

MLIS 7300 Special Populations Exercise (aka Diverse Users)

Compare and contrast two or more of these catalog interfaces. What features work well, which ones need improvement?

“Can you tell me where to find the red book with the frog on the cover?”

I like everything about the International Children’s Digital Library catalog except for one thing: the size of the collection is too small. The catalog design of this collection is very intuitive; it is visual or textual and allows for many access points unlike any other catalog I have seen. Of particular note is the option to search for a book based on the color of the cover, to search for a book based on an interactive globe, and to change the language of the catalog from forty-seven different choices (be careful, it may be hard to get back to your own language). There are many categories to help narrow your search in the advanced search option and for each category there is a numeric notation as to how many books any particular choice may have before you even go there.

Best of all is the fact that the International Children’s Digital Library is a real online library where you can browse and read the entire book online. You can’t ‘check it out’ via a download, but the contributor may have the pdf available for download that can be accessed from the ‘about this book’ screen. I found a book called *Gobolinks* by Ruth McEnery and Albert Bigelow Paine that linked to the Library of Congress and I was able to download the pdf from there; I did have to search a bit in the LC for it. I noticed that the LC version of the book is viewable from the LC, but that the version on ICDL allows zooming and viewable page previews (try the comic viewer).

A comparable catalog can be found at the Mid Hudson Library System’s Kid Catalog. This catalog has a similar design approach that uses visual images to represent subject category access points in addition to word, title and author. This system is stacked two deep in terms of visual choices and then broadens without the ability to narrow as seen in the ICDL catalog. The MHLS catalog does have more subject choices and a much larger collection that includes non-print materials, but that is where the good points

end. Once the user is in the third tier screen I noticed that search results were a mix of both children and young adult and that trying to modify the search criteria could quickly lead the user out of the children's catalog. However, once out of the children's catalog in the modify search screen, the user is presented the 'normal' catalog screen with keyword, title, author, subject, and Boolean operator functions. This search screen can be further limited to collection type, library branch location, material, language (21 choices), year and publisher. The ICDL does not have some of these access points, but I feel that is due to actually having the materials available online.

Suggestions for the MHLS would be to truly separate the children's and young adult collection and 'block' the jump from the children's catalog to the main catalog for younger users. They could use the ICDL as a guide for how to accomplish this. In addition, I find the ICDL catalog would be helpful for public libraries overall, academic libraries not so much, but public libraries may see greater use of their collections if the catalog was this (ICDL) user friendly.

My main disappointment was that the MHLS catalog was just that, a bibliographic list and not the real thing. List don't do much for me anymore, I want to read the information now, not just know that a library near or far has the item and may be able to get it my way in the near future. This is what makes the ICDL so interesting; it is a forerunner to a functioning universal digital library. I am very excited about the digital library concept and have had the ICDL bookmarked for some time. I am glad I was able to analyze it in more depth for an actual assignment and I hope they will be able to really grow their collection in the near future. I would like to be a part of their progress in some way and maybe the library or archive I end up at will be able to participate in their collection development program.

*****I have added for your enjoyment, a description of the access points found in the ICDL. This is not part of my essay, just something I did along the way.**

Search with image graphics (Simple Search):

Color of book: rainbow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, black, white, grey, and brown

Age group: three to five, six to nine, ten to thirteen, make believe books, true books

Character content: kid characters, real animal characters, imaginary creature characters, picture books, chapter books

Length of book and some genre: short books, medium books, long books, recently added books, award winning books, fairy tales and folk tales

Language of book: 47 languages are include in search ability

Book rating: three star, four star, five star, happy, sad

Format of book: short story, series, plays, popup books, comic book

Genre of book: action/adventure, poems/songs/rhymes, mythology/folk tales, fantasy/science fiction, funny/humorous, scary/horror

Keyword search: text box with language choice

***Note that you can also choose your language for all written material on the screen, be careful though it is sometimes hard to get back to English.

Text “search by collection” box without pictures (Advanced Search):

Collection search: main collection, Baldwin collection, Jordan collection, CLRC collection, NCLC collection

Appearance: repeats color, length, and format searches but adds shape search: rectangle, square, wide, narrow, irregular, tiny

Content: repeats country/language search and some of the character search but adds a continent search: Africa, Asia & Middle East, Oceania/Australia, South America, Europe, North America and Central America; other places beyond continents: oceans, imaginary places, school, buildings, space, underwater; characters adds: adults; and time period (when) search is added: prehistory, ancient history, 500-1500, 1501-1900, 1901+, the future

Type: repeats ratings and true or make believe searches; repeats feeling searches but combines with happy/sad/scary/funny; and repeats genre search but adds: mystery and learning books

Subject: repeats time period search and most of other places search but adds: lots of places; new categories not found elsewhere are: Culture and Society (How People Live): customs, mythology/folk tales, religion and beliefs, arts, school and education, jobs and careers, government, wars, money and commerce; Entertainment: painting and sculpture, music, dance, sports, games, hobbies and crafts,

toys, movies and TV; People and Relationships: children and growing up, friendship, family; Science and Nature: animals, plants, fossils and rocks, weather and seasons, space and astronomy, human body and health, land and water; Tools and Machines: computers, land vehicles, flying vehicles, water vehicles; Animals: lots of animals, amphibians, birds, bugs/worms/spiders, imaginary animals, mammals, reptiles, sea animals

***Note all searches allow narrowing with view: text or cover and by sorting results by: title, language, author, illustrator, publication date. Text search gives a small thumb of the cover and more information about the book.

Search using interactive globe (Location Search): allows selection based on continent on globe or by choosing continent from text list. Once continent is selected search can be narrowed by view: text or cover; sorted by: title, language, author, illustrator, publication date; by location: from, about, set in with a choice of countries based on continent location.

Browsing the collection (Browse): Full book list allows view by text and cover with sorting options; Author and Illustrator list give list of names, clicking the name will give you the exact book with information and ability to read the book; **Recently added** and **Award winning book list** are the same as the Full book list; **Collections** gives information about collection and links to the books in that collection and opens up the advanced search box for narrowing.

***Clicking any entry will give you the “**About this book**” page, it presents the following information: summary, publication date, languages, contributor, publisher, awards, get this book, read this book.

*****Read this book'** will open the normal reader and or allow you to access the comic or spiral readers. I prefer the comic reader for its ease of use over the normal view. The normal view requires constant scrolling to go to the next page whereas the comic view allows the use of the hand to move around on the page while zoomed in and has the next page buttons centrally located. The spiral view is a bit 'fru-fru' for my tastes.