iPort is the OCLC PICA web based service that provides access to multiple data sources. The service allows you to offer your library users a service based on more than just the local resources. It offers a powerful and elegant discovery and delivery service.

Combine your collection building skills with iPort’s retrieval power to produce a service that delivers relevant and accurate results together with an interface that is easy and intuitive to use.

With the discovery and retrieval service as the basic building blocks, your web service is completed with news pages and links that are tailored and easily maintained by you without requiring any professional advice or intervention.

iPort is the new OCLC PICA Internet Information Portal service based on the well respected Decomate software that was the result of Decomate II European project.

Thus the user of the library can now search all relevant databases at the same time by only keying the search once. She or he is not confronted with a myriad of different interfaces and home pages.

The library can pre-define groups of information sources for searching, for example by subject area.

iPort’s is delivered with numbers of predefined database configurations to make your implementation speedy.

Database searching is precise and produces results that are far more relevant than a web search engine, for example. The results are more relevant because you selected the data sources for quality of content and indexing. As the indexing is also in depth, the results are usually more complete.

Creation of an extended collection – retrieving

The system can retrieve records in multiple formats (syntaxes and schemas) from multiple targets and resolve the differences to a standardised internal format that is XML based. The results are presented in a format suitable for a web browser to display. The non-homogeneous results can be combined into one result set.

Results processing:

- sorting, e.g. by author, date, title, relevance, etc.
- removal of duplicates
- acceptance of multiple formats: Dublin Core, MARC21, UNIMARC, etc.), MAB, MARCXML, GRS-I, SUTRS, DCXML and MARCXML
- Acceptance of multiple character encoding, e.g. UNICODE, ISO 8859-1 (Latin-1), ISO 5426 (UNIMARC), MARC8 --- MARC21)
- Linking to all formats supported by a browser, e.g. XML, HTML, Text, PDF, WAV, JPG, etc.
- integrating results from diverse sources, e.g. from museums (CIMI profile supported) and libraries

Linking for Delivery and Other Services

Once a record has been located, it is possible to link to abstracts, reviews and full text or to a relevant service for the record such as purchasing from an online book shop. This linking is achieved by:

- linking to local document servers by url or Z39.50
- linking to remote document servers by url or dynamic linking (openURL)
- linking to ILL systems using openURL or ISO ILL (10160/10161)
- providing gateways to services using their own interfaces (URL)
- linking to the library’s local system for reservations and circulation information

How does iPort achieve this service?

Creation of an extended collection - searching

The iPort Multi-protocol Server (MPS) enables one single search request to be sent simultaneously to multiple targets (catalogues and databases). The various targets may have different configurations and database layouts. iPort can search and retrieve data via:

- Z39.50 search & retrieval protocol
- ZING/SRU
- http/XML: alternative protocol, e.g. for Pubmed (Medline)
- http/HTML for retrieval of full text access to additional services.
- Access from outside to your catalogue, e.g. from SilverPlatter using WebSpires, VLE (virtual learning environment).
Determining rights to services
The iPort authentication broker can communicate with external systems using LDAP (Light Directory Access Protocol), Samba or Athens to determine a user’s rights to various services. This facility is the key point in enabling users to have external access from their own homes, via a Virtual Personal Network etc. Not only can the system access up to date, secure and reliable information, it can also do it without the need for the user’s password to travel unencrypted and in so doing entail a security risk. For in library use, authentication can be based on IP address ranges.

Providing personalised services
Personalised services include the storage of preferences and selected results and the Current Awareness Server (CAS) regularly performs queries and the results for the user’s interest profile are delivered to his/her email address. Current awareness profiles are shared enabling VLE addresses.

Tailoring
The Administration module and SiteBuilder modules enable your library to tailor the system to its own preferences and requirements and to build and evolve your own web site.

Benefits:
• You can offer an extended library collection including:
  o resources you own/Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
  o professionally selected external resources
  o internally created resources: thesis, own publications
• Promote the library’s services
  o bring the library service to the user’s desktop 24 * 7
• Link to professionally selected resources for additional services
  o Directly from a title; without any re-keying
  o Via carefully selected gateways: short cuts to access another web site
• Provide an easy and powerful searching interface
  o Single search box with index pull down
  o Guided advanced search
  o Expert searches using CCL
  o Browsing e.g. list of authors, keywords, thesauri
  o Graphical concept browser to aid query formulation
  o Navigation from within a record
• Provide integrated precise and relevant retrieval to:
  o Multiple data sources from one search / one interface
  o Display integrated results
    o Resolving format and content differences
    o Detecting duplicates and grouping them
  o Deliver the information on the desktop
    o Full text documents from linked databases, by downloading
    o Download of references in standard formats
    o Non digital materials by local or inter-library reservations or document delivery requests
  o Provide a personalised service by:
    o Recording searches for regular searching and reporting (CAS – Current Awareness Service)
    o Bookshelf
    o Search history
    o Provision of service from remote browser
• Provide a tailored interface by:
  o Determining the overall look and feel of the interface – making your own house style, incorporating your logo.
  o Determining the choice of interface languages
  o Determining the screen layouts and help
  o Grouping data sources, e.g. in subject groupings to provide more precise and efficient searching
  o Multi-lingual capability – Interfaces currently available in, Dutch, English, French, German and Italian

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