

John Shipp on putting the Summon™
web-scale discovery service to work
in the University of Sydney Library

POWERING UP TO BEAT BUDGET CHALLENGES



University of Sydney Library earns bigger return on its content investment with new technology

It takes a “power user” to sort through the vast collections in the University of Sydney Library. Thousands of resources for students and faculty – an enormous investment in content – have been carefully collected to address the particular needs of the University’s students and researchers. It’s an overwhelming amount of information that’s deftly navigable by the university librarians, but a maze to students. Yet, University Librarian John Shipp plans to leverage that content to build greater awareness of the unique assets of the library, getting users to even its most esoteric collections and resources.

His strategy is an investment in an innovative new technology called the **Summon™** web-scale discovery service, a groundbreaker from Serials Solutions that will make the library as easy to use as Google makes the open Web. The **Summon™** service enables users to search the breadth of the library from one search box. Books and videos, ebooks and newspaper articles – all formats – are integrated in a single results list. Users see what they want, click through to full text or, in the case of physical materials, find its location in the library.

Investing in new technology during lean years may seem counter-intuitive, but consider Shipp’s logic: the service significantly increases the return on the investment the library has already made in its collection. “We’re facing challenging budget years ahead. It’s essential that we raise the profile of the library and demonstrate real value,” he says.

Shipp is on to something. Studies show that students want to use the more credible resources of the library, but stumble at the lack of a simple starting point. Their search strategies are hodge-podge: they may return to a database a former professor recommended, whether it fits the assignment or not, or use trial and error until they either strike it rich, or strike out. In the latter case, they often default to Google or Wikipedia, entirely missing the quality resources held in the library.

Shipp views the **Summon™** service as an opportunity to eliminate the confusion, providing a single, compelling starting point. Transparent behind a library-branded search box, the technology searches the expanse of the library, neatly organizing the most relevant resources for the user’s search. Not only does the technology draw users back to the library as a starting point, it exposes more of the collection, ensuring each of those carefully selected and funded resources add value to the library experience. “The **Summon™** service’s ability to simplify access and uncover the genuine riches of our collection is an opportunity for the library to shine when we need it most,” he says.

The **Summon™** service works by pre-harvesting content in a single index, allowing instant and true relevancy-ranked results. Serials Solutions has partnered with content providers of all types who provide direct feeds. With content from more than 4,800 publishers included so far – from key content participants like ProQuest and Gale, Springer, SAGE, Taylor & Francis and a host of leading academic publishers. Seeing an opportunity to surface their content at the right time with right user, publishers are continuously signing on with the **Summon™** service. To date, Serials Solutions has indexed nearly half a billion records already.

University of Sydney signed on as a beta partner for the **Summon™** web-scale discovery service earlier this year and plans to take it live campus-wide this within the next few months. When it does, everyone becomes a power user.

Visit the University of Sydney Library at www.library.usyd.edu.au/.

Learn more about the **Summon™** web-scale discovery service by visiting www.serialssolutions.com/summon. Serials Solutions is a ProQuest company.

Hear more from early library partners and adopters of **Summon™** unified discovery service in the free Webcast series, “Returning the Researcher to the Library,” hosted by Serials Solutions and *Library Journal*. Parts 1 and 2 of the series are archived at www.libraryjournal.com/webcasts. Parts 3 and 4 will be Webcast in Fall 2009.



Summon™
Web-Scale Discovery

One search box... your library discovered.