MultiSearch comes to WIT libraries

Incorporating a discovery service into first-year learning support programme

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Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) is a third-level institution situated in the south east of Ireland with over 8,500 students and 900 staff. It offers a broad range of courses across the schools of humanities, science, business, health sciences, lifelong learning and engineering; these courses range from undergraduate certificate and degree courses up to PhD research levels. WIT libraries learning support team is responsible for providing information literacy training to all students at WIT. The Luke Wadding Library team comprises four members of the library staff with a mix of assistant librarians and senior library assistants. The learning support programme in WIT libraries has been running since 1997. The majority of library training takes place in the library learning centre, a purpose-built computer training lab in the Luke Wadding library.

WIT Libraries introduced a new one-hour learning support programme for first-year students for the 2012–2013 academic year. It was designed to replace the existing two-hour programme on offer for first-year students, which had been running since 2008 (Hegarty, Carbery and Hurley, 2009) and was supplemented by drop-in library tours and treasure hunts in the first full week of term and drop-in tutorials at the end of October. The two-hour programme was divided into two one-hour classes, the first focusing on print resources and the second on electronic resources.

The new programme was developed at a time when the library was changing to a new website, introducing ebrary (e-books collection) and a new web-scale discovery service MultiSearch (Summon). In agreement with Asher, Duke and Wilson (2013, p. 476), we felt at the time, that by 'providing a uniform search interface and aggregating content behind a single "brand", discovery tools like EDS, Summon, and GS help to diminish the "cognitive load" on students by eliminating the often difficult and confusing step of choosing an appropriate disciplinary database'. Our experience in training undergraduates has made us acutely aware of the need to get the first-year students engaged by having a positive first experience of accessing library resources. Having first-year students focus on just one search interface for accessing library databases during training would make more time available for teaching search strategies and evaluation.

Given these changes and new resources it was felt that a new training programme was needed. Other factors influencing its development were lecturers' requests and the time pressures of semesterisation. A number of lecturers in 2011–2012 had requested hour 2 (database) training only, and the team had also noted in previous years that some student groups were not booked in for the second hour of the existing programme. Poor student attendance at hour 2 training also contributed to the decision to develop a new programme.

After looking at feedback from learning support staff and academic staff and after examining recent research and best practice in introducing a 'discovery' service to students (Stone, 2010; Brown and Simpson, 2012), the team decided that the best approach at this particular time was to provide a one-shot session (Kenney, 2008) which would incorporate the new online resources and search technologies available. The training would have a student-centred approach and would focus on helping first-year undergraduates develop independent research skills; the MultiSearch training element would provide a problem-based learning experience.

New one-hour library training programme

The programme was rolled out in semester 1 in September 2012. A total of 45 first-year groups were booked for training during this semester. Their class lecturers booked in all classes as students' booking themselves in has been found not to be effective. At the start of the semester, lecturers are prompted to book by an email advertising the learning support programme.

The focus of the hour was to raise awareness of the resources available both physically and online through the library website and the library section on Moodle. It highlighted how these could be best utilised in assignments and projects. In particular, students were helped to develop the research skills that would enable them to identify which library resources would help them at each step of the process.

The new one-hour programme started by giving students an overview of the new library website (http://library.wit.ie/) complete with 'single search box' feature and introducing basic information about library services and resources. The catalogue and e-books were then demonstrated. Students were given a worksheet that required them to complete a search on the library catalogue. E-books were initially introduced to the students through the catalogue search. ebrary (the platform which supplies most of WIT Libraries e-books) was then shown independently. Students responded positively to the idea of using e-books and in particular found very useful the bookshelf feature, and the fact that the full reference for the book was automatically copied to their Word document when they copied material from the e-book.

The students then worked through 'Five steps to a successful assignment' (see appendix 1), which was informed by the ACRL Information Literacy Standards (http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/infolit/standards/steps - standard1). The 'five steps' involved the students identifying keywords from a given topic title; a worksheet required them to conduct a practical online search using the libraries' new discovery service, MultiSearch. They were required to identify one useful article relating to the given topic and to give the reference details.

The students appeared comfortable with the idea of using MultiSearch, a Google-type search interface, to access all library resources. The MultiSearch search page provided them with a clear starting point for their research. The first-year students had no previous experience of book or journal records, so initially they had difficulty in distinguishing between them. We found the best solution was to distinguish between the catalogue and MultiSearch by recommending that the students used the separate catalogue search box when they needed a book, e-book or print journal and the MultiSearch search box, initially, only for electronic journal articles. To this end, training was designed to get the students to limit their

results to journal articles from scholarly publications on the MultiSearch results page.

