LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA SEARCH REDEVELOPMENT: FINAL REPORT

PURPOSE

1. To provide the Libraries Australia Advisory Committee (LAAC) members with a final report on the outcomes of the Libraries Australia Search Redevelopment (LASR) project.

DELIVERY OF NEW SERVICE

2. The redevelopment of Libraries Australia Search was completed in June 2014, implemented in a staged release in early July, and was warmly received by members. Extensive testing was undertaken by Resource Sharing staff and the LASR Project Team in June, prior to the release. The team have responded to feedback received post release, with some fixes and changes implemented.

3. The redevelopment included the replacement of the underlying software to deliver improved performance, capacity to support large-scale data quality improvement projects, and a more usable and efficient interface.

4. Improved user interface features included:
   - An easy way to compare and report duplicate records
   - The ability to select unlimited number of favourite libraries
   - New and improved indexes and searching options
   - Additional sorting options
   - Layout changes and preview panels to make scanning results easier
   - Improved customisation and preferred settings

PROJECT STAGES

5. The redevelopment was a two year project which included the replacement of the underlying software to deliver improved performance, capacity to support large-scale data quality improvement projects, and a more usable and efficient interface. It was one of the Library’s two major IT projects over this period, and required the equivalent of 4 FTE dedicated IT staff together with significant resources from the Resource Sharing business area.

1. Stage 1 - Research and development of requirements (May 2012 to September 2012)

   The key deliverables of Stage 1 were: the research findings based on the Libraries Australia business review, specific surveys and site visits; and development and prioritisation of requirements.

2. Stage 2 - Delivery of database infrastructure (September 2012 to January 2013)

   The key deliverables of Stage 2 were: the Search database; the Z39.50 interface; the Loader; a set of user interface wireframes; and infrastructure for the development, Test 1 and Test 2 environments.

3. Stage 3 - Alpha release of the Libraries Australia Search service (January 2013 to June 2013)
The key deliverable of Stage 3 was an alpha release of the Libraries Australia Search service (LA Search Alpha), deployed on production infrastructure and available to LA user account holders for review. There were two early, although incomplete, releases of versions of the new system to Libraries Australia users so that any issues could be addressed prior to the production release and to ensure that it meets user needs. The first was released in Stage 3 during May and June 2013 and the second in Stage 4 during October and November 2013.

4. Stage 4 - July 2013 to June 2014

Stage 4 included the completion of remaining functionality for the user interface: modifications to associated systems; development of online help; updating of the manual, website and other documentation; establishment of a training environment; and deployment of the new service into production.

In order to minimise risk and potential disruptions to members, the following staged release of the new Search Service was implemented:

- **Stage 1 - 8 July** - production release of the Z39.50 interface and Search database.
- **Stage 2 - 15 July** - production release of the Search User Interface, LA Admin update, RES update and the Training environment.
- **Stage 3 - 17 July** - production release of the Products update.

**Supporting Documentation**

6 The following documentation was provided to members to provide information about the changes, and information about using the service (a summary of the changes is provided at Attachment 1):

- Libraries Australia Search Manual
- Getting the most out of your new Search Service
- What is different in the new Search Service (summary)
- What is different in the new Search Service (full list)

**User Response**

7 The LA Member Services team has worked closely with the LASR Project Team to respond to feedback on the new LA Search Service post release, with the feedback mechanism in place until 30 September. A number of modifications and fixes were implemented as a result. Members have provided positive feedback about the new Service and the Project Team’s responses to requested changes, through the feedback forms and via User Groups, including:

- “I wanted to thank the LA team, you’ve put a lot of work into everything, and you’ve responded so positively to my feedback. I think it’s one of the best roll-outs of an update that I’ve experienced with a web service.”
- “Libraries Australia! Your new interface is beautiful!! I even found a title not held in any Oz libraries. Happy joy joy!”
- “Liking the new Libraries Australia Search. Great work team! Lookin good!”
- “I think the redesign is gorgeous. Well done!”
• “Loving the new format - so much easier to see things at a glance, select other databases and overall, the new functionality is much more user friendly.”

• “Love the popup at the right side giving the record preview.”

• “Thankyou for taking on board my suggestion in relation to last saved record on top. It has made my job and time management much more efficient.”

**IMPROVED PERFORMANCE**

8 During August 2014, the Database Services Branch monitored the pusher (which loads records from CBS to Search) performance while performing increasingly large data processing tasks, to determine whether there was a transaction load level beyond which danger lay. Despite a number of large data maintenance tasks, no adverse effects on system performance were noticed. With this welcome result, changes have been made to the record import queues to allow some files to be load automatically; as soon as a member uploads a file, it goes on to the database without delay. This change also provides greater flexibility around timing of large database maintenance jobs. Database Services has been able to complete major global holding refreshes, holdings transfers, record deletions and removal of bad merge headings without needing to micro-manage scheduling. In coming months Libraries Australia will benefit from being able to schedule other types of maintenance tasks. To date, SOLR has coped with as many data transactions and changes as the Database Services branch have been able to push to it with no loss of processing speed or system functionality.

**FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS**

9 The final changes to the new Search service as part of the project were implemented on 16 October. A list of prioritized future enhancements has been established; these will be implemented as Business As Usual as resources permit. A Lessons Learnt report is also being prepared and will be reported to the internal Libraries Australia Search Redevelopment Project Board.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Libraries Australia Advisory Committee notes the report.

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA SEARCH

New functionality

- Favourite Libraries - new functionality has been added to allow the selection of an unlimited number of favourite libraries as reciprocal, affiliated or libraries of interest.
- Compare Records and report duplicates - new functionality has been developed to enable members to compare and easily report duplicate records.

Appearance

- Layout and preview - the alignment and formatting have changed and additional preview panels have been added to make scanning results easier.

Customisation

- Remembered settings - the number of things which can be customised have been expanded and the settings members last used will be remembered.

Navigation

- Tabs - the main function tabs have been re-categorised into two separate levels to simplify and make navigation easier.
- Help and News - quick links to help and news are available in the footer of every page.

Sorting

- New sorting options - additional options to sort by relevance and no. of holdings have been added. The default is date (latest first).

Searching

- Simple and Advanced Search - the most highly used databases are now available on the search form itself and changes to the material checkbox limits.
- Advanced Search - there are new and improved indexes and searching options.
- Command Search - now uses the Solr query language instead of CCL query language and an improved Query builder has been added to assist users to build queries.
- Browse - now has an immediate view of database and index options for selection.

Performance

- New platform - providing a faster and more reliable service.
- No timeouts - no need to log in again on the same day unless you close your browser or log out.