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NEXT STEPS IN NEXT GENERATION CATALOGS. A REPORT ON PRESENTATIONS AND A DISCUSSION HOSTED BY THE LITA NEXT GENERATION CATALOG INTEREST GROUP. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, ANAHEIM, JULY 2008

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## **NEXT STEPS IN NEXT GENERATION CATALOGS.**

### **REPORT ON PRESENTATIONS AND A DISCUSSION HOSTED BY THE LITA NEXT GENERATION CATALOG INTEREST GROUP. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, ANAHEIM, JULY 2008.**

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Sharon Shafer, Chair-Elect of NGCIG, launched the discussion by giving historical context to the third ever meeting of the Next Generation Catalog Interest Group. The first meeting of NGCIG addressed commercial alternatives to the traditional library catalog, the second meeting focused on non-commercial, open source endeavors while the third meeting was dedicated to next steps in next-generation catalogs. The meeting held presentations and discussion about two examples of recent next generation catalog endeavors. Karen Schneider (Evangelist for Equinox's Evergreen support) shared what she does as an Evangelist by giving some real world, grounded information on the pluses and minuses of open source software as compared to proprietary software. Sara Davidson and Amy Kautzman (Members of the UC/OCLC Pilot Implementation Team) presented insights in to the benefits and challenges encountered while launching a next-generation consortial catalog (Melvyl) pilot using WCAT Local.

#### **Running a Free and Open Source Software ILS does Not Equate to a Tightrope Act with No Net**

Karen Schneider (Evangelist for Equinox's Evergreen support) began with brief insights in to open source software and the many ways that support models can work in that environment with some specific discussion about Evergreen. Open source software brings on FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt).

FUD examples:

- There are no support options for any of the open source products
- Open source software is for third world countries
- Open source software stagnates in development

Reality check:

- Open source has matured and there are a number of companies (E.g. Red Hat, Evergreen) out there who are profitably supporting it.

- There are major open source software implementations in large western libraries.
- Open source development process is transparent and fluid

### **Development Process**

Schneider compared the development processes of proprietary and open source software.

#### Proprietary

- Non disclosure agreements foster duplication of effort.
- Libraries are locked in to the vendor's development cycle.
- When a library system reaches a certain size, the idea of turnkey is a lie even with proprietary software.

#### Open Source

- Lends itself to greater economy of effort and rapid application development.
- Is highly customizable.
- Developers are closer to the users.
- Interoperability is achieved because vendors of interactive products can easily work with code that they can see.

Schneider also brought the example of working through the pain of “a famous upgrade that never happened” where staff and stakeholders were told “it’s coming we promise”, but it never came. In that particular case, development was taking place in silos and not in the open where questions could have been asked. Schneider stressed that we’ve seen open source software not get developed, but it was out in the open and it was recognized that it wasn’t happening thus there was opportunity for a developer to be found to work on it to move it to the next step.

### **Investment and Payoff**

Schneider pointed out with proprietary software, large sums of money are put up-front for licensing fees and hardware, but there are many ongoing maintenance and development costs. With open source software, the up-front cost is for hardware (excluding the case of hosted open source), but there are no licensing fees. Instead, the money is put toward development. Schneider found an interesting cost analysis buried in the book, “Cathedral and the Bizarre”, which points out that with software you’re not paying for software per se, you’re paying for the promise of support and development. Schneider insisted that is where libraries get shortchanged because that is where the revenue is so small for the vendor.

### **Pines - Evergreen - Equinox**

Schneider clarified the distinction between Pines, Evergreen and Equinox as a way of discussing how commercial support works in the open source world.

*Pines* - is the Georgia public library automation and lending network. It has 280 outlets encompassing small to large libraries in Georgia. In 2004, Georgia public library decided to upgrade its automation software. As this was a fairly large consortium with many demands, it was decided that no vendor was up to the task at the time. After running focus groups for a year, a team of developers was assembled. The membership included developers who were familiar with libraries and developers with no preconceived notions or limits of what good library software is about.

*Evergreen* - is the open source consortia quality software used in the Georgia Pines Network and other libraries as well. Schneider relayed that Evergreen can be downloaded and installed as a staff client on a demo server.

