

The Library Catalog...

The catalog is among a library's most important assets. An unread book offers little value, but the catalog offers the promise that the library's resources will be found and used, and a well constructed catalog makes the finding easier by offering rich details and easy navigation.

...Breaks Free of the Box

But catalogs have their limitations. The WebOPAC was designed with a very specific purpose, the search and retrieval of information, and has limited support for other uses of the bibliographic data it contains.

XML Server offers a direct interface to that catalog data for applications a library may develop to serve their specific needs and interests. This presentation offers a number of examples of how it might be used, including:

- Fully automatic featured lists
- Dynamic bibliographies that can be re-sorted by author, title, pub data, etc
- Web-based citations that draw bibliographic details and availability status right from the catalog
- Browse interfaces that reveal the catalog's contents without searching
- New searching tools, including services similar to Google Suggest
- Optimizations that increase the catalog's contribution to the "Google economy" by being easier to index and link to
- Resource linking that puts supporting information in the catalog, a Shakespeare reader's guide offered in a sidebar to a Shakespeare author search, for example

These services depend on and leverage the value of the library catalog content, but use that content in ways not possible with the standard WebOPAC.

Why?

Our patrons are expecting increasingly integrated solutions that anticipate their questions and shorten the distance between inquiry and answer. Catalogs must compete for attention, even against a library's other services, as they add online databases and increase the content on their websites. These competing resources increase a patron's confusion at the same time they're expecting greater levels of self-service.

XML Server offers the framework libraries need to develop solutions to these problems

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