Technology Fee Full Proposal

Title: A Next-Generation Search and Discovery Service

Proposer: Christian Poehlmann, E-Resources Librarian; & Colleen Seale, Reference Librarian, Library West

Sponsoring Organization: George A. Smathers Libraries

Purpose and Specific Objectives: The Libraries propose to purchase and install an ADA compliant web-scale discovery service to provide a seamless, Google-like single search service with access to library resources. This interface will provide users with access to UF's collection (both print and electronic) via a single entry point, creating a comprehensive, fast and familiar experience.

Fragmentation of library resources and their interfaces is a complex issue in libraries, and the University of Florida Libraries is no exception. As in most libraries, resources are dispersed into a number of areas with a traditionally organization-centric, rather than user-centric, layout. Users frequently have trouble navigating and discovering the variety and depth of resources, and any attempt at a single global overview of information offerings is at the same time incomplete and highly complex.

Electronic resources as well as print information in the UF Libraries is found in multiple areas of our catalog; our main website, our branch library websites; remote article databases, local custom databases, local digital collections, special collections, other remotely hosted resources (such as LibGuides), and others. The number of these resources, as well as the total volume of content offered by the Libraries, has grown tremendously over time, and concerns for efficient and accurate usability exist.

A user landing on the Smathers Libraries' main page is confronted with many, not necessarily intuitive, choices on the initial page alone. Each page linking to this main page contains another page with multiple alternatives and levels. UF Libraries currently makes use of Metalib, a federated search service. Metalib can have slow response times. Usage statistics for Metalib are unavailable, but anecdotal evidence indicates that it is not used frequently and users sometimes do not gather all information on their search terms when doing individual rather than federated searches.

In light of this dilemma, the Libraries and various units within have deployed finding and search tools that provide browsing and searching access to certain subsets of these resources, depending on criteria such as the type of resource; its place within the libraries' organizational structure; its place within some arbitrarily defined topical categorization of library resources; the perceived quality of its content; and its uniqueness relative to other resources. These tools are generally searching a limited number of resources rather than emphasizing an inclusive "big picture". The result is, from the user's perspective, a somewhat confusing number of scattered findings that, to varying degrees, each accomplishes its own specific goals at the expense of macro-level findability.

Currently, a comprehensive and inclusive search for a given subject across as many library resources as possible might involve visiting several interfaces—each one predicated upon awareness of each individual interface, its relation to the others, and the characteristics of its specific coverage of the corpus of library content.

User expectations of search functions have changed dramatically with the rise in popularity of Google. Today's users demand a clean, simple and inclusive interface, yet the native interface of all library databases, including the catalog, remains multifaceted. When students begin their research, they must first identify appropriate resources and then access and search each resource separately. Confused and overwhelmed, many students turn to Google, Wikipedia, and other useful, but not scholarly, sources of information. Studies show that students actually want to use solid, scholarly resources, but stumble without a simple starting point and consistent search methodologies. The result is a less than favorable research process. Nevertheless, libraries have a powerful competitive advantage over Google, including Google Scholar, in the quality, breadth, and authority of the content provided by the library.

A web-scale discovery service such as Summon or EBSCO Discovery Service saves time and simplifies the multi-faceted library research process. A web-scale discovery service will not only provide a compelling starting place for library research, but also increase the value of the library's collection, and ensure a solid return on investments in the library materials budget. The adoption of this service would comply with FL Statute 1009.24 and greatly enhance the instructional technology-related resources available for students and faculty on our campus.

Simply put, it is our objective to provide a user-centric, starting location for all library users, students and faculty, which will aggregate information from library resources, print and electronic, in one Google-like interface. If this proposal is funded, we will form a task force to examine the capabilities, reliability, and "fit" for UF of current discovery service offerings. When the product is in production, we will initiate an active testing and assessment program in collaboration with both students and teaching faculty to determine how student use of library resources is affected, measuring, for example, the number and quality of sources cited in papers and the time it takes for students to find necessary resources. We will also look at use statistics of expensive e-resources to assess return on investment.

