

From the Bibliographic Stream to the Bibliographic Ocean

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The history of bibliographic access is one of a continuing struggle to provide a single point of retrieval for all items. Cataloging has coped with this task admirably, coming to embrace all media, including electronic resources.

However, the current system of cataloging cannot be sustained due to the exponential growth of scholarly literature, and numerous studies have shown that information seekers are more likely to consult Web search engines before, or even instead of, library catalogs for their scholarly information needs. While librarians have long warned search engine users about the amount of information not retrievable through