Against the Grain

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eBook Access via a Library-Developed Full-Text Search Tool: A Five-year Reflection

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eBook Access via a Library-Developed Full-Text Search Tool: A Five-year Reflection

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Early in 2005 staff at the **Health Sciences Library System (HSLS)** at the **University of Pittsburgh** introduced a federated search tool for their collection of over 2,500 eBooks. **HSLS** serves the six schools of the health sciences at the University plus the fifteen hospitals that are part of the **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)** and located throughout western Pennsylvania. **HSLS** staff determined that the eBooks would be useful during patient care, but believed that patrons would be hindered in trying to locate relevant information, both in trying to identify useful titles and in having to separately search each title or platform.

The "**Google**-like" search uses the Velocity search platform from Vivisimo as its search interface (also used by **The National Library of Medicine** and *Womenshealth.gov*).[1] Although there were other products on the market, **HSLS** staff chose the **Vivisimo** product for three reasons: 1) **Vivisimo** was a local company, 2) company staff were willing to partner with **HSLS** in development of the search tool, and 3) the price was competitive with similar products on the market. The intent was to provide better access to the eBook collection, especially for users seeking quick information for patient care or for users who worked in **UPMC** hospitals without on-site libraries.[2] Early in the development of the eBook search, **HSLS** had recognized our users' needs to "seek smaller and more specific content units."[3] Our work coincides with recognition by others in our specialized field of health sciences literature that a major barrier to eBook adoption was discovery.[4] Our eBook search provides a quick way for researchers and clinicians to get detailed, specific information from our large collection of eBooks (currently over 1,000 in health and biomedical science). The eBook search is not designed to search journal literature because **HSLS** users use databases such as **PubMed** and know when the information they need would more likely be found in eBooks.

The eBook Search

The eBook search accesses content on eight platforms from a variety of publishers and aggregators of health sciences titles.[5] Restrictions on some publisher's/aggregator's platforms occasionally have made it difficult if not impossible to search the content of their eBooks. With one aggregator we had to wait until their system was configured to be compatible with Velocity. Currently we are unable to search one of the publishers because the search isn't working after they made an upgrade to their platform. In some instances where we do not have site licenses, but pay only for a limited number of seats, we have been gratified that most publishers/aggregators have allowed us to use an extra seat for searching that doesn't count against our concurrent user seats.

The eBook search has been very successful. **HSLS** staff track the usage of the eBook search using **WebTrends** software. From March to October 2005 (after the search was developed), there was an average of 251 searches per month, and in 2010 there was an average of 2,693.[6] Statistics gathered from **McGraw Hill** for the AccessMedicine package may also demonstrate the increased use of the eBook search (and of the eBooks in general). In 2005 there were a total of 9,680 searches recorded on the Website; in 2010 that had increased to 60,238 searches for the year.

HSLS users have multiple ways to access eBooks licensed by the library. They can do a search for the title from the Pitt Resources Quick Search box on the main page of the libraries' Website (*http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/*), search for the title in the online catalog (*http://pittcat.hsls.pitt.edu*), browse eBooks by subject (*http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/resources/books/ebooks*), or use the eBook search (*http://tinyurl.com/3bruveb*). See Figure 1.

Patrons enter search terms in the search box, much like they do in **Google**. They can be common keywords (cancer, heart attack) or more clinical terms (neoplasm, myocardial
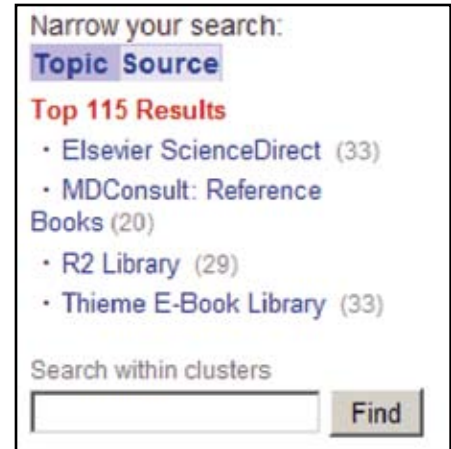
Figure 2. Clustered Results

infarction). Results are displayed in a ranked order based on relevancy. One excellent feature of Velocity is the clustering technology that narrows the results. In the **HSLS** eBook search, patrons can select a narrowed topic (elevation myocardial infarction, acute myocardial infarction) or a specific resource. See Figure 2.

Patrons have adopted this new tool with great ease and few need instruction from the librarians. Although the library has done a limited amount of usability testing, few changes have been needed.

