

Abstract

This diploma thesis discusses a modern concept of information retrieval and search engines for libraries and other academic institutions. The concept named “web scale discovery” comprises of search engines, whose main characteristics lie in simplicity and user friendliness for the end users while maintaining all functional qualities of traditional research databases. Users can search in a wide variety of international research databases, and also in local sources of an institution that are combined within a large central index.

The theoretical section presents definitions of web scale discovery, which conceptually set the new method of information retrieval within the field of information and library science. A graphic scheme of the basic functionality of a web scale discovery system is presented. Also discussed are requirements for a modern discovery system, an overview of the current situation in the Czech Republic, and a short characteristic of commercially available discovery systems. The theoretical part concludes with a literature review of selected foreign research, studying user satisfaction with the new solution, the impact on electronic and print resources in libraries, and usability testing.

The practical part presents an original research study – usability testing of EBSCO Discovery Service discovery system at Charles University in Prague. Usability of the system is analyzed by user testing in a laboratory setting, using the methods of eye-tracking, think aloud protocol, questionnaires, an interview and a System Usability Scale. A set of research questions covering a variety of usability aspects of the tested system is answered through observation and analysis of the collected data.

The thesis concludes that usability of the discovery system EBSCO Discovery Service implemented as Informational Retrieval Service UKAŽ can be evaluated as above average and its impact on academic libraries can be assessed as positive.

Keywords

search engines – web scale discovery – central index – libraries – discovery systems – EBSCO Discovery Service – Primo – Summon – WorldCat Discovery Services – usability testing – user testing – eye-tracking – think aloud protocol – system usability scale