**Introduction**

I'm going to begin by sharing my belief that the local OPAC as we know it does not have a long future in most academic libraries and that any work the OPAC Task Force does now to try to resuscitate our web opac is a temporary solution. I'm not saying we shouldn't do everything we can, as quickly as we can, to improve our local OPAC, but I'm saying that it is likely temporary.

The catalog as an inventory management tool used for managing circulation functions will likely remain, but I'm convinced that before long there will either be one big catalog or there will be Google and/or other Internet search engines with links to our holdings. What I'll be talking about in the next 15 minutes is the one big catalog option provided by OCLC, known as worldcat.org and WorldCat Local.

**[slide 2]**

Hopefully I'll have some information that is new to you all today. I recognize that most if not all of you have seen the UW implementation of WorldCat Local and probably have used it more than I have, so I won't talk too much about what it is. I'll talk about what makes it different from our local OPAC, what it does well and not so well and finally discuss some concerns with the one big catalog, single silo approach. It would also be interesting to talk about the affect of this on the work we all do but I don't think we'll have time for that today.

**What Is WorldCat Local? [slide 3]**

As its name implies, WorldCat Local is a localized version of OCLC's Worldcat.org. It looks the same because it is, for all intents and purposes, the same. Both search the OCLC WorldCat union catalog of bibliographic records and article citations from selected OCLC FirstSearch citation databases including ERIC, Medline, GPO and ArticleFirst that are now included within WorldCat. There can be no doubt that they are working with other index and abstract services and database vendors to acquire additional article metadata. Both offer a single search box, relevancy ranked results, and a FRBRized display by which versions and editions of works are brought together. Both offer faceted browsing, cover images and reviews. I'll get into more specific features of the product in a few minutes.

WorldCat Local works with local circulation systems (OPAC), consortial resource sharing and other resource sharing options, and local link resolution systems to access article full text.

All of the results are displayed in a single result list and ranked by relevancy according to three tiers. It displays results that match the home library's holdings most prominently, then holdings from libraries within the library's consortia and finally the holdings of

other libraries. If we were to use WorldCat Local, first among the results will be those resources found at OSU Libraries, followed by resources available from Summit libraries, followed by resources from other holding libraries according to geographic distance each ranked by relevancy within those tiers but presented to the user as a single result list.

If you haven't already had an opportunity to look at it, UW of course features their pilot of the product prominently on their home page and its also directly available at this url -

**How Is It Better? [slide 4]**

In the WorldCat Local scenario, the local OPAC is entirely replaced as a search tool.

Why would we want to replace our terrific local OPAC with WorldCat Local?

- Because it does search and retrieval better, with better search result algorithms with FRBRized results in which different editions and versions of works are pulled together.
- Nice, clean interface that is easy to use and easy to navigate
- It includes book cover art.
- It includes reviews.
- Because its back end is xml and it is a web service, it can easily incorporate reviews and other bibliographic and related data from compliant sources such as Amazon.com.
- III is enabling many of these features or similar features with its Encore product and it will be interesting to see how well that works.

- It includes other libraries' holdings in the search results automatically.

- It searches for articles in addition to books without requiring the agonizingly slow searches that you get with federated searching. The metadata can all be searched and retrieved quickly because all of it is indexed together in a single silo, which of course is also a goal of LibraryFind – to harvest and index metadata from multiple sources locally for better and more efficient search and retrieval.

Many of our users, we've discovered in usability testing sessions and focus groups, already use google to find relevant materials and then do a title search in our library catalog to find out whether or not we own the item that is sought. So, already for many of our patrons, because OPACs work so poorly as a search and discovery mechanism, they've already lost that search and discovery role to tools that do a better job of it like Google Scholar or plain old Google. They are searching those resources quickly to locate relevant materials and then, if they aren't freely available directly, searching the catalog to see whether the library owns the item. Even that use of the catalog is going away as WorldCat will increasingly be able to syndicate library metadata including library

holdings information so that it is available to users wherever they are searching – in Google, Microsoft Live, Yahoo, and Amazon.

III, as we know, is a black box. If we want to make our cataloged resources available outside of the III system, we can engage in incredibly time consuming exports and buy a "scheduler" for 20 K that allows us to schedule regular harvests of our metadata for use outside the system. At some point in the future we might be able to buy a separate server that enables us to output data in XML. Or, we can ensure that our holdings are fully represented in WorldCat and benefit from the ways that OCLC is syndicating and integrating WorldCat into web services like Google and Amazon.


**Current Generation Search and Retrieval Functionality [slide 5]**

Karen Schneider, in an ALA Tech Source series of blog posts last year provided a long checklist of things that all search engines provide but that are rarely or never provided by most current library catalogs. I'm going to list some of this current generation search and retrieval functionality that patrons expect from the catalog and describe whether or not WorldCat Local meets those expectations.

