

Student Product Evaluation—360 Search

Student Evaluation

Six students volunteered to take the product assessment. These students were given a scenario in which they had to find 2 books and 3 journal articles on the following topic:

Does the integration of special education students into the regular classroom help improve their education?

The students were then ask to follow a link to <http://tinyurl.com/3xmcgq> and perform two searches by clicking on buttons that led them to either the 360 Search trial page (Search A) or to our web page where they had to use the current method of searching each interface for our catalog and journal databases separately (Search B).

Three of the six students were asked to perform their research using 360 Search (Search A) first and then asked to perform the same search using the current method (Search B). The other three students began their research with Search B first, and then repeated the process using 360 Search.

For Searches A and B, students were asked to paste and save their citations in a word document. We had students name the search with their email IDs. Of the 12 sets of search citations captured, 16 out of 24 books were determined to be on-topic and 16 out of 36 articles were determined to be on-topic. 8 books located using 360 Search (which used WorldCat) were determined to be on-topic and 8 books located using the library catalog's native interface were determined to be on-topic.

6 articles located using 360 Search were determined to be on-topic. Of these 6 articles, 5 were determined to be from scholarly journals (with 0 of these 5 scholarly articles from peer-reviewed journals).

10 articles located using our native database interfaces were determined to be on-topic. Of these 10 articles, 7 were determined to be from scholarly journals (with 0 of these 7 scholarly articles from peer-reviewed journals).

Students were then asked to answer a series of questions regarding their searches. The first two questions asked students to rate the two search methods on a scale of 1-5 on how satisfied they were with the citations they were able to discover (1=unsatisfied to 5=Very satisfied). Of the three students who began using 360 Search first, two students rated 360 Search higher than the current method, and one rated them the same. Of the three students who began with our current method first, all three students rated the current method higher than 360 Search.

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The next question asked students to rank one method over the other. Overall, two students preferred 360 Search and four students preferred the current method. Of those who started with the WebFeat search, two preferred it to the current method. Of the three students who started with our current method of searching (Search B), all three preferred the current method.

Students were also asked if they were likely to use Google Scholar on this or similar assignments. Three students indicated that they would use Google Scholar and three indicated that they would not.

The final question of the evaluation encouraged students to comment on this searching experience. Most of this feedback was mixed. This included two comments about needing more time to explore 360 Search, one comment about the ease of use of GLOCAT, and one comment stating “this kind of sucks, sorry!”.

Complete Student Evaluation Questionnaire results:

Product	Started with	Satisfaction w/ Search A	Satisfaction w/ Search B	Pref. Search	Uses Google Scholar?	Class Yr	Major	Initials
360 Search	B	3	4	B	No	Junior	Communication	AMK
360 Search	A	3	2	A	No	Senior	Business Administration	FR
360 Search	B	4	5	B	Yes	Senior	Business Administration	RL
360 Search	A	4	4	B	No	Graduate Student	Accounting	LW
360 Search	B	1	4	B	Yes	Senior	Accounting	CRS
360 Search	A	4	3	A	Yes	Graduate Student	Speech Pathology	NF

Search Preference

Preferred Search	No. of Students who started with Search A	No. of Students who started with Search B
Search A (360)	2	0
Search B	1	3

Feedback

Type of Feedback	No. of Students who started with Search A	No. of Students who started with Search B
Positive	3	2
Negative	0	1

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360 Search Student Evaluations—Citations

Search	Books on Topic	Articles on Topic	Scholarly Articles	Peer Reviewed	Article Citations Unclear (Null)	Total Searches Performed
Search A		2	2	0		
Search A	2	3	3	0		
Search A	1	1	0	0		
Search A					5	
Search A	2	0	0	0		
Search A	1	0	0	0		
Search B	2	3	3			
Search B	2	3	1			
Search B	2	1	1			
Search B					5	
Search B	2	3	2	0		
Search B	0	0	0	0		
TOTALS	16	16	12	0	10	12
Search A	8	6	5	0	5	6
Search B	8	10	7	0	5	6

Librarians Evaluation

Do we want Federated Searching?

The majority of librarians are in favor of trying Federated Searching, at least for a trial period. The belief is that it will make searching easier for students. Students will also be exposed to a larger variety of databases through the use of federated searching. The biggest concern noted is that students may miss out on resources other than journal articles or books.

What is your opinion of the functionality/usability of 360 Search?

Though the Librarians liked 360 Search they had many reservations regarding its functionality and usability. The biggest concerns were that it was lacking a peer-reviewed filter and a date-limiter and it was confusing to use. Another big concern was that search tips were not well written. The librarians liked the clustered results and the ability to view abstracts.

Do you have any comments on the interface and design of WebFeat?

The librarians polled found the interface to be straightforward and clear, though they did not like the “crowded look” of the page.