

## Chapter 26

# Does Web–Scale Discovery Make a Difference? Changes in Collections Use after Implementing Summon

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries implemented the Summon™<sup>1</sup> Discovery Service in January 2010 to provide a convenient starting point for library research, particularly for undergraduate students who are less experienced in library research. Librarians thought Summon™ would help users find and use materials more effectively; therefore, implementation of the discovery tool was expected to positively influence collections use. At the end of the first year following Summon™ implementation, statistics on the use of collections showed significant increases in the use of electronic resources: link resolver use increased 84%, and full-text article downloads increased 23%. During the same period, use of the online catalog decreased 13.7%, and use of traditional indexing and abstracting database searches decreased by 5%. The author concludes that the increases in collections use are related to adoption of a Web-scale discovery service.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2010, the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Libraries implemented Serials Solutions<sup>®</sup> Summon<sup>™</sup> Web-scale discovery service. This study reports on the increases in the use of collections following the implementation. Summon<sup>™</sup>, like other discovery services, provides streamlined access to a wide range of library resources, both physical and electronic, including printed books, DVDs, e-books, online journal content and metadata from thousands of database producers and publishers, and local digital content such as image collections. Having a single search box interface and quick access to full-text material across databases and formats would presumably serve a range of users; however, it appeared to hold particular promise for undergraduate students.

As Web-scale discovery services began to appear over the past several years, the tools clearly had the potential to address the need for a student-friendly search option that would not require specialized instruction. With over 7,000 incoming freshmen each year and a student body of over 31,000, offering a more intuitive means of accessing collections would enable UTSA undergraduate students to be more self-sufficient and to connect with information resources easily—in effect, lowering the barrier to successful library research. The library assumed that following Summon<sup>™</sup> implementation most graduate student and faculty research would continue to be conducted in subject-specific databases. The new discovery tool would serve as a safety net for undergraduates, providing 24/7 research support whether or not a student understood the difference between the catalog and a database, whether or not they knew how to select an appropriate database for their topic, and whether or not they understood the search process from the library perspective.

As one means of evaluating the effectiveness of Summon<sup>™</sup>, librarians planned to monitor collection use and compare post-Summon<sup>™</sup> use with previous use. If a discovery tool can lower the bar-

rier to effective library research, then the number of downloads of journal articles, for example, would be expected to rise as students made increased use of available resources. The purpose of a discovery tool is to help users successfully find and access library materials; examining changes in collection use would be one indication of the value of the service. The chapter discusses changes in the use of physical materials and electronic collections following Summon<sup>™</sup> implementation, as well as marketing approaches the library employed to encourage Summon<sup>™</sup> use. The discovery service has been in use since January 2010, and statistics for the first year of use demonstrate both the acceptance of Summon<sup>™</sup> as a discovery tool and accompanying growth in the use of collections.

## **BACKGROUND: WEB-SCALE DISCOVERY SERVICES ENTER THE MARKET**

One of the fastest-growing educational institutions in Texas, UTSA enrolls over 31,000 students in 64 undergraduate, 48 masters, and 22 doctoral programs. The university began offering classes in 1970, and its goals include expansion of the graduate programs and eventual status as a Tier One university. The library maintains four facilities on three campuses: the John Peace Library on the main campus; the Downtown Campus Library; the Applied Engineering and Technology (AET) Library, a 2,200 square-foot bookless satellite library on the main campus; and the Special Collections Manuscripts Unit at the HemisFair Park Campus. The library's collection includes 1,747,000 volumes (809,644 e-books), 3.2 million microform items, 68,866 current serial titles, and 375 electronic reference sources and aggregation services. In 2010, the library spent approximately 68% of its 5.6 million dollar collections budget on e-resources. The library has a staff of 105 full-time librarians and classified staff.

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