

## Chapter 30

# Encore Synergy Implementation at a Medium-Sized University Library: Unforeseen Challenges and Opportunities

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Implementing Web-scale discovery at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's (UNO) Criss Library presented some unexpected challenges. The UNO library selected Encore Synergy from Innovative Interfaces, Vendor homogeneity between Innovative Interfaces' Integrated Library System (ILS), and the discovery tool did not prevent problems regarding ILS module interoperability. This chapter describes the solutions found. Web-scale discovery via Encore also did not include all of the library's electronic resources, but only a few aggregator databases. A representative sample of approximately thirty resources, however, was accessible via pass-through search from Encore to Innovative's federated search tool, Research Pro. An initial examination of database usage indicates a decline in the use of databases not directly searchable in Encore.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) currently has a population of approximately 14,000 total undergraduate and graduate students and has experienced exponential growth during the past several years. Part of this growth can be attributed to UNO's new classification as a doctoral/research university according to the Carnegie Foundation. Several years prior to this designation, the Library had lagged behind its peer institutions in offering search technologies that provide seamless delivery of full-text resources. Specifically, the Library lacked an OpenURL link resolution system and a federated search product. However, in 2007, under new leadership, the Library added OpenURL link resolving (Serial Solutions<sup>®2</sup> Article Linker) as well as federated searching (Serial Solutions<sup>®</sup> 360 Search). Although not formally surveyed, many students and faculty expressed concern with 360 Search's speed and retrieval of relevant results. Librarians at UNO were also not satisfied with 360 Search and eschewed including it in bibliographic instruction. The Library worked with Serials Solutions<sup>®</sup> to troubleshoot the product's slowness in yielding search results. Serials Solutions<sup>®</sup> recommended the Library reduce some of the database clusters because many of them had more than twenty databases per subject category. After the Library streamlined the number of databases per category to no more than ten, 360 Search's speed did improve, but the retrieved results were still problematic. General dissatisfaction with 360 Search led to its discontinuation prior to the end of the three-year contract, but no alternative federated search product was considered. Despite overt criticism of 360 Search, the discontinuation of federated search altogether generated many inquiries from faculty and students. Many of them suggested that the Library offer something akin to 360 Search. As expected, neither faculty nor students offered any federated search product examples that they may have encountered at other libraries.

The feedback from faculty and students convinced the Library it was important to offer a searching experience reminiscent of Google that would allow users to search the local catalog and a selection of full-text sources from a single interface. The Library determined that discovery tools eclipsed federated search utilities in meeting the objective of searching the library's local and electronic collections, and decided to implement Innovative Interfaces' Encore Synergy<sup>™</sup>. Interestingly, the Library also implemented another federated search product, Innovative Interfaces' Research Pro because it integrates with Encore.

While other institutions are able to incorporate digital collections, locally developed collections, and institutional repositories, these collections are still in their infancy at the Library. Because of these limitations, the Library's search tool is not quite the "the foundation for portal development" that may currently exist at other institutions (Allison, 2010, p. 13). However, the tool for ensuing portal development, Encore Synergy<sup>™</sup>, is now present in the Library. While many accounts of discovery tool implementation discuss the inclusion of digital collections and localized search interface customizations, this account focuses on some fundamental issues encountered while implementing the Web-scale discovery tool, Encore Synergy<sup>™</sup>. In addition, Web-scale discovery's impact on the use of library resources which indicates that Encore Synergy<sup>™</sup> is well-positioned to serve as a portal will be explored.

## **SELECTION**

Having identified the need for a discovery tool, the Criss Library sought quick implementation because two other universities in Nebraska, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska-Kearney, already offered Encore Synergy<sup>™</sup>. In the interest of rapidly selecting and deploying a discovery tool for the upcoming 2010-2011 academic year, the Library did not

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