Bidding Farewell to the Old Library Catalog

Our current online library catalog, known to some as Voyager (portal.emich.edu), is being retired this summer after nearly twenty years of service. For perspective, our first online catalog, NOTIS, lasted only ten (1989-1998) while the card catalog it replaced lasted over a century. The new face of the catalog will be accessible through E-search (currently the default search on the library website) and, as with previous migrations of bibliographic information, there will be no loss of content. Users will still be able to find what the library owns (including our growing wealth of online resources), where these items are located and how to access them. Additional current functionalities, such as renewing items or placing storage requests, will also be preserved. These functions may, in fact, become easier as logging in will only require entering the same standard EMU NetID used across campus (instead of our current anomalous E-number and last name).

Library discovery services, of which Esearch is one example, were initially used as supplements to library catalogs, but are now beginning to replace them. A single search interface to the library’s online and physical collections provides ease of access, particularly for novice researchers. Searchers with specific needs can use the advanced search options and the options on the results page to drill down to specific types of items. Esearch certainly has some functions that differ from the catalog, but for most it will work much the same as the old library catalog; including options that allow limiting by content type, such as books, journals, archival materials, or videos, and also by library location, such as the Children’s Literature collection. Esearch will also retain an option to limit a search to “Library Catalog” items, which will include all of the physical materials located in the library, therefore allowing users to replicate searches in Voyager.
The current month for the transition is May. Librarians will be actively testing and modifying the system and can address any questions or concerns you may have. Library Administration can also be contacted directly. Additional enhancements will be coming to the library website later in the summer including a new look to the website and an updated Ask a Librarian chat interface. We are, as always, attempting to steadily improve the user experience so don’t hesitate to let us know how this can be done.

~by Sara Memmott & Bob Stevens, Information Services Librarians