

KNOW THY FRENEMY?

Thank Google for repositories

This issue of *INCITE* is about the changing expectations of library users. Walls are disappearing, print books are gathering dust... But is the perception that libraries struggle to keep up with the world around us accurate? Is Google really out to get us? Or do we as librarians have changing expectations too?

As a librarian, I expect to work in a dynamic environment with colleagues dedicated to the highest level of customer service. I expect to be challenged and to celebrate the small wins. But there are other things we're beginning to take for granted in our workplaces. We expect the internet to be superfast. We use open source software every day. We need web services available in our browsers, and data stored in the cloud so we can work wherever and whenever we like. We back up our presentations in Dropbox so we don't have embarrassing technical issues. We wonder why websites don't work on a mobile, and it's a long time since we've had to memorise a URL. Slowly, our expectations are changing alongside those of our customers. Google is becoming our friend.

Google will only be an enemy of libraries as long as we believe we're in competition. Librarians spend a lot of time teaching people not to trust Google, yet we're keen to implement discovery layers that we value for their 'Google-like' search. If librarians are 'the original search engine' as the t-shirt says, why do we want to replicate the Google search experience instead of just making it work for us?

'Repositories' may well be a contender for the ugliest word in the English language, but these systems lead the way in teamwork between libraries and Google. I'm a librarian with a background in making research open, so you may think of course I would say that. But, once again, our expectations are shifting. The research we put online is of great value to people all around the world, but I expect our role to be invisible, and certainly seamless. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain, Dorothy—thanks to Google, you should never have to know repositories exist.

Repositories are optimised for indexing by Google, Google Scholar, and other services. When we promote these services to academics, they ask: 'Is it in Google?' And it works both ways. Google is always hungry for content. We feed it ours.

The new publishing agreement between ALIA and Taylor & Francis for *ALJ* and *AARL* allows authors to deposit their final drafts in institutional repositories. So if you haven't visited a repository before, you soon will. But thanks to Google, you'll never need to know the URL of the repository or where the author works. If you type the title into Google and the paper is in a repository, you'll find it.

Designing libraries with our customers in mind means embracing, rather than rejecting, the technologies they know and love, especially where they serve our ends. And I'm hoping that, thanks to Google, one day I will never have to use that word 'repositories' again.

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