Library front page – <http://library.yorksj.ac.uk/index.php>

Becoming cataloguing members of OCLC also meant changes to acquisitions and cataloguing practices. Cataloguing is now carried out through the OCLC Connexion interface, available as both client and web-based software, with records being downloaded into the underlying system, as well as catalogued in WorldCat. This has meant some changes to process.

As part of our move to WorldCat and WorldCat Local we reviewed our link resolver arrangements. The link resolver we were using was in fact the WorldCat Local Link Manager although acquired through a third party. We negotiated a cheaper arrangement with OCLC and a new interface was designed and knowledge base transferred. This proved to be one of the easiest elements of the project and proceeded without any problems.

As the first UK academic library implementation we received a lot of support from OCLC. However, it was a learning experience for all involved, since the UK team had not had any previous experience on how a UK implementation might work, and practices were largely driven from the US.

The technical inexperience of the York St John team was also a factor, as was the quite basic problem of the time difference between the UK and US. Webinars and other online support tutorials were not offered at times that suited the UK market; the project overran the original schedule because of the lack of technical knowledge.

One issue identified by other users in usability tests is the display of multiple editions of books and known-item searching. FRBR-ised sets came up in previous usability testing for OCLC and end users would prefer the latest edition to be displayed. The edition that displayed was generally the one most widely held by WorldCat libraries. Some of these issues have been partially resolved in the latest software upgrade. Related to this was the display of e book and print copies of the same title. These were displaying separately whereas we preferred for them to display on the same record. This was achieved by including the OCLC number for both e-book and print on the same record, i.e. each record has 2 OCLC numbers. A knock-on effect however, was that when users attempted to place holds on a print record that also had an e-book OCLC number in it, they were presented with a blank screen. This was because the underlying LMS system could not decipher from the search string that was parsed through which item it should place the hold on. A solution was eventually found by contacting the wider community and the phrase „not electronic resource“ was added to the search string transmitted to the LMS. Further more detailed information on the implementation and problems encountered can be found on the project blog at <http://yocalcat.wordpress.com/oclc-worldcat-local/>.

Part way through the implementation the opportunity arose to bid for JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) funding to produce a case study of the implementation and the usability of the product, under the Information Environment strand (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/inf11/jisclms.aspx>). A usability study was conducted in the form of a single iteration evaluation, employing a variety of methods: personas, use cases, task analysis and interaction scenarios in the pre-testing phase; followed by heuristic evaluation in the form of focus groups and videoed think-aloud usability sessions. Data analysis was informed largely by the Critical Incident Technique. Again detailed information on the usability study can be found on the project blog at <http://yocalcat.wordpress.com/usability-study/> but the general feedback from users has been positive, particularly in contrast to the existing OPAC, a link to which is still available from the library web pages to provide access to other local data and to gain user feedback on WorldCat Local. Subject librarians have not

generally been as positive in their experience and feedback, particular in view of the problems with FRBR-isation and known item searching.

Future plans are to complete the federated search part of the implementation. In order for federated searching to be successful, databases need to be centrally indexed in WorldCat, although it does work with remotely indexed databases. Originally only one of our subscription databases was centrally indexed. The situation is improving all the time but due to other institutional requirements we have not been able to spend the time to fully implement this aspect of the project, nor have we made much progress with the lists that we intend to use for our reading lists. We hope to remedy this over the summer.

WorldCat Local is a tool that is developing continually. The knowledge base underlying the link resolver is being expanded so that links to online content are easier and quicker to achieve. Libraries can then decide if they want to use this expanded knowledge base to share their resources.

OCLC WorldCat Local is recommended as a product that sits well beside the other resource discovery interfaces currently on the market. Its subscription model with an implementation fee is attractive for those organisations that do not have large capital amounts to spend, but are able to commit some resource from their recurring budget. For those libraries that catalogue through WorldCat, or value WorldCat as a database, it is a logical next step if they also require a more user friendly catalogue interface than their existing one. From a user experience viewpoint it makes the searching process easier, and once federated searching and central indexing of databases is set up, will provide access to several million records. Usability tests carried out indicate that it has been well received by most users, particularly when compared with the previous catalogue interface.

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