"We ensure discoverability of our own collections, and those of libraries worldwide."

Statement of Need

As our collections and research needs continue their long course of change, we need to think strategically about how to meet the discovery requirements of our users, whether they are developing a bibliography for a term paper, researching local history, preparing for a semester abroad, or any other of the broadening range of requests we hear each day from faculty, students, staff, and guests.

Summary of Plan

In preparing our report, we have considered both current needs, as well as the ways we will want to improve library resource discoverability as new opportunities and challenges arise over the next 3-5 years. While the only thing that will remain constant is change, we seek to address the future by putting groups and processes in place that will ensure we are ready to act when the time is right. We have also included action items that we believe can and should be addressed now.

Impact on Community

Improving discovery will have a very positive impact on our user communities, both near and far. By ensuring that our local collections are well-cataloged and searchable, we expose them not only to St. Olaf and Carleton researchers, but to the entire world. For our St. Olaf patrons, we seek to implement better processes for finding known items (whether we own them as part of our collections or not) and to enhance their research process when investigating ideas and concepts.

Objectives and Action Items

Objectives:

- Both in the programs we use for search/display and in our local cataloging/metadata practices, we need to look toward solutions that allow us the greatest possible flexibility for searching and retrieving our data, regardless of the changes that will occur as standards and technologies evolve. By intentionally addressing these issues now, we will ensure that the work already done on our data will stay useful and relevant.

- High quality metadata, particularly for unique and specialized collections, should be our primary focus in cataloging. This includes archival and rare materials (print and digital) as well as collections of particular use to our community and those with specialized requirements for metadata and discovery. For example, resources in the Music Library, Kierkegaard Library, Rolvaag Special Collections, NAHA, Archives, institutional repositories (CONTENTdm, future system…)
- As much as possible, we should rely on cooperative resources (like OCLC) for data about widely available items, and use automated procedures when local processing is required. When practical, we should be proactive in implementing new features within existing standards when they will benefit our users.
- Systems that can tap into the intellectually rich authority metadata that we already have will be increasingly valuable as linked data and RDF (Resource Description Framework) come to the fore. We should continue to ensure our records have authoritative author, title, and subject data, and explore ways to more effectively expose that data in our internal and external search mechanisms.
- We should advocate at the national/vendor level when there are issues with non-local metadata. It will be impossible going forward to do cleanup of individual records.
- We should continue to look for ways to provide our users with the information they need, at the point of their need. Knowing that users value convenience, we should identify ways to get into the regular work flows of our patrons wherever possible (for example, Moodle, Google Scholar, WorldCat).
- There is still a strong need for "known-item" discovery. We should optimize our software and metadata for retrieving resources by title and article titles, both through the catalog and openURL searches.

Action Items:

- The new Library Management System (LMS) will have a huge impact on our ability to achieve the objectives above. We should communicate these guiding principles to the task force that will select the system, and advocate for implementing the system in ways that will enhance discovery for our patrons. It is too soon to tell if a new discovery interface will evolve out of that process, but if it does this will be particularly critical.
- Form two teams (or if possible, revamp or reconfigure existing teams):
  - Small group (perhaps in conjunction with Carleton through CWG) to monitor developments and make recommendations about our transition to new metadata formats, linked data, etc.
  - Team that will be responsible for user feedback on discovery (OR, we could broaden this group to be responsible for all user feedback on space, services, etc.) We otherwise may tend to do this in a disjointed way, or not at all as we get busy with other things. But meeting our users where they need us is increasingly important, and we won't know how to do that without observing them.
- Contract with PALS to enhance known item searching (when a specific title, author, etc. is known) in VuFind as soon as they hire a new developer.

Team Membership

Sarah Johnston (chair)
Kathy Blough
Karen Engler
Kim Fradgley
Ken Johnson
Cynthia Lund
Jeff Sauve

Budget

PALS Developer : 10 Hours of Work on Updating Indexing and Relevancy ranking algorithms in VuFind $2000

List of activities and readings used as background material for the report

Our group met roughly every other week:

November 8th
November 22nd
December 6th
December 13th
January 10th
January 24th
February 21st
March 7th
March 21st
April 4th
May 2nd

We also met or talked with:

Cataloging Working Group
Special Collections & Digitization staff
Student Senate subcommittee
Christina Sinkler-Miller
Virtual Experience Team

We found the following readings particularly helpful:

"Thirteen Ways of Looking at Libraries, Discovery, and the Catalog: Scale, Workflow, Attention" (in particular the section "Four Sources on Metadata about Things")
http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/thirteen-ways-looking-libraries-discovery-and-catalog-scale-workflow-attention

"Moving Special Collections forward in an age of Discovery"
http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/mm09fall-carter.pdf

Library discovery: past, present and some futures by Lorcan Dempsey, librarian at OCLC on Nov 21, 2013
http://www.slideshare.net/lisld/library-discovery-past-present-and-some-futures

4 Things about discovery by Lorcan Dempsey librarian at OCLC on Jun 29, 2013
http://www.slideshare.net/lisld/4-things-about-discovery

Kroeger, A. (2013). The road to BIBFRAME: The evolution of the idea of bibliographic transition into a post-MARC future.Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, 51(8), 873-890. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2013.823584

Bacon, V., & Boyer, G. (2013). Beyond discovery tools: The evolution of discovery at ECU libraries. Against the Grain, 25(4), 28-28, 30, 31. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1512200731?accountid=351