

Case Study

Columbus Metropolitan Library

Seamless Integration of WebFeat Search Tool Improves Access to Electronic Resources

When the top rated public library in the nation wants to give its patrons improved access to electronic resources with a cost effective solution that's seamlessly integrated into their new website who do they turn to for a solution? The answer is WebFeat.

Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) was ranked by Hennen's American Public Library Rating (HAPLR) 2005 Index as the top public library in the nation serving a population of more than 500,000. The Library has ranked in the top four for its category since the HAPLR Index began in 1998. As part of its commitment to being a top library, CML set out on an ambitious project to overhaul and upgrade the Library's website interface and database searching technology in 2004. A key goal of the website upgrade project was a desire to improve patron access to electronic resources. To accomplish this, the Library turned to WebFeat to deliver a powerful federated search solution that is customized to Library specifications.

"Two concepts at the heart of our website project were to make electronic resources easier to access on the site and to deliver a consistent user interface for the public," explained Jessi Crim-Weithman, Manager of Web and Applications Development, Columbus Metropolitan Library.



Today, from any page on our website patrons can use the WebFeat search option to access our electronic resource collections. We were able to add a 'Find It' search box to each of the library's web pages that allows patrons to search ... the library's databases simultaneously via a WebFeat interface. Further, the WebFeat interface matches the look and feel of our website so [it] provides a consistent user experience.

-Jessi Crim-Weithman
Manager of Web & Applications
Development



A 'Find It' search box seamlessly embedded within each of the Library's web pages enables users to quickly search the library's general resources. The "More Searching" tab links to a more advanced WebFeat search interface.

WebFeat's search capabilities, flexibility with implementation and customization enabled the library to easily accomplish its goals. The customizability of the WebFeat solution enabled the library to make WebFeat a central component of its major technology and website upgrade project which was successfully unveiled to the public in mid-October. "Today, from any page on our website patrons can use the WebFeat search option to access our electronic resource collections," added Crim-Weithman. "We were able to add a 'Find It' search box to each of the library's web pages that allows patrons to search against the library catalog and/or search the library's databases simultaneously via a WebFeat interface. Further, the WebFeat interface matches the look and feel of our website so, to patrons, WebFeat searches appear as just another page on our site and provide a consistent user experience."

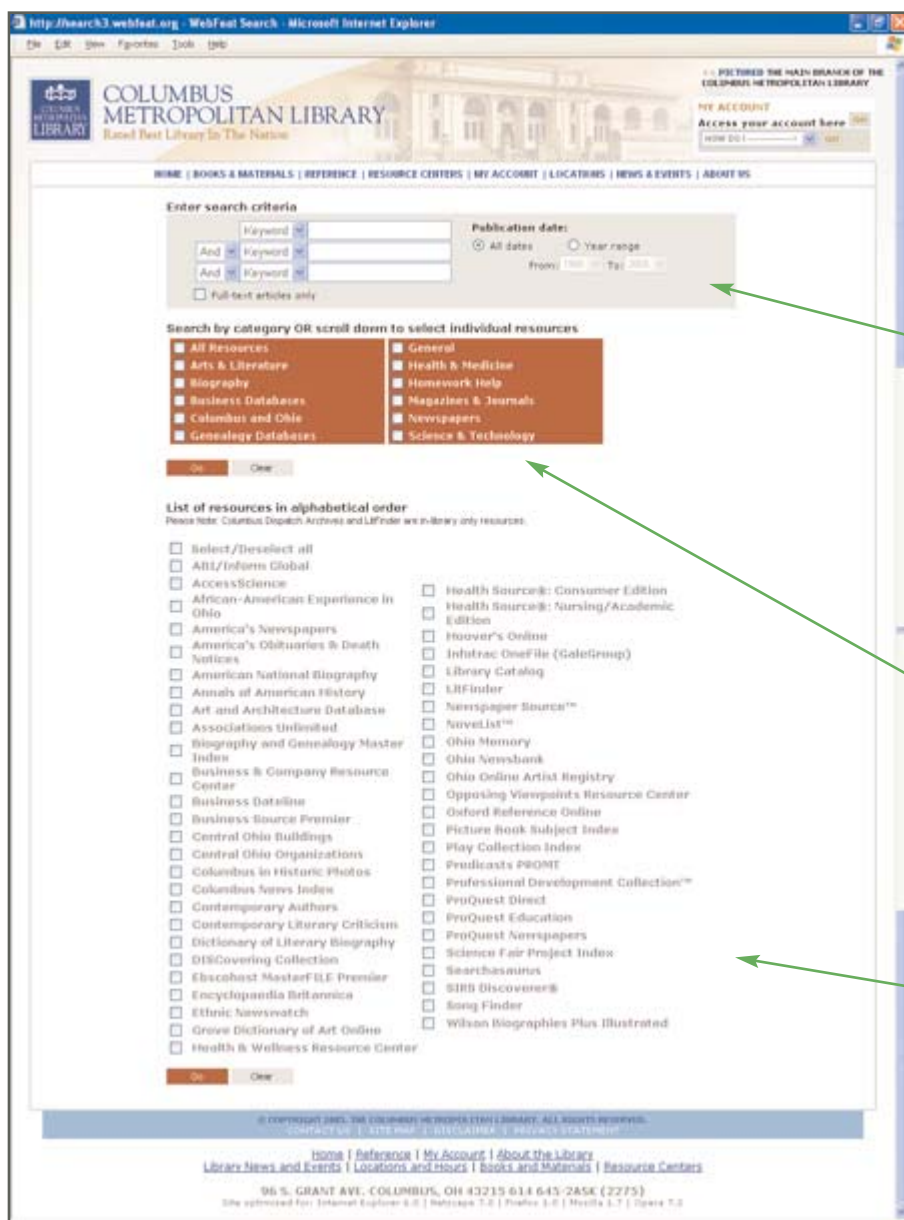
The WebFeat implementation at Columbus Metropolitan Library (continued)

