

CUL XC User Research Project

eXtensible Catalog (XC) Project at the University of Rochester

The XC project is a set of open-source applications that will provide libraries with an alternative way of revealing their physical and digital collections to library users. The access is across a variety of databases, including licensed ones, and across metadata schemas and standards, including user-generated metadata. XC will enable library content to be revealed also through other services, e.g. content management systems.

XC will combine a "next-generation" discovery interface without dispensing with the traditional ILS and its rich metadata. So far, two toolkits have been developed and the team is continuing to develop the rest of the XC system and plans to release the open-source license in July 2009.

It is based on the understanding of actual user practices and ethnographic research.

For more information, see the official XC site at <http://www.extensiblecatalog.org/>. Jennifer Bowen, one of the principal investigators has also released two reports on the two XC phases: "Supporting the eXtensible Catalog through Metadata Design and Services"; at <https://urresearch.rochester.edu/handle/1802/6377> and Metadata to Support Next-Generation Library Resource Discovery: Lessons from the eXtensible Catalog Project, Phase 1 at <https://urresearch.rochester.edu/handle/1802/5757>

See also the latest [Project Update](#)

User Research at Cornell

In October 2007, the Cornell University Library signed a partnership agreement to conduct user research studies and work with Nancy Foster, the lead anthropologist at Rochester, on the analysis of the data. In April 2008, we conducted 19 interviews with 13 faculty and 6 graduate students in a variety of humanities and social sciences disciplines. There was an even gender spread, and the tenure of the faculty subjects varied from assistant professors who had just begun their careers to faculty who had been at Cornell for years. We followed an interview protocol designed by the Rochester team and customized by us for our patrons. See the [interview protocols](#) used for faculty and graduate students.

We used both audio and video recorders. Each interview lasted between 45 min and an hour. All the interviews took place in the faculty and graduate students' offices or library studies. The transcripts of the interviews were done by the Rochester team, using the audio files and then sent to us for verification and editing using the video recordings.

As a team, we viewed the video-taped interviews together, read all the transcripts and discussed our impressions. In July of 2008, Nancy Foster and our team analyzed the data, grouped our findings, and brainstormed for possible information access and management system features that would be most conducive to the research processes employed by our subjects. See [Summary of Interview](#) results.

In Nov. 2008, Rochester hosted a partners' meeting, where the findings from the 3 institutions (Yale had not completed their analysis) were discussed and compared, and another brainstorming session held. The [results of the brainstorming session](#) were shared with the programmers who are working on the set of applications.

CUL User Research Team members

Kaila Bussert: social navigation, user-contributed data
Ellie Buckley (alum): user studies
Gaby Castro-Gessner: anthropology; ethnographic studies
Kathy Chiang: usability and user studies
Kornelia Tancheva (team leader): usability and user studies
Wendy Wilcox: usability
Liane O'Brien (alum): administrative assistance