WorldCat
A global network for library cooperation
WorldCat—the power of global library community, efficiency and sharing

In an expanding universe of information alternatives, why stand alone?

A library makes its community stronger by providing shared resources for its users. For decades WorldCat has been at the forefront of providing similar value to the libraries it serves. Built upon cooperatively maintained databases and directly entered bibliographic metadata, WorldCat is a global network of library content and services. Using the Web to let your institution be more connected, more open and more productive, WorldCat helps you reduce costs and redundant effort by sharing the load.

Cooperating across the full spectrum of library activities

Whether you’re a small public library or part of an extended academic consortium, an array of WorldCat services lets your institution and thousands of others pool information and connect common workflows—such as acquisitions, cataloguing, resource sharing and collection management—on a cooperative network driven by the shared data. Time and money you normally spend on these routine activities can instead be applied to user-facing services and activities that are more professionally challenging. You can concentrate on the real value you deliver—context, local knowledge and expertise, special collections—instead of the methods behind them.

No other catalogue is quite like it: Built up over 30 years, WorldCat holds in excess of one hundred million bibliographic records that represent more than one billion items owned by member libraries. WorldCat encompasses hundreds of languages and all formats, including rapidly growing numbers of electronic resources and digital objects. High hit rates, reliable, quality-controlled metadata and the application of FRBR principles to records mean your users and staff both locate the right resources quickly.

What people say about WorldCat...

“At the University of Essex, we place a great deal of value on our membership of OCLC. The support of OCLC has been vital for our ability to handle a large intake of holdings. We had no hesitation in adding our records to WorldCat because of the numerous benefits that contribution affords, such as resource-sharing.” —Robert Butler, University of Essex

“I spent some time yesterday on WorldCat.org, I was so pleased to find this superb database is available to users to search for free! I now have quite a few books in my own bibliography amassed over some seven years of work around the libraries of the world. WorldCat.org is invaluable for me in locating holdings and checking bibliographic data.” —David Dillingham, Bibliographer and WorldCat.org user

“WorldCat points more people, even those who don’t typically visit libraries, to our collections as a prime source of information.” —Dr. Rolf Griebel, Director General Bavarian State Library
More connections than ever

Cooperation through WorldCat services enables better, more efficient resource sharing and results in significant savings for libraries. WorldCat makes library resources easier to acquire, manage, analyse and promote. The benefits of this cooperation occur at several levels:

- **At the local level**, individual libraries can catalogue unique items in the world’s largest bibliographic database and promote them through popular Web sites, making them more visible and accessible to users. The use of library services that work together means less duplication of effort. Participation in a global collaborative provides opportunities for staff to work with and learn from librarians all over the world.

- **Library groups** benefit from shared discovery and delivery services. Acquisition, cataloguing, resource sharing and collection management tools allow groups to share the load among any number of locations. When using CBS, our group cataloguing system, they have real-time synchronisation with WorldCat. Library users benefit from access to resources in extended locations or shared collections.

- **At the global level**, participants benefit from opportunities of scale afforded by WorldCat—a single coherent technology that provides libraries the opportunity to connect with each other and their users at Web-scale. The connection comes full circle as users are presented, in their local systems, with unique library content from all around the world.

WorldCat helps more people discover your content

Today, the Web is the medium of choice for information seekers. No individual library can realistically compete with global information providers for users’ attention. To address this issue, OCLC moved WorldCat fully onto the Web in 2006 with the free-to-use library search site, WorldCat.org. Since then millions of unique visitors come to WorldCat.org every month, many of whom then click through to local library services.

Users connect to your library holdings by searching WorldCat.org, as well as major search engines (including Google and Yahoo!) and then link to delivery options, interlibrary loan systems, databases and eContent.

WorldCat.org libraries also have access to social tools (such as lists, citations, reviews and tags) that let them maintain an ongoing, personal relationship with users and other information seekers.

The result? You pull in new users and give existing ones a familiar way to reach you as information seekers link to your catalogue through search engines, browser toolbars, social networking sites, online booksellers and the WorldCat.org destination site.
Working together gives libraries and information seekers more of everything.

Libraries and their users can accomplish a lot when they work together via WorldCat. The momentum built from participation will help more libraries provide value, make more connections and become even more relevant. It’s a circular process.

- Individuals and library partners can now add their efforts to those of libraries through the WorldCat platform. By doing so, they increase the efficiency, discovery, personality and interest of library materials and services.

- Publishers, materials vendors and other industry partners can interact with library workflows, saving time and money.

- Users can personalise their library experience, adding lists, tags, reviews and other descriptive data to further enrich the catalogue.

- Programmers have access to WorldCat through APIs and other Web Services in order to create unique mashups.

And while direct cataloguing was responsible for much of the early growth of WorldCat, improvements in batch processing have allowed large organisations, including many national libraries, to add massive numbers of records to WorldCat. Regional and national group catalogues provide a way for library systems to share data and service interactions on the Web. And the WorldCat Registry now provides a place for libraries to store institutional and service data so that it, too, can be shared at a wider level.

More than 35 national libraries and union catalogues now contribute their data to WorldCat, including those in Australia, Botswana, Chile, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and Turkey. This number is still growing.

Please visit www.oclc.org/worldcat/catalog/national for an up-to-date overview.
How often a record is added:
Every 10 seconds

Monthly WorldCat.org search box displays:
2.7 million

How often a request is filled through WorldCat Resource Sharing:
Every 4 seconds

In 2009 an agreement is signed to load the Danish National Union Catalogue (DanBib) into WorldCat. This cooperation brings global visibility through WorldCat.org to a national web-based library service, Bibliotek.dk.