PowerPoint slides were used to explain and back up the training handouts used in the sessions. We introduced the idea of searching with keywords by using an example topic – *The online social networking experiences of college students*. Students were asked to work in groups to break the example essay title down into its main concepts. They were then asked for alternative keywords, and broader and narrower terms for each concept. Depending on the size of the overall group, these suggested keywords were written on a whiteboard. The level of student participation in providing answers to the overall group was low.

The trainer then with the aid of PowerPoint slides explained briefly what a journal article is and what a database is and what MultiSearch does. After a short demonstration of MultiSearch the students then used the keywords they had identified to find a suitable journal article using MultiSearch. The trainers provided guidance and assistance to each student while they were completing the worksheets. It had initially been planned that students would search using their own keywords identified from an actual assignment topic. However, at the start of the semester the majority had not yet received an assignment topic, so we used the generic one.

SUPPORTING THE ONE-HOUR PROGRAMME

This new one-hour programme was supported by a series of tours, treasure hunts and drop-in training sessions on ebrary/e-books, referencing and MultiSearch. The first week of the academic term was dedicated to the drop-in tours and treasure hunts, with prizes of sweets and pens for all who completed the treasure hunt. The tours / treasure hunts were advertised by flyers at the library stand on registration days, posters, online on the library website and Facebook and Twitter. The tours ran twice a day Monday to Wednesday and treasure hunts ran on the Thursday and Friday. Unfortunately, interest in these tours and treasure hunts was low.

The drop-in sessions ran in October. They were advertised in the same way as the tours and were highlighted to students at the end of their training session. Again, the number of students who participated was small. It was difficult to ascertain when interest would be highest. We found that if students had attended library training, they were

not interested in or didn't have the time to attend again.

The new one-hour programme also promoted and encouraged students to make good use of the library information desk. The students received follow-on support through the library Moodle page. Every student at Waterford Institute of Technology has WIT Libraries listed as a course on their Moodle page. We provide support material on Moodle such as test-yourself quizzes, library guides and handouts and how-to videos.

Lessons learned

Trainers were worried about how students would take to using MultiSearch, but as one student's feedback pointed out, they didn't know any different, as they hadn't used the previous resources. This acted as a reminder to us to look at the training from the students' perspective.

Students who took part in the library training programme in 2012–2013 were not surveyed. However, as Oakleaf *et al*. (2012, p. 10) explains, 'the moment that students actively engage in learning, they are also providing you, their teacher, with assessment data that can be used to tailor instruction immediately'.

Observing how the students filled out the worksheets and the questions they asked indicated which aspects needed to be explained more fully in the demonstration part of the session. During the worksheet activity, the trainers observed that many students were jumping to the next part that needed completion and not reading the worksheets fully; this led the trainers to revise the worksheets for the next academic year.

These observations also raised awareness of different learning styles amongst students and the different ways of explaining the same thing, for example, getting across how to use MultiSearch by demonstration, worksheets and talking to each individual student during the worksheet activity. This meant not being afraid of repeating more than once how to use the library resources!

Library training 2013–2014

The students focused on steps 2 and 3 of the 'Five steps to a successful assignment' process, these being:

- step 2 – develop a search strategy

activity: group work to identify keywords from given topic

- step 3 – finding information from within the sources identified
activity: practical demonstration of catalogue and MultiSearch followed by students conducting search with identified keywords.

The other main adjustment to the training sessions for 2013–2014 was that the worksheets were streamlined. One worksheet for the session replaced two separate ones for catalogue and MultiSearch. Extraneous elements were removed such as 'top tips', which are covered in the PowerPoint slides, and the library section on Moodle. Students were also given an example topic relevant to their subject area rather than one generic topic for all. For example, tourism students were given the topic *Investigate customer loyalty in the hotel industry*, and business students were given *Investigate the impact of social media marketing on consumers*.

The outline of the session was similar to the 2012–2013 one-hour session and supported by PowerPoint slides with handouts and worksheet. After a brief introduction to general library services, these sessions focused on library resources by first asking asking students what types of information they would expect to find in an academic library (most answered books). The students were then talked through the search strategy slides, followed by an example topic relevant to their course in which they were asked to identify keywords. This was done as group work.

This was followed by a demonstration of the catalogue; students chose one of their selected keywords and searched the catalogue to find answers for the questions on the worksheet. The trainer then explained briefly what a journal article is, what a database is and what MultiSearch does. A short demonstration was given on MultiSearch and the students again conducted a search in MultiSearch, using example topic keywords. They then had to pick one article and fill in certain bibliographical details about it and say why they selected that particular article. This helped to bring their attention to the importance of evaluation. There was also a slide 'Evaluating information – applying the CRAAP test' (adapted from Successful research @ Meriam Library, CSU; available at http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf) to reinforce the importance of evaluating all information. All groups were reminded about the help available

from the library at the end of the training session, and students were encouraged to bring follow-up questions to the information desk. (Both the first-year undergraduate learning support trainers are also members of the library information services team.)