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followed a schedule set by the Library. In February 2005, a CML task force began selecting the appropriate resources for inclusion with Library's federated search system. WebFeat provided the Library with the necessary translators for the databases selected, then Library staff set about to categorize the resources for the website. In August, WebFeat's interface design team worked with CML to develop a user interface per the Library's specifications. Final tweaks to the system were completed in September.

"What has made WebFeat unique for CML, is that we are able to tailor searching to fit the needs of specific users," commented Joy Bevan, Virtual Librarian Columbus Metro Library. The library has created 14 'Resource Centers'—mini-websites within the main library website—that are geared to different user populations, such as investors, genealogists, parents and teachers. "We can configure WebFeat to only search databases that are relevant to whatever the respective population is searching," added Bevan. "For example, a genealogist can limit their searching to only genealogy databases without having to even choose those databases. The ability to categorize databases and to control the searching in such a manner has made WebFeat a valuable tool for both library administrators and our customers."

Remarkably, despite having a completely customized user interface and implementation, library staff can still make changes to the WebFeat system at any time using WebFeat's Administrative Console (WAC). WAC enables library staff to manage a variety of system attributes, such as database menus, subject categories, and custom help screens. This gives the library a tremendous amount of control and flexibility as the library considers adding more databases and electronic resources.



From the 'Find It' boxes embedded throughout CML's website, users can easily access WebFeat's advanced search interface.

Advanced searches enable the user to search by keyword, title, author, abstract and/or subject. It also allows for limiting results to a specific date range and/or by full text availability.

Users can simultaneously search databases grouped by categories. Checking these boxes lets the user search a set of databases that the library staff has identified as the most relevant for that topic.

Experienced researchers who know what sources they want to use can select from a traditional A-Z menu of databases. WebFeat will simultaneously search all of the databases that the user selects from the A-Z list.

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WebFeat enables Columbus Metropolitan Library to tailor searching to fit the needs of specific users.

CML's website provides fourteen 'Resource Centers'—mini-websites within the main library website—that are geared to different user populations, such as investors, genealogists, parents and teachers.

Remarkably, WebFeat enables CML to configure the search system to provide users of each of these Resource Centers with the option to only search databases that are relevant to the subjects that they are researching.



FIND IT
Select a topic and enter your search term(s) in the field below:

Select a Search Type:

Select a Search Type:

Select a Search Type:

LIBRARY LOCATOR

Select a ZIP code:

[Locations and Hours](#)

From Resource Center pages users can choose to search all of the library's databases or only a set of databases (pre-selected by library staff) that are most relevant to their subject of interest.

For example, a genealogist could limit their searching to only genealogy databases without having to know which databases to choose individually.

With WebFeat patrons can search all of the library's relevant resources with just a few mouse clicks.