Due to the country’s history of independent states, German libraries do not have a single union catalogue. Federated searching is possible – but only in WorldCat can library users search in all loaded records at once for a unified, deduplicated results list.

Although OCLC’s relationship with libraries in the People’s Republic of China began in 1986, it wasn’t until early 2008 that the National Library of China began adding records to WorldCat. Important ones:
China can offer 5,000 years of recorded history, one of the oldest cultural heritages of humankind.

Since 1997, OCLC has worked with Sabinet, a leading provider of electronic information services to libraries in South Africa. Through this partnership, more than 300 libraries synchronize their holdings with both WorldCat and SACat (the South African National Union Catalogue) in order to better link users to unique and important information resources.

Through WorldCat, the National Library of Australia makes the rich and varied collections from more than 700 Australian libraries visible on the Web and accessible to information seekers worldwide. Materials contributed to the Australian National Bibliographic Database are automatically synchronized with WorldCat.

The National Library of New Zealand has added some 8 million records and the holdings of 275 libraries to WorldCat. As a result, records of items held in New Zealand libraries are visible to Web searchers worldwide through the OCLC WorldCat.org service.

In 2008, the National Library of Spain agreed to load 3 million records into WorldCat. Spanish is now the 4th largest language in WorldCat, serving 400 million native Spanish speakers worldwide.

The Dutch GGC union catalogue has shared its data with WorldCat since 2006. Today the GGC is synchronized with WorldCat in real-time, meaning that a title catalogued in The Hague is available for use in Tokyo seconds later.

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Just a few of the success stories made possible when libraries cooperate globally. For more information, see: [www.oclc.org/worldcat/catalog](http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/catalog)
Should your library participate in WorldCat?
Consider the benefits of cooperation.

1. **Global in geography, scope and content**

The Web is truly worldwide. Users and organisations have become accustomed to services that remove barriers to global participation. WorldCat is the only truly worldwide platform for library cooperation, already incorporating materials from thousands of libraries in hundreds of countries in a wide variety of formats. Every local library has something to share with users around the world. That level of participation becomes not just possible, but effective and compelling with WorldCat.

2. **Library-focused community, technology and research**

Libraries occupy a unique space in the information and education spheres. Library services are often interwoven with those of larger institutions or communities of practice, while simultaneously having very specific needs. WorldCat provides a way for libraries worldwide to be part of a community that exists solely for their long-term benefit. Participation in OCLC provides access to professional opportunities and industry-wide research available nowhere else.

3. **Engage users on the Web**

The Web is now the first choice for information seekers worldwide. To be successful, libraries must embed their services as fully as possible into the Web experience of their users. WorldCat provides the only Web-scale platform currently available that connects global discovery to local delivery. In addition, the WorldCat.org user interface adds personal and social tools to the library experience, allowing participating users and libraries to benefit from shared reviews, suggestions, lists, tags and Web services.

4. **Connect libraries, users and partners as fully as possible**

Providing a way for libraries to share data among themselves is important, but is no longer enough. WorldCat brings industry partners—publishers, vendors, search engines and others—into the flow. The more transparent these connections become, the more libraries will benefit from efficiency and cost savings. Users, too, benefit when library services connect more intuitively and universally. Participation in a linked system of library management, service, discovery and delivery will encourage even more use and appreciation of libraries and what they offer.

5. **Streamline processes when libraries work together**

Libraries are built around the value of shared community resources. Similarly, the greater library community benefits when we share as many tasks as possible across a connected infrastructure platform. Updates flow out to participants without pause. WorldCat simplifies multistage tasks, reducing the need for redundant, expensive processes. And libraries can better manage their entire workflow, saving money and better serving their constituencies.
More connections means more value

WorldCat has become the foundation of an array of services that connect libraries, vendors, partners and users in a shared, global platform. Putting back-office, management, library-to-library and user-facing functions in the same system allows for greater utility and discovery for librarians and users. Data and results from any one service help inform decisions and enrich activities elsewhere.
Next steps

If you want to learn more about how to take a step toward participating in WorldCat, let’s have a conversation. We encourage you to call or e-mail us to get that dialogue started.

If you want to spend some time exploring WorldCat further on your own, you can do so in a number of ways:

- Do some searching! Helping you find interesting and unique library materials is what WorldCat.org is all about:
  - Try refining a search using facets for author, format, year, content, audience level, language and topic.
  - Check the “Related Items” tab for suggestions.
  - Search inside user-generated lists.
- Search for your favourite author, character or group in WorldCat Identities at www.worldcat.org/identities.
- Find out more about the depth of WorldCat through statistics, timelines and maps at www.oclc.org/worldcat/catalog.
- Update your Registry profile or create one at www.worldcat.org/registry/institutions.
- Sign up for updates and offers at www.oclc.org/email.
- Register for RSS feeds and podcasts at www.oclc.org/rss.

Features and benefits

- WorldCat is a global network of library content and services helping members streamline processes by working together.
- WorldCat holds in excess of 100 million bibliographic records that represent more than one billion items owned by member libraries.
- WorldCat encompasses hundreds of languages and all formats, including rapidly growing numbers of electronic resources and digital objects.
- High hit rates, reliable, quality-controlled metadata and the application of FRBR principles to records mean your users and staff both locate the right resources quickly.
- WorldCat helps you reduce costs and redundant effort by sharing the load.
- WorldCat helps you engage users on the Web—Millions of unique visitors come to WorldCat.org every month, many of whom then click through to local library services.
- Global in geography, scope and content.

For more information

To order WorldCat services or to find out more about ways to contribute, please visit our Web site at www.oclc.org/worldcat

Or contact us at: uk@oclc.org

OCLC helps libraries in more than 100 countries. Please contact us to learn more about OCLC in your part of the world.

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