In a recent study, **Folb** examined eBook use at **HSLS** including patrons' use of eBook search tools, including **Google Books**. The eBook search tool was used by a large percentage of people (67%) and was rated as moderately to extremely useful by 74%. **Google Books** was rated the same. Patrons gave a somewhat lower rating to the library catalog (61%), rating it moderately to extremely useful.[7]

Other Federated Searching Products at HSLS

The use of **Vivisimo's** Velocity for federated searching at **HSLS** has led to development of other, more specialized products, focusing on content in specific health science areas such as clinical medicine and bioinformatics. **HSLS** molecular biology librarians have a rich Website that provides access to a variety of resources for researchers at the University and **UPMC** (*http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/molbio*). Velocity is used for searches of numerous discrete groups of materials, including the extensive collection of licensed protocols such as Cold Spring Harbor Protocols, Methods in Enzymology, and Current Protocols. Researchers appreciate the opportunity to search in one place for needed protocols.

Within the last few years reference librarians have worked with the **HSLS** programmers to develop a clinical tool that uses the Velocity

Figure 1. eBook Search Page

technology to search a pre-selected set of full-text "answer tools" and electronic textbooks.[8] Initially named Clinical-e[9] it has been redesigned and renamed Clinical Focus. Clinical Focus allows a user to search for information about a disease, symptom, drug, procedure, or test from a single search box. The goal in developing Clinical Focus was to embed it in the **UPMC** electronic medical record, or eRecord, to provide easy access to the library's knowledge-based resources at the point of care. Currently, Clinical Focus is available to clinicians via the inpatient and outpatient eRecord.

Future Plans

HSLS continues to have an excellent relationship with **Vivisimo** as we continue to find new uses for Velocity. We have recommended its adoption to other libraries, and the **Houston Academy of Medicine — Texas Medical Center Library** is currently a **Vivisimo** Velocity customer. Because of our continued success with the product, we have no plans to investigate other products.

We will continue to monitor the use of the library's eBook search as well as the other search tools this project created. The library will also look at other innovative ways to use this technology to aid our users in quickly finding the information they need. 🐛

Endnotes

1. **Vivisimo, Inc.** *http://vivisimo.com/*.

2. **Jill E. Foust** and others, "Improving E-book Access via a Library-developed Full-text Search Tool," *J Med Libr Assoc*. 95, no. 1 (January 2007):40.

3. **Alix Vance**, "Smarter Metadata — Aiding Discovery in Next Generation E-book and E-Journal Gateways," *The Scholarly Kitchen*, Feb. 17, 2011 [*http://scholarlykitchen. sspnet.org/2011/02/17/optimizing-discovery-in-next-generation-e-book-and-e-journal-gateways/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_ medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed:+Sch olarlyKitchen+(The+Scholarly+Kitchen)*]

4. **Ramune Kubilius**, "eBooks in Health Sciences: Trends and Challenges," *Against the Grain,* 17 no. 1 (February 2005):36-40.

5. The platforms are: AccessMedicine (**McGraw-Hill**), AccessSurgery (**McGraw-Hill**), Books@Ovid, Elsevier Science Direct, MD Consult (**Elsevier**), R2 Library (**Rittenhouse**), STAT!Ref, Thieme E-Book Library.

6. **Foust**, 43.

7. **Barbara L. Folb**, **Charles B. Wessel**, and **Leslie J. Czechowski**, "Clinical and Academic Use of Electronic and Print Books: The HSLS E-book Study," *J Med Libr Assoc*. 99, no. 3 (July 2011):222.

8. The platforms are: ACP Pier, BMJ Clinical Evidence, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Current Medical Diagnosis & Treatment, Current Treatment in…. (Lange Textbooks), MICROMEDEX and MedCalc 3000.

9. **Barbara A. Epstein** and others, "Development of A Clinical Information Tool for the Electronic Medical Record: a Case Study," *J Med Libr Assoc*. 98(3)(July 2010):223-7.

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people profile

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BORN AND LIVED: Born in Denver and also lived (in order) in Phoenix (AZ), Fargo (ND), Ann Arbor (MI), Grinnell (IA), St. Paul (MN), McMurray (PA).

EARLY LIFE: I've loved theater all my life and spent lots of my early years doing plays.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I've also loved books and libraries all my life, so finding a career working in them has been wonderful — although I never realized when I started that I'd now be spending so much time working with computers!

FAMILY: Husband, two children (one a librarian), and two grandchildren.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I ride bikes, go hiking, do some quilting, and read.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction (esp. **Jane Austen**), mysteries/thrillers, biographies.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Managing the EAD implementation project at the **University of Minnesota** Archives & Special Collections.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I see the library world still struggling with the issues of open access, print vs. electronic products, and how we provide materials to our patrons in a increasingly complex environment. 🐛

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people profile

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BORN & LIVED: Born in Oil City, PA but lived most of my life in Pittsburgh.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I started my career working in research labs before switching to libraries. I loved and love working in both areas.

FAMILY: Two daughters, one husband.

IN MY SPARE TIME: Read, walk, daydream.

FAVORITE BOOKS: My recent favorite is *Packing for Mars*.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I see the library as a place for some faculty but mostly students to study and interact. The resources they need will be delivered to some type of mobile device.

Librarians will continue to adjust to new methods of acquisition and delivery of this information and how best to support learning. 🐛