

New Initiatives 0607—Funded through savings from database review

Resources to Make Research More Seamless

The new library and Passports are concrete expressions of the library's mission, which is in part to:

- Respond to the changing needs of our faculty, students, and staff and make available new resources and services that foster academic excellence.

The changing needs of faculty and students include the ability to conduct research more seamlessly, as we know and as has been discussed extensively in the literature. We made this a priority in designing the learning spaces in the new library by including library, media, and computing functions in our Electronic Commons, Cyber Café, and Listening/Viewing Center. Passports makes available resources that foster academic excellence, but it is not as seamless to use as it could be. Below is the latest summary of federated searching from Eileen. It was written for a fundraising campaign and may provide talking points when discussing these services with faculty and students.

“Access to the library's 100+ databases and 22,000 online full-text journals will be greatly improved with the addition of a federated search service. A federated search service will allow users to search multiple library databases at one time in a single, easy-to-use interface. This option will help users who are beginning research, since it will allow them to search one or more terms in several databases, and either begin viewing articles from the list of results, or determine which databases are most relevant to their research. It will also help users finalize research, since it will allow for a broad range of searching, and may show a researcher articles not found in the databases in his or her field. Federated searching complements our recently added article linker (OpenURL) service. The article linker service allows a user who has found a citation without full-text to find the quickest path to any available full-text. If no full-text is available, the article linker presents the user with other options, including information about whether the journal is available in print at the library, and a link to an online ILL form for requesting the article.

The University pays \$550,000+ per year for Passports databases, and these services will allow Webster to leverage our investment in full-text databases by making the research process easier and more efficient. One of the disadvantages of subscribing to multiple database vendors is that each vendor has a different search interface, so there are dozens of interfaces for users to learn. A federated search engine will simplify the research process, which will be a boon for new library users. More experienced users will still have the option to use advanced search engines at individual databases, but even these

users might benefit from doing a comprehensive check of resources using a federated search. The article linker service additionally streamlines the research process. By making the searching process easier, we will increase the use of our Passports databases and improve the research process for students.

NOTE: Central Search was added in fall 2006

In the same vein, a bibliographic utility would make compiling research results more seamless. Not only have we had requests for such a tool from extended campuses, we had them from patrons on this campus, which is why we added EndNote to some of the library PCs.

NOTE: RefWorks was added in summer 2006