

David Seaman and Cyndy Pawlek on putting
Summon™ unified discovery service to work in
Dartmouth College Library...

FAST ACCESS THROUGH A SINGLE SEARCH BOX



Dartmouth College Library brings easy discovery to the full scope of its collections

The library at Dartmouth College is harnessing a bold and innovative technology to address one of its most pressing problems: how to bring order to a confusing array of services, indices, destination sites, and catalogs that users must navigate to access the library's rich and growing print and electronic collections.

“Users express confusion at this disjointed discovery layer, and too often they default back to Google™, Wikipedia, YouTube, and Amazon.com®, often missing relevant scholarly items not represented there,” says David Seaman, the college’s Associate Librarian for Information Management.

Indeed, it’s a problem shared by libraries around the world. Studies verify that as users grow accustomed to the intuitive, nearly effortless navigation of general Web surfing, they’re more likely to settle for its less impressive content. As a result, the library – with its multiple starting points on page after page of resources – is falling prey to slow, steady disintermediation from the research process. But the library is taking action. It’s one of growing number of libraries to test the **Summon** unified discovery service, a ground-breaker from Serials Solutions.

“Serials Solutions’ ambitions with the **Summon** service are no less than to gather up into a central hosted database all the library content and metadata our users have access to – our catalog records; metadata and full-text files harvested from the many vendors and publishers from whom we purchase information; bibliographic databases; indices and abstracts; open access content; and locally-created digital collections,” says Seaman. “The **Summon** service indexes and enhances this mass of data to create a single, convenient, compelling, high-yielding discovery system for scholarly articles, newspaper entries, books, and the metadata that leads to the rest of our holdings.”

To put it simply, the **Summon** service does for libraries what Google does for the Web. Through a single search box (branded with the library’s name and logo), users have access to the breadth of the library in all its formats – print and electronic, granular to the article level.

“This new discovery platform has Google-like convenience and speed as a goal, and employs Google-like practices to achieve it: all the data and metadata that it searches are gathered up onto a central server where the resulting mass is de-duplicated, regularized, indexed, and delivered back to the user,” says Cyndy Pawlek, Deputy Librarian of the College.

“And as with Google, once a resource is found, the **Summon** service takes the user to that item wherever it resides – it links back to the local library catalog entry for a printed book, for example, or uses an OpenURL resolver to take the user directly to a journal article on a publisher’s Web site.”

Building the central index of data behind the **Summon** service is accomplished through partnerships with content providers of all types – key among them are aggregators ProQuest and Gale together with Springer, SAGE, Taylor & Francis and a host of leading academic publishers – about 4800 publishers in all. The library at Dartmouth includes about 117 million of the nearly half a billion records currently indexed by the **Summon** service.

“The **Summon** service shows real promise as a single starting point for scholarly inquiry and discovery, significantly enhancing the ease with which our faculty, students, and staff can discover and use the print and electronic collections we buy, build, and lease,” says Seaman. “Certainly, the need that the **Summon™** service addresses head-on is a significant one for us in college and university libraries.”

Visit the Dartmouth College Library at <http://library.dartmouth.edu/>.

Learn more about the **Summon** unified discovery service at ALA by visiting Serials Solutions booth #3026. Or visit www.serialssolutions.com/summon. Serials Solutions is a ProQuest company.

Hear more from early library partners and adopters of Summon unified discovery service in the free Webcast series, “Returning the Researcher to the Library,” hosted by Serials Solutions and *Library Journal*. Parts 1 and 2 of the series are archived at www.libraryjournal.com/nextgenuser. Parts 3 and 4 will be Webcast in Fall 2009.



Summon™
Unified Discovery Service

One search box... your library discovered.