*Equinox* - is the support / development company for Evergreen which was formed by the original Evergreen developers. Equinox provides support for Evergreen software as well as providing hosting services and consulting services. It has just partnered with Solinet to also provide training. Even though Equinox provides services, Schneider pointed out that there are people who download Evergreen and support it themselves. Some come to Equinox for support of one module but not for others. Libraries can buy the amount of support that they need, can afford or want.

## **Next Generation Melvyl Pilot Using WCAT Local**

← Handouts: [Next Generation Melvyl Pilot \(PPT\)](#)

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Amy Kautzman and Sara Davidson (Members of the UC/OCLC Implementation Team) introduced the presentation as being organized in to five main categories:

- Vision
- Process of Implementations
- Challenges
- Next Steps

### **Vision**

Kautzman started the presentation by pointing out that most ALA talks are “what we done good”, but this one is on what “we’re trying to do good”.

On May 08, 2008 the Melvyl Next Generation Pilot using WCAT Local went live (six months later than what was originally planned). Melvyl

is the University of California (UC) union catalog that has been in existence since the mid 80s and the Melvyl Next Generation Pilot is the third derivation of it. Kautzman noted the following about Next Generation Melvyl:

- Bows to the individuality and branding of the individual campus via ten local views and one UC wide view.
- By implementing different views, the UC system can highlight what is local and then go out to deeper library holdings.

Davidson noted the following about Next Generation Melvyl:

- Pilot does not have every single item that is in the current union catalog.
- Campus affiliated libraries are not included in the pilot.

Davidson stressed the Implementation Team has to communicate the limitations of content in the pilot. She spoke about the vision and how the pilot came about. In 2005, the Bibliographic Services Task Force (BSTF) produced the report, "Rethinking Bibliographic Services for the University of California". This report, known as the "BSTF Report", got quite a bit of attention in library-land. There were four major recommendations in the BSTF report:

- Enhancing search and retrieval
- Re-architecting the OPAC
- Adopting new cataloging practices
- Supporting continuous improvement

### **Process of Implementations**

Davidson stated the implementation process started when the University Librarians charged both an (a) Executive Team and an (b) Implementation Team to implement the pilot.

#### **(a)EXECUTIVE TEAM**

Karen Butter, UCSF (Chair)

Laine Farley, CDL

Terry Ryan (Chair of Implementation Team, below), UCLA

Brian Schottlaender, UCSD

Gary Strong, UCLA

#### **(b)IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (Original members of BSTF group plus others)**

Terry Ryan, UCLA (Chair and member of Executive Team, above)

Sara Davidson, UCM

Luc Declerck, UCSD

Amy Kautzman, UCD

Patricia Martin, CDL

Ellen Meltzer, CDL

John Riemer, UCLA

Charlotte Rubens, UCB

Joan Starr, CDL

In addition, a number of task groups were formed which consisted of about four to six UC librarians per group. Finally, there were joint workgroups which consisted of a combination of UC individuals and OCLC individuals. Davidson quoted a University of Wisconsin Madison library employee,

*“Checking out the list of subcommittees alone for the UC Melvyl implementation can be overwhelming and provides a glimpse of the complexity”.*

In reality, Davidson noted there are at least another hundred people involved in the process. Davidson gave a brief overview of the project timeline:

- December 2005 - BSTF report.
- September 2007 - Planning blitz which consisted of a face to face meeting with key UC players and OCLC staff to set milestones and goals.
- Two teams charged.
- May 2008 - Launch.
- Future - Working on request integration and making a recommendation as to whether to go with WCAT Local as more than a pilot.

Kautzman spoke of the challenges encountered in the implementation process:

- Different Campus Visions of What the Catalog Should Be.
- Communication.
- Idea of Working in New Ways.
- Technical Hurdles.
- Data Issues.
- Managing Expectations.

*Different Campus Visions of What the Catalog Should Be* - Working in a large and complex environment meant that all the different campuses had different visions of what the catalog should be.

