

Anne Prestamo on putting Summon™ unified discovery service to work in the Oklahoma State University Library...

TRANSFORMING THE LIBRARY TO EMBRACE THE USER



Oklahoma State University Library removes barriers to collections and e-resources

“Simplicity is complexity done well,” said Jeff Jarvis in his widely-read book *What Would Google Do*. It’s a notion embraced by the Oklahoma State University Library in its continuing efforts to transform the way the library interfaces with its users. Early adopters of next-generation catalog AquaBrowser®, the library is now taking that effort a step further, adding an innovative technology that allows the breadth of the library’s resources to be as easily searched as Google searches the open Web.

Anne Prestamo, Associate Dean for Collection and Technology Services, is leading the transformation effort. She feels libraries have spent too much time trying to teach users “rules” for finding information and too little time finding solutions to user frustrations. In reality, librarians see a very small proportion of their users in face-to-face settings.

She spent a year analyzing searches on the library’s traditional OPAC. After backing out staff searches, she found the results “incredibly informative and downright frightening,” she says. An extraordinary percentage of searches by lay-users yielded no or very few results.

The culprits: library systems that are complex and users that are often overwhelmed. She likes to quote Free Range Librarian blogger Karen Schneider when discussing how the library interfaces with students and faculty. “The user isn’t broken,” paraphrases Prestamo. “Your system is broken until it’s proven otherwise. Information flows down the path of least resistance. If you block a tool the users want, users will go elsewhere to find it.”

Subscribing to that notion brought Prestamo face-to-face with the **Summon** unified discovery service, a ground-breaking technology from Serials Solutions. The library was the first to sign on as a beta site for the service, which allows libraries to align their broad array of collections and resources behind a simple, obvious starting place – a searchbox. It provides a view of the library that’s consistent with user experiences with Amazon or Wikipedia, and just as compelling.

Later this month, when the **Summon** service launches commercially, students and faculty at Oklahoma State U will access the breadth of the library from one starting point. The library branded searchbox will seamlessly bring to the surface for the user the expanse of library materials relevant to the search – books, videos, e-content, local digital collections at the article level – whatever the format. “We see the ground-breaking scale of the **Summon** initiative as a unique opportunity

to streamline the discovery-to-delivery process for our users. As a result, it allows us to maximize the return on our substantial investment in full-text content and authoritative databases,” says Prestamo.

The **Summon** service works by pre-indexing content, allowing instant and true relevancy-ranked results. Serials Solutions has partnered with content providers of all types who provide direct feeds. Key among them are ProQuest and Gale, aggregators representing about 4,000 publishers. Others include Springer, Taylor & Francis, SAGE and a host of leading academic publishers – about 100 in all. Seeing an opportunity to uncover their content at the right time with the right user, publishers are signing on with the **Summon** service continuously. In fact, Serials Solutions has indexed almost half a billion records already.

Prestamo sees the service as a win-win: users can follow their own familiar search path, but use it to access high-quality, authoritative resources. It conquers a fundamental barrier that keeps users from getting the most from their library experience and keeps libraries from worrying that Google is “winning.”

Visit the Oklahoma State University Library at www.library.okstate.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.