

User Ed Meeting Minutes - March 20, 2009 @ TCNJ

Invited representatives from Ebsco, Jim Kropelin and Ron Burns, met with the User Ed committee to discuss some of the problems that we have been experiencing since the updated Ebsco platform was introduced last year. There was a question and answer period of over an hour to address many of our concerns, followed by discussion of new Ebsco products.

Highlights of the Q&A:

- Nancy M. noted that a number of searches she was running in Academic Search Premier (ASP) were yielding seemingly unrelated results. Ron conducted several searches and made some notes on unusual results. **Recommendation:** since ASP is a general database, **set the default sort to relevance**, rather than date in admin. Many libraries have found this to give more accurate results. Users have found the date limiter on the right column to be easy to use.
- Nancy M also requested that additional journals for Equine, Theater and Fashion should be added to ASP. These are all important industries in the NJ/NY area and there are very few journals for these disciplines in ASP.
- Several other searches were conducted to show Ebsco some of the problems encountered.
- Narrowing down search results in ASP can be done from the left hand column with suggested terms. To use the **suggested terms** to search the entire database, you can **click on the term in the bread crumb trail** for searches, which appears just under the number of results.
- Ebsco usability testing shows that limiters and changes in the search mode are rarely changed/utilized when users conduct advanced searches. The default of Boolean/phrase mode is used most often.
- Ron demonstrated the use of **Smart Text search mode** which is available in some of the databases. You can copy and paste a large amount of text into the box (eg. from a recent news story) and the search algorithms will look at the terms and their frequency in the text and return results of related articles in the databases based on the terms. This works best if the text is lengthy.
- Problems with printing results in the new 3 column format were raised, as well as printing of the citations page (overlaps results). Ron will check on these problems.
- Personalized Ebsco folders retain all files for multiple semesters. The last clean-up done was on folders which were unused for 3 years.
- **Streaming video files** can be found in the **History and Science Reference Centers**, available through Jersey Clicks. Jim can provide a direct link for accessing the databases without going to the Jersey Clicks page.
- **Citation formatting** is being reviewed by Ebsco, especially MLA which was recently revised. There is always a note on the page cautioning users to recheck the suggested formats, since users have found a number of mistakes have been found. Some of the problems come from journal data which is downloaded directly, such as capitals in article titles.

- **Incorporating links in documents.** In order to get working links which students can include in bibliographies, admin needs to modify to **put the proxy in the link format prefix** as a default in order to authenticate. Otherwise links will only be active for several days on campus.
- **DOI** is on Ebsco's lists for improvements. It is not always received from vendors, so it is not consistent.

After addressing the committee's questions, Ron also demonstrated Ebsco's upcoming **Integrated Search (IS)**, their federated search product. Features of the product include:

- Ability to put a basic search box on the library's home page, with a list of topic areas underneath to all the library databases.
- Each library can customize their databases into Tier 1 and Tier 2 sources for searches. Tier 1 are the preferred databases that will be searched first for articles. Tier 2 databases can be secondary sources, or those that are slow and heavily news-based. Tier 1 sources are searched first and results are quickly displayed, while the search is continued in Tier 2 sources.
- The first 350 search results are displayed, so user is not overwhelmed. The IS tool searches each database based on relevance and takes the 100 from each. IS gives each article a relevance rating.
- Retrieval of articles goes to the native database.
- Formatting of results are in the new Ebsco format, but source databases are identified.
- Capability to narrow results will still be present. Limiters include those which most databases offer – date, Full text, scholarly.
- De-duping, the major problem with federated searching, is done by listing the source with the best coverage for an article – full text, longer abstract.
- A special shaded box will have article access information – HTML, PDF, link, to simplify user access.
- Authentication will be via SmartProxy, based on IP addresses.
- Ebsco will set up all the connectors to the library's databases. They are currently offering connectors to 5000 databases, including all the major databases, many open web, Library of Congress, PubMed, and Google Books. The library's catalog can also be connected. There is no cost for connecting to Ebsco's databases or e-journals (which other federated search products charge). Other connectors will be charged for, but Ebsco will set up the product.
- Detailed statistics will be available for all databases included in the IS tool. Basic info will be available in June and an update to Counter 3 in September with the new release.
- IS demo site will be available in April.

Jim Kropelin also indicated that Ebsco is offering an overlap analysis of a library's databases to identify potential savings by cutting duplicates. This analysis is free and the goal is to identify savings of 20-25% in subscription costs. Many libraries have already asked for this analysis to be completed.

Many Thanks to Jacqui DaCosta for setting up this informative session and hosting at TCNJ.

Next User Ed meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2009 at Bergen Community College – 10:30 – 12:30.