- Relevance ranking and field weighting. As a default, every search interface that I'm aware of, including WorldCat.org and WorldCat Local, but still excluding most OPACs, uses relevancy algorithms to present the searcher with the materials that they are most likely to be looking for. III of course has relevancy ranking of a sort called Right Results that Laura will describe.
- Faceted browsing. OCLC is able to exploit the highly structured metadata that is resident in the system to create navigable relations within WorldCat Local. After a search, the system suggests related subjects, pulls together other editions and versions of a work, suggests other books by an author or related authors, and related works by format, year and language.
- WorldCat Local allows users to supply reviews and add additional metadata to records such as table of contents and notes, but there is currently no option to apply tags or keywords to records.
- It includes book cover images from outside sources when available.
- There is currently no option to receive RSS alerts when new books become available that meet a user's search criteria, something that many databases provide.
- It doesn't include a recommendation system that lets the searcher know that people who borrowed this, also borrowed that, because it doesn't have access to the circulation data that can enable that.
- Did you mean?/spell check and automatic correction stemming. I'm surprised that WorldCat Local does not have any of these features yet. I'd be shocked if they don't enable this soon, however.
- Only the standard sorting options are currently available with relevancy being the default. Options to sort by popularity, librarian and user recommendations, ratings, currently available, locally available are not offered.

- Search visualization- Aquabrowser, Grokker
- Citation exporting – No. There is a nice feature that cites an item in different citation formats but you have to copy and paste the citation. Surprisingly, you can't select and export a batch of citations. This, too, I would expect that they are working on.
- There is also an option to purchase from booksellers through a link to Amazon.

**What Does WorldCat Local Not Include? [slide 6]**

Aside from not including some features that we might expect, some other problems include:

WorldCat Local only includes what is in worldcat. We have thousands of records we've cataloged, including digital History of Mathematics books from the Univ. of Michigan, digital Cornell U. math books and tens of thousands of federal government document records that haven't been contributed to OCLC. We can work to batch load those holdings and records to OCLC but they are not currently there. Other libraries, including UW, have literally hundreds of thousands of MARC records that they haven't contributed to OCLC. Indeed many vendors of MARC records expressly prohibit the sharing of their records to union catalogs. OCLC will have to make deals with these vendors in order for those records to be included in WorldCat and WorldCat Local.

Any local editing of records that we haven't contributed to OCLC will not be included. Local notes pertaining to series treatment, additional subject headings, alternative call numbers and other record corrections and additions will not be represented. How important is that?

OCLC recently announced that they are allowing what they call institution records that contain additional local cataloging data to be linked to OCLC WorldCat master records. The RLIN Union Catalog worked this way and OCLC is enabling this functionality in WorldCat for the first time so that RLG libraries that used RLIN before OCLC swallowed it, have this capability. It is conceivable that OCLC will allow other libraries that wish to retain this local cataloging data in WorldCat to be able to do so using the new Institutional Record.

**Other Concerns [slide 7]**

One concern is the loss of local control to the search interface and to the design of the catalog, although as I mentioned, we've never have really had that control anyway so its not like we're really giving anything up. Is loss of control and homogenization a bad thing, though? Many librarians have lamented the loss of a commonly understood, standard interface provided by card catalogs. They all looked and worked exactly the same. Karyle has often noted. When you went into a library anywhere in the country, public or academic or school, you knew how to find books using the card catalog. Since

the advent of OPACS, each of which operate a little bit differently, and for the most part, equally badly, library patrons no longer have a standard interface that they can expect to encounter. WorldCat Local has the potential to provide that once again, at least for those libraries that can afford it.

Ethical concerns – With OCLC's one big catalog we are becoming increasingly reliant on OCLC for more and more things.

There are also issues about how this changes our jobs. How does this change what we select when patrons have increasingly efficient and effective ways of searching and getting information from other libraries? What is the impact on ILL. OCLC is investigating the improvement of its ILL fulfillment options, working to facilitate home delivery. I would guess that as more libraries participate and more patrons search worldcat.org and worldcat local, the ILL impact could be dramatic for libraries that have a lot of holdings or that hold a relatively high number of unique resources.

It could also have a major impact on cataloging and acquisitions, although its not clear to me what that impact will be at this time. I can't imagine a time that we wouldn't want a local copy of our catalog records, but it may be that we establish regular backups of our catalog and holdings data created in OCLC, but do all of our cataloging and acquisitions work there and no longer maintain a local cataloging system at all.

As more libraries and patrons use worldcat.org and worldcat local to locate resources, libraries that can't pay to play by joining OCLC are increasingly disenfranchised because their holdings aren't represented. OCLC has been working to be more inclusive and to lower costs for smaller institutions. The Montana state library consortium is piloting an effort to make all Montana libraries, from the smallest school libraries to the largest academics and publics, OCLC WorldCat subscribers, offering memberships for a couple hundred dollars to the smallest libraries. So, it is quite possible that OCLC, in order to get closer to becoming a true World Catalog, will continue to work to enable setting holdings for all libraries.

We don't know anything yet about what OCLC plans to charge for this. This kind of portal that sits on top of the library opac – similar to what III's Encore product – is a new cost. What do libraries give up to pay for it? We'll still have to pay III everything we already do as the OPAC is just part of our package.

I'm concerned that the more we are reliant on OCLC, the less knowledge we have and the less ambitious is our drive to change. One of the great things about LibraryFind and other local development, and I'm just repeating what Karyle has said in meetings, is the potential it has to get library staff involved in decisions concerning access to library resources. We haven't really had that ability to affect access in any serious way for a long time. We've had to take what we're given by our ILS vendor and database vendors. LibraryFind allows us to think about how our patrons seek and use information and act on that knowledge to better the interface. Just letting OCLC do search and retrieval, even

if it is a great product, can have the unintended consequence of taking us out of the search and retrieval equation again. Once again, our role will largely be teaching users how to use the system and cataloging materials for that system but not being able to change anything about it, just when we are beginning to get acquainted with this role.