

Melvyl® Recommender Project

The logo for the California Digital Library (CDL) features the letters "CDL" in a white serif font, centered within a dark blue square. Below the letters is a small white upward-pointing arrow.

Building a smarter library catalog

<http://www.cdlib.org/inside/projects/xtf/>

What would it be like if your library catalog worked more like some of the most successful resources on the Internet, like Google and Amazon? For example, what if you consistently found what you were looking for at the top of the list? And what if the catalog were smart enough to offer good recommendations for items that you hadn't considered?

Project Description

Melvyl Recommender is an experimental research and prototyping project that seeks to address these questions, using data from the California Digital Library's Melvyl Catalog as a test bed. The project goal is to determine the feasibility of implementing a variety of user-friendly features in future versions of online public access catalogs. Areas of focus include:

Relevance ranking. Research will consider how information about content, circulation patterns and library holdings can be combined so that the items most likely to be relevant consistently appear at the top of any results list.

Recommending. Using catalog content in conjunction with data on circulation patterns and other external sources, this aspect of the project will seek the best method of offering recommendations of interest to an academic audience.

Auto-correction. Incorporating data from indexes and external thesauri, this research will investigate how best to incorporate "did you mean..." hints when potential misspellings produce poor search results.

Text-based discovery system. In a departure from more traditional relational database systems, this project will assess CDL's eXtensible Text Framework (XTF) (<http://www.cdlib.org/inside/projects/xtf/>) as an indexing and query tool for bibliographic systems.

New user interface strategies. This project will consider ways to enhance the user interface, incorporating strategies such as faceted browsing to encourage flexible subject-area exploration, and bibliographic record grouping to present more concise and meaningful results.

Sponsors and Partners

Funding for this research project is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The UCLA and UC Berkeley libraries, the Research Libraries Group, and the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) have supplied circulation and holdings data to be used in relevance ranking and recommending experiments.

Timeline

Results of the project will be available in June 2006.

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For more information

<http://www.cdlib.org/inside/projects/xtf/>