The information services team took over the running of tours for the academic year 2013–2014; this enabled the learning support team to focus solely on the tutorial element of the library training.

Student feedback 2013–2014

The team designed an online feedback form on WIT Libraries Moodle page for all library training in semester 1 2013; placing it here helped highlight the library resources section on Moodle. At the end of the session students were encouraged to complete the short online feedback form (see appendix 2). We view this as a snapshot of feedback as not all classes were asked to complete the form and not all students who were asked to do so, actually completed the form. Of those who did, 73% (313 students) were first-year undergraduates. Of all those who responded, 88.55% agreed or strongly agreed that the worksheets used in the classes were useful and well presented. The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that they would now feel confident about searching the library catalogue (WITCat) was 85.51%. In relation to searching using MultiSearch, 91.35% of those who completed the feedback form agreed or strongly agreed that they would now feel confident using MultiSearch.

Conclusion

Library training is forever evolving, and it is important to be flexible and to adapt training to meet each new challenge. The new one-hour programme was designed to help first-year students become familiar with the library resources and to make them mindful of the research process involved in completing an assignment and how the library can assist them at the various stages.

Surveying the first-year students provided positive feedback and reinforced our belief in the new programme. We realised the importance of keeping in mind the students' perspective of learning and the different ways in which they learn. The new programme was also designed to help equip students with the necessary skills needed for lifelong learning.

The focus on using MultiSearch as a gateway to our online databases was positively embraced by the first-year undergraduates. The concept of the 'single search box' feature was found to be easy to understand and utilise. The learning support team feel confident that introducing new students to the library resources through use of the 'single search box' feature is the correct approach.

Appendix 1

Five steps to a successful assignment

Step 1 **Define your topic – What are the information requirements of your assignment?**
How much time do you have to complete the assignment?
If possible state your topic as a question – brainstorm – what are the different angles in relation to your topic? Gather some background information

Step 2 **Develop a search strategy**
Identify keywords / synonyms that you will use to search for books, articles and websites relating to your topic
Call to the library information desk to find the best resources to search for information

Step 3 **Find information from within the sources identified**
Attend a 'drop-in workshop' in the library on MultiSearch – workshops run throughout the academic year
Use the library catalogue to find books, print journals, e-books on your topic
Use MultiSearch or individual databases to find scholarly journal articles
Call to the information desk for recommendations of websites useful for scholarly research if required

Step 4 **Evaluate and use the information found – Write the paper**
Apply the CRAAP test (Adapted from Successful Research @ Meriam Library, CSU)
Currency: Is the information up to date?
Relevance: importance of the information for your needs
Authority: source of the information
Accuracy: reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content
Purpose: reason the information exists

Keep a record of the all the sources that you use to complete your assignment. Referencing guideline handouts are available in the library and online through Moodle. Attend a 'drop-in workshop' on referencing if needed.

Step 5 Assess and submit

Does your paper meet the requirements set out in the assignment? Submit in the appropriate format.

APPENDIX 2

Library training feedback results: September – December 2013

Feedback form was on WIT Libraries Moodle page using Moodle's own feedback form. We view this as a snapshot of feedback – not all classes were asked to complete form and not all students who were asked to do so, actually completed the form.

Are you	
- 1st year Undergraduate	313 (73.13 %)
- 2nd year Undergraduate	0
- 3rd year Undergraduate	43 (10.05 %)
- 4th year Undergraduate	60 (14.02 %)
- Postgraduate Taught	12 (2.80 %)
- Postgraduate Research	0
The worksheet(s) were useful and well presented:	
- Strongly Disagree (1)	7 (1.64 %)
- Disagree (2)	11 (2.57 %)
- Not Sure (3)	31 (7.24 %)
- Agree (4)	255 (59.58 %)
- Strongly Agree (5)	124 (28.97 %)
Average: 4.12	

I now feel confident about using WITCat.

Please select the number which best applies to you.

- Strongly Disagree (1)	9 (2.10 %)
- Disagree (2)	7 (1.64 %)
- Not Sure (3)	46 (10.75 %)
- Agree (4)	251 (58.64 %)
- Strongly Agree (5)	115 (26.87 %)

Average: 4.07

I now feel confident about using MultiSearch/databases.

Please select the number which best applies to you.

- Strongly Disagree (1)	6 (1.40 %)
- Disagree (2)	2 (0.47 %)
- Not Sure (3)	29 (6.78 %)
- Agree (4)	264 (61.68 %)
- Strongly Agree (5)	127 (29.67 %)

Average: 4.18

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