

# Chapter 17

## E-Discovery with the ABCD Information Management System

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter discusses the e-Discovery oriented philosophy of ABCD as a library system and the possibilities offered by the ABCD-Site, such as the meta-search, integrating external databases into the ABCD-database environment, easy inclusion of all sorts of links to e-resources and widgets (e.g. Google Scholar) with sample applications. The chapter will be based on the statement that actually the whole ABCD-system technology is built on the philosophy of e-Discovery as implemented by e.g. the ‘Virtual Health Library’ in Latin America rather than as a ‘library system’. In this way the system represents a ‘modern library’.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we will describe the concepts and concrete possibilities of incorporating e-Discovery functions into the ABCD system.

The ABCD-software is a FOSS ‘Integrated Library System’ (ILS) but adding a lot of flexibility to make it in fact a general (textual) information management system. This characteristic of ABCD is fully based on the underlying ISIS-database technology, a predecessor to the now widely used no-SQL (or scheme-less) database philosophy.

ABCD is mostly targeting, as was and is the ISIS-software – formerly developed and supported by UN-bodies like UNESCO, FAO and WHO – the many countries in the South (the ‘Developing World’) where the use of expensive commercial software for libraries and information centers is problematic. The typical users-environment therefore also often lacks the financial resources and the necessary fast internet connectivity to allow full deployment of connectivity- and subscription-based e-Discovery services. In order to cope with these challenges, ABCD offers some possibilities to incorporate off-line

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(locally stored) databases as well as externally connected databases of any structure, making it suitable to provide e-Discovery services in itself.

In this way ABCD can be positioned in between other solutions like e-Granary, LibHub and LibreCat, but with the added advantage of fully integrated services with the own library system, archives management and repository systems.

The aim of this chapter is to explain and illustrate these claims of the ABCD system being suitable to combine library (and catalog-) management with e-Discovery services.

## **THE E-DISCOVERY CONCEPTS OF ABCD**

The concepts characterizing ABCD as a tool for e-Discovery are respectively:

- An integrated approach,
- A Do-It-Yourself approach,
- A mixed offline-online approach.

### **The Integrated Approach**

The ‘integrated’ aspect refers to the fact that e-resources in ABCD will be presented as just one or more ‘other’ databases along with the ones maintained by the library itself for its own resources, like the books catalog, the (e-) journals, the archives, the repositories. In fact, these last three examples in themselves, in our view, already represent ‘e-resources’ as the focus of ‘e-Discovery Services’, in the sense that they are less-traditional library resources like the books-catalog.

In ABCD ‘everything is a database’: as the system is fully based on the ISIS-database technology, it can be seen as a fully web-based ‘database management system’. Especially the ‘ABCD Central’ module (ABCD is very modular in the sense that each part can be used together or independently from other parts) is to be considered a general database manager. This module, acting as the ‘system management’ interface, offers the following functions:

- Database creation, either copying existing ISIS-databases, existing ABCD-databases or creation from scratch, which then includes definition of the fields-repository (the Field Definition Table, not a database scheme really as it only provides the ‘available’ fields which are all non-mandatory unless otherwise defined), the data-entry worksheets, the indexing mechanisms (Field Selection Table) and the powerful output-templates (Print Format Tables) based on a rich formatting language with pseudo-programming language or scripting possibilities. Any structure can be implemented, from very simple ones like Dublin Core, up to very complicated ones like Marc21, UniMarc, ISAD/G.
- Modifying existing database-structures: all previously defined tables can be modified, this without having to re-create the database (as is the case with fixed-structured tables in a relational system); the list of available databases can be adjusted anytime and databases can be stored in a series of dedicated directories.
- Typical database management tasks like re-indexing, (un-)locking, initialization/deletion, import/export (together constituting the ‘compacting’ task) are complemented by more specific jobs like

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