Library Portal & Linking Technology:
An Alternative New Way of Delivering Information

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OVERVIEW

→ Digital Library and single search/linking systems

→ Definitions and standards

→ Functionality of single search & linking products

→ Use / User behaviour

→ Benefits

→ Disadvantages

→ Conclusions
DIGITAL LIBRARY AND SINGLE SEARCH/LINKING SYSTEMS

Digital library
→ provides a wide range of library services electronically to users anywhere
→ more than digital collections/repositories
→ includes support & training
→ a virtual library service

Single search/linking solutions
→ enable integration across digital collections
→ cut through complexity and chaos of multiple publisher interfaces, variable search strategies & record structures, output formats, etc.
→ provide deep linking to full-text & other services
→ offer customisation
DIGITAL LIBRARY

→ “A system providing the services of a library in digital form.” (Johnston, Gregory et al, 2000)

Portals  (Single search interface & linking solutions)

→ “…virtual libraries, with a range of services equal to those currently provided in the library.”

→ “A portal combines powerful searching with the diverse resources and services that patrons find when they use a library. Portals should provide library experience of that quality without requiring people to come to the library.” (Jackson, 2002)
DIGITAL LIBRARY AT UTS

Integrated content provision
→ major emphasis on digital resources
→ integrated delivery of databases, e-journals, e-books & print
→ SuperSearch (MetaLib/SFX) crossfile searching & linking
→ E-reserve and course materials, linked to UTSONline (Blackboard)
→ developing UTSePress
→ ADT participant
DIGITAL LIBRARY AT UTS, contd.

Support & training
→ online live reference (ALIVE); 24x7; collaboration
→ online tutorials
→ user guides, online help, FAQs
→ online generic information skills program
→ learning commons

Platform of value-added services - under development
STANDARDS

→ MARC
→ Z39.50
→ Open URL
→ HTML
→ XML

Significance

→ results retrieval
→ retrieval variations (native vs generic interface)
→ finding full text vs not finding full text
→ number of clicks needed to reach full text
FUNCTIONALITY OF PORTAL & LINKING PRODUCTS

→ subject gateways
→ simultaneous searching - integrated searching across multiple databases
→ merging / deduping results
→ quick searching across a few specific databases
→ links to full-text
→ links to library services, e.g. online realtime reference, interlibrary loans, web search engines, etc.
→ e-journals list, A-Z
→ customisation, e.g. e-shelf, my resources, my e-journals
→ alerts
→ pushing new resources
→ integration with ILS
USE / USER BEHAVIOUR

SuperSearch launched Dec 2001

Uptake
→ ~40% of UTS community used it by Jan 2003
→ ~50% of UTS community using it by Aug 2003

Popularity (survey data, Sep. 2002)
→ ~60% off-campus users
→ mostly u/grads & coursework p/grads
→ faculties of Business & Social Sciences
→ customisable features well-used (My Resources, e-shelves)
USE / USER BEHAVIOUR, contd.

‘Hot’ databases

Usage of UTS' Fulltext Databases From SuperSearch
Semester 1-2, 2002

Jan to June 2002

July to Dec 2002
USE / USER BEHAVIOUR, contd.

‘Hot’ e-serials
→ NY Times
→ BRW Australia
→ Bulletin With Newsweek
→ Economist
→ HBR
→ Wall Street Journal
USER / USER BEHAVIOUR, contd.
Portal search capability vs native interface search capability

Portal (generic) interface:
→ Non-specialised functionality
→ Fewer results via less sophisticated search functionality; no thesauri
→ General users

Native interface:
→ Specialised functionality expected
→ Maximum results via Advanced searching & thesauri
→ Expert users
BENEFITS

→ your valuable e-collections will be used more
→ more efficient resource discovery paths
→ consistency – search strategies, record structures, results displays
→ popular with users, particularly off-campus users
→ library staff develop new skills
→ usage statistics support informed decision-making for better e-collection management
DISADVANTAGES

→ specialised functionality of native interfaces not available
→ products are in development
→ need for different approaches to training, e.g. focussed sessions, online tutorials, etc.
→ there’s work involved!
→ discover your inadequate skillbase!
CONCLUSIONS

Questions / Choices

→ ‘Better the devil you know’?
  → keep maintaining your A-Z lists of databases and e-journals?
  → keep expecting your users to navigate the minefield of e-resources?

→ Are portal & linking systems still too underdeveloped?

→ Which product(s) to buy? What’s best for your users?

→ ‘Get with the strength’ (consortia), or ‘go it alone’ (bleeding edge)?

→ What is really involved in implementing portal & linking technology, and is it worth the effort?
Any questions for me?

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