*Communication* - Davidson stressed that the Implementation Team contemplated “How do we keep our message?” when communicating such a large project to multiple campuses, hundreds of librarians and thousands of students, faculty and staff. To deal with this, a Communications Task Group was formed. This group helped draft documentation language and instruction so when the pilot went live everybody was working with the same script. Davidson mentioned a comment from one of the UC library staff:

*“Keep us informed. I hate attending library meetings like ALA where I hear about these new projects from outside people.”*

This illustrates that outside people were clearly going to the web pages and reading what the Implementation Team was putting up and not all of the UC librarians or staff had the time or ability to go to the website or in some cases comprehend all that's going on. To deal with this, the Communications Task Group came up with a launch packet:

- Search box instructions.
- Adaptable text for use with the faculty and different text for the students.
- FAQ (for users).
- FAQ (for librarians).
- Quick and dirty color comparison chart of old Melvyl vs. new Melvyl.

*Idea of Working in New Ways* - proved to be another challenge. One of the words the implementation team kept coming across was "nimble". Kautzman stated the UC is a large system so moving quickly is not "necessarily their default speed". The idea that the UC might be in a perpetual beta was also very new. The Implementation Team had to examine whether to use existing groups on campuses or when the team should assemble a new task group. Kautzman gave a specific example of when they were setting up the task groups. The question was how to get permissions for individuals to go on these task groups. The Implementation Team ended up getting overall permission to email individuals and their AUL or supervisor. Within the text of the email there was a statement indicating the Implementation Team would like the person to serve on a particular task group and it was requested that the recipient respond by a certain date. Kautzman said it still took us a number of months.

*Technical Hurdles* - As can be imagined, Kautzman shared that there were many tiny technical hurdles. After all, it was ten different campuses working with four different ILSs trying to merge them all in to WCAT Local. Kautzman also pointed out that it was the first time that OCLC had ever worked with ExLibris. Kautzman said that not all the vendors were thrilled about working with ExLibris. Kautzman explained that this is where WCAT Local is not quite open access, not quite that innovative or focused on sharing the code, but it was not business as usual. Kautzman explained when OCLC worked with the University of Washington to bring up the first WCAT Local pilot, they did screen scraping on their Triple I system. OCLC wanted to try using z39.50 to query the UC local catalogs. Issues encountered with z39.50 query of local ILSs:

- Required major time and effort for testing.
- Required z39.50 expertise from UC staff as well as OCLC staff.

- Systems offices had to be included more than originally planned on. There were a few months where it wasn't sure if some campuses would come up as fast as desired.

*Data Issues* - presented hurdles and they "still continue to haunt us."

- Reclamation. Partway through the project, some individuals were conveying information about reclamation and whether or not campuses should go ahead with reclamation projects; which are not always easy.
- WCAT Local matches on OCLC number. The Implementation Team discovered WCAT Local matches on OCLC number so an end user using the pilot clicks to obtain circulation information and then a z39.50 query launches to the local system and attempts to match on OCLC number. If the OCLC number is not in the local system or is not indexed, the end user can not get the circulation information. The UC campuses have varied in terms of how many of their local records have the OCLC number in them and if they are in the right location.
- Some vendors do not permit records be loaded to OCLC (or other systems). So, not all of the campus collections are currently exposed in WCAT Local.

*Managing Expectations* - Kautzman shared the ins and outs of this emotional issue. The Implementation Team had to keep reminding themselves not to add more to their wish list as this was only a pilot project. Kautzman compared the typical way of doing business which has an identified beginning and end to the WCAT Local implementation process; which is nothing like that. She indicated that at every point of the way they've been disseminating information about how the interface and functionality is not the way they hope it will look in three or six months time. During the pilot process, the team has had to decide, "sample sets are good enough", and "representative libraries are good enough", because it was a pilot. Kautzman shared how the team struggled with the question, "how much metadata is enough?" A great deal of local holdings record information is not in WCAT Local as of yet. UC is having discussions with OCLC about that; especially when it comes to special collections' added information. Kautzman relayed how the placement of the WCAT Local search box can influence the discussion of managing expectations. The search box for the pilot has been placed on the front page of pretty much every UC campus library. The team decided to place the search box in a highly visible location to see if the system is robust, but they were also aware that it could be the tool that most people will go to and it may not always be a complete search. The challenge is to get the end user to understand that this is a pilot and how does the team most effectively share that information?

Kautzman relayed the story of going live and the challenge it presented. As the deadline drew near, one campus was having technical difficulties and it was not easy diagnosing the problems. By then, the launch date may have been disseminated via campus newsletters and other means. The team had to ponder the question, "if one campus is not ready should we go live?" On principal, the team did not want to go live without one of the campuses. As a result, the release was delayed.

## **Future**

Kautzman indicated that for the most part WCAT Local does support the primary BSTF recommendations, but there is still a long ways to go. OCLC is constantly improving its WCAT Local interface. The following are categories for future efforts:

- Content
- Services
- Usability Studies
- Analysis of Metadata and Workflow
- Recommendation from the Pilot

## Content

*Abstracts and Indexes and reviews* - The access to content continues to evolve as article level metadata from H.W. Wilson and Modern Language Association (MLA) indexes are going to be added to the currently existing access to GPO Monthly Catalog, Department of Education's ERIC database, OCLC Article First database, NLM MEDLINE, and the British Library Inside serials. Kautzman indicated there are ongoing conversations with other vendors to get more citations in WCAT Local. Reviews from Amazon and Education Online will be added.

*Digital objects* - Another area of content growth is seen by the inclusion of digital objects in WCAT Local. Kautzman spoke of highlighting dark collections via inclusion of materials like the Archive of Popular American Music (a digitized sheet music collection from the UCLA Library). She spoke to the rich resources available from providing searchable Google books.

## Services

*Multilanguage support* - Kautzman explained there are search interfaces available for other languages. Work is being done so end users can set up the interface and search within the language of choice. The team is trying to make WCAT Local more robust for multilanguage support; especially for the non roman languages.

*WorldCat Identities* – Kautzman pointed out for many of the records, if the end user goes to a full record and scrolls down to click on the author link, they can see an information timeline of what the author has written and what other authors are related to them and tag clouds of subjects that relate to them. Kautzman believes the link to WorldCat Identities would benefit from more exposure in the record.

*Citation and exporting* – Endnote and Refworks are built in to the interface, but there are some limitations. Currently, the end user can only export from one record at a time to the citation manager instead of a list. The team is sharing their critiques about that with OCLC. Exporting records and emailing them is somewhat awkward at this point. With that in mind, Kautzman pointed out that WCAT Local has come a long way compared to when it wasn't possible to even mark items. Request integration will happen sometime this fall. Users are currently requesting through the existing UC-elinks window. The interface and functionality has changed so much within the last year as end users can now:

- Build sharable lists.
- Write reviews.
- Share record (s) to their facebook or take them in their del.icio.us account.
- Employ faceted navigation to navigate through large sets of results.

### Usability Studies

Kautzman shared that initial results from usability tests indicate:

- Faculty love seeing materials beyond the UC.
- When users were asked what they liked about the catalog, they responded that they liked the facets and thought they were useful, but on initial observation, users didn't always use the facets or see them.
- There has been one set of usability testing and the final report has not been completed. Another set of usability testing is planned for fall.

### Analysis of Metadata and Workflow

Kautzman explained the evolution of public discussion surrounding the BSTF report and how it is related to the WCAT Local project. She stated when the Implementation Team first began the public discussion, there was a little bit of an outcry from some of the catalogers and technical services folks who assumed the direction that the report was pushing for was to deemphasize if not wholeheartedly destroy cataloging. Kautzman pointed out that the BSTF report discussions were in addition to the Calhoun report and

other conversations that were going on. Kautzman made the point that WCAT Local has shown how none of this can happen without the metadata. She stated that these catalogs can not be built if the metadata is not harnessed and repurposed in original ways. She stated this catalog is strong only because of the cataloging. It is hoped this will maximize the efficiencies by having everybody just go through with one record so staff don't have to repeat the same work over and over again. Their expertise will be focused on the collections that haven't been uncovered.

#### Recommendation from the Pilot

The Implementation Team will be making a recommendation to the Executive Team in terms of whether or not to adopt Next Generation Melvyl as the future UC consortia catalog. Kautzman indicated if that recommendation does go forward, old Melvyl is still going to be around for a while.

## **QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION**

### **Do You Own This Book?**

There was an interesting discussion about the response time and number of clicks required to ascertain a book's status in the Melvyl Next Generation Catalog. It was pointed out that Melvyl is a consortial access point so it is never going to be possible to show quickly what all ten campuses have on the front screen unless it is one title at a time. Local OPACs are still going to be around and for some users that may be the best answer. Members of the audience pointed to Evergreen's same main page availability as well as Endeca's. Currently, the circulation information for Melvyl Next Generation is obtained via querying, but Kautzman indicated that OCLC is looking at other options for how it gets the circulation information.

### **Interlibrary Loan**

There were questions from the audience if there are any UC plans for mitigating possible increase in interlibrary loan activities due to WCAT Local implementation. John Riemer (Member of the UC/OCLC Implementation Team) indicated that it was discussed at the UCLA campus and they are continuing to explore the topic. He explained that the exponential growth in interlibrary loan experienced by University of Washington upon launching WCAT Local was that the campus itself wanted to borrow more heavily from the rest of the consortia. It wasn't the outside coming in to borrow more from the University of Washington.

### **Link to Digitized Books Even if UC Does Not Own A Print Copy?**

Riemer explained how the Google API has been implemented so that if a print book happens to exist in Google in mass digitized form then it will become apparent to the WCAT Local user and that will be true whether it is in the UC grouping of consortial institutions or other WCAT libraries.

### **Missing Content**

An audience member made the point that a lot of the materials that libraries have do not have the ability to be loaded in to OCLC . He asked if the implementation team had discussions with OCLC in order to provide some way to get that information in to WCAT Local. Riemer indicated a number of libraries have mentioned to OCLC sets of records where there are strings attached. To date, OCLC has successfully negotiated 32 sets of records with the vendors and there are 21 more in the pipeline that are in negotiation. OCLC is going to post the list of the 32 negotiated sets. Riemer explained that “getting permission” means because OCLC did the asking, anybody else who also has that set is already covered. An audience member pointed out that in addition to records from vendors there are also lots of records in local systems that are not in OCLC and they wanted to know if the UC is also in that situation. Riemer responded in the affirmative and explained how there are a lot of records out there that were from former RLG files. Riemer explained that the UC had in process records that it did not feel like cataloging for some reason on OCLC and they had only been cataloged in house for various reasons. Riemer pointed out that the UC is able to pick up those records in batches and give to OCLC and have them batch load and then test results are run to assess matches. Riemer explained that it is a good idea to keep the consortial or local ILS around as a back up tool because WCAT Local can be used for most things while having the local system as a back up for the missing records until they are all cleaned up. An audience member pointed out that with WCAT Local a lot of local information disappears and wondered if there was a plan in place for the UCs to move local information in to the local holdings records in order to appear in WCAT Local. Riemer explained that local holdings records don't interact with WCAT Local product right now, but there are plans to work on that by the beginning of next year. Riemer explained that the Local Data Task Force discovered that the most important local information is the local URL and not the one in the master record. He stated that some of the 590 notes are now being queried in WCAT Local and those display, but the team is hoping that local holding records could be a solution for specific location information summary holdings so that it is pre-harvested and quicker to display and the only querying to the local system might just be to the local circulation system.

## Size and Open Source

There was an interesting revelation from the audience that many large consortia were working with open source catalogs and or discovery layer tools while some were working with a combination of open source and proprietary systems. Various members from the audience volunteered the following:

- Eleven State University Libraries of Florida are on the Endeca system.
- University of Toronto will also be Endeca. Not only are they loading all their holdings of all their 800 satellite campuses, but also article level holdings. University of Toronto has talked to all the different vendors like Ebsco and Wilson about putting article level material in. “Endeca is really fantastic if you have a huge amount of records and schools and materials. It’s worked really well for us.”
- Midpals in Minnesota is using VuFind to load records from all 63 of their libraries and it seems to be scaling just fine. “Native retrieval is different; we’re only loading records from our consortium”. In addition, Midpals is going to assist some of their libraries who are willing to pay the fees to use WCAT Local.

A brief Interest Group business meeting followed the discussion.