

Discovering Discovery Layers: An Introduction

OhioNet

Discusses the purpose of discovery layers, how they work, and why they are useful for libraries and patrons. Learn how this search tool differs from databases and catalogs and consider the pros and cons of using a discovery tool.

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Doing More with Less: How to Motivate and Reward Your Overworked Staff during Lean Times

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TESTIMONY

Our Experience with Joining a Large Consortium

I am the head of Technical Services at Covenant Theological Seminary, which in 1998 was a founding member of MOBIUS (originally an acronym for Missouri Bibliographic Information User System). This testimony is about our experience joining a large consortium, particularly the implementation of a complex ILS.

MOBIUS

The MOBIUS consortium currently has about 75 members, mostly Missouri academic institutions (with a few large public libraries and a few out-of-state members). Our union catalog is nearing 30 million items. Covenant was one of the 50 original founding libraries, but since the libraries implemented over several years, we did not actually "go live" on our Innovative Interfaces ILS until June 1, 2001.

MOBIUS is organized uniquely. The libraries are mostly grouped into 'clusters' which are, for the most part, geographical. Covenant belongs to the Bridges cluster, which includes academic libraries in the St. Louis area except for the community colleges (organized into their own cluster), and the large institutions such as Washington University, etc. which are not in clusters. Each cluster shares an OPAC among its members. The Bridges cluster is a diverse group of ten members or eleven libraries, including 7 universities and 4 seminaries (Covenant, Concordia, Kenrick-Glennon, and Eden).

Why did we decide to join MOBIUS?

We were ecstatic when MOBIUS was founded! The state of Missouri contributed over \$11 million for the startup and more funds for several years. We had been struggling to upgrade our technology and the OPAC that was within our budget was woefully inadequate to support graduate level research. The state funds paid most costs for bringing up the Innovative Interfaces Inc. (III) system and for upgrading equipment, migrating records to III's OPAC (which is integrated into the statewide III InnReach union catalog), providing many days of training by III trainers, and we had MCO (MOBIUS Central Office) staff who shepherded us through the process of implementation. All the help and coaching we had was tremendously helpful. We have never regretted our decision.

By joining MOBIUS we were able to implement an extremely robust ILS. As a cataloguer, in particular, I have appreciated all the advanced editing capabilities, such as global updating, that a large system offers. The state of Missouri no longer supports MOBIUS financially, but the annual costs are partly based on student FTE, so it is still affordable for us.

Migration Complexity

Migrating to a different ILS is not easy or straightforward. It is especially difficult if you have a small staff (5 full-timers) and can't hire any extra assistance. We didn't have the luxury of a project leader or implementation team; we just had to