Impact/Benefit: Anyone involved in the educational mission of the university or conducting library research will benefit from using this service, at least during initial searching. This includes all students, faculty and staff on and off campus including Jacksonville and IFAS Research and Education Centers. In short, 100% of University of Florida library users will benefit from this service. A discovery service can also be easily integrated into existing course management software such as Sakai. Faculty can create learning environments confident students will locate needed library resources and many will find materials that would have remained undiscovered had they not used this service.

Information resources are costly, so libraries want to encourage and facilitate use. The UF Libraries purchase print materials and license thousands of e-resources, representing an investment of close to $11 million annually. The cost of a discovery service is small in comparison to the amount spent on materials. This service will enhance access to millions of dollars of content, increase patron use and lead to maximum utilization of collection budget dollars.

Studies show that, although library resources are recognized as the most accurate and authoritative available; many students begin their research with Google or Google Scholar. Students prefer to use Google Scholar for its simple interface and unified search that goes beyond the metasearch tools currently used by libraries. Google Scholar, however, falls short on indexing depth and scope. Summon and EBSCO Discovery work like Google but provide more focused and thorough indexing of a library's resources and more reliable links to the information.

Library patrons want to access authoritative information wherever they are and whenever they need it; and they want books and articles in full-text digital format. Any tools that facilitate remote access to digital information are timely and useful; this is especially true for students and faculty in branch campuses, research sites, and study centers.

Learning environments may also be enhanced by faculty discovering library resources more effectively using the discovery service. Providing efficient access and discovery to library resources will boost their research skills, increase student confidence and greatly enhance student success rates. These discovery services are also ADA compliant.

Web-scale discovery tools are already in use at many comparable universities including Columbia, Indiana University, the University of Michigan, North Carolina State, Penn State, Florida Atlantic University, etc., where, as a result, student use of resources has increased dramatically. Additionally, last fall Florida State University Libraries successfully requested technology fee funding for the evaluation of a discovery service.

The addition of a web-scale discovery service that enables access to the breadth of our collections supports both our mission and strategic plan and would be a collaborative project among the George A. Smathers Libraries including the Health Science Center Library, the Legal Information Center, affiliate libraries and the Florida Center for Library Automation.

Sustainability: Web-scale discovery service implementation costs include all hosting, support, maintenance and training. These products do not require the purchase or installation of any additional hardware or software.

During the first year, the Libraries will conduct analyses and surveys of the discovery service to ascertain user satisfaction. If the service is found to offer significant improvement in resource retrieval and its users offer sustained

positive feedback, in subsequent years the UF Libraries will assume the subscription cost for the discovery service by soliciting donor support, seeking external funding, or reallocating other resources.

Timeline: The Electronic Resources Librarian will oversee the implementation and operation of this product. Implementation is expected to take from 6 to 12 weeks. Most of the work is done by the vendor. After the contract is signed, implementation will begin immediately. The steps are as follows:

- A one-day kick-off meeting with vendor and implementation team
- Week 1-2: UF library staff export and map MARC (library catalog) records into the system, working with the vendor to verify subscriptions and holdings of other resources, especially e-resources
- Week 1-4: UF staff work with vendor to address interface configuration details for subscribed e-resources
- Week 2-5: Vendor ingests MARC records
- Week 3-6: Vendor verifies quality of MARC files
- Week 5-6: Site QA and review
- Week 7: Initial launch and internal testing
- Week 10: Public launch
- Week 11-52 Review and assessment of product.

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BUDGET

One-time setup fee: US $10,805.00

Annual subscription fee: US $73,450.00

Total request: **US $84,255.00**

Technology Fee Full Proposal Template Sponsor Signature Form

Title: A Next-Generation Search and Discovery Service

Proposer's Name: Chris Poehlmann and Colleen Seale

Note: By signing this form the sponsor is making a commitment to support the project. This may include providing startup, recurring or equipment replacement resources as presented in the attached budget.

Signature of sponsor: College Dean, or Unit Director, or VP for Student Affairs.

_____   _____
Name and Title   **Date**

Note: By signing this form the UF IT unit is making a commitment to manage the project if selected for submission of a full proposal. This may include providing startup, recurring or equipment replacement resources as presented in the attached budget.

Signature of managing unit administrator:

_____   _____
Name and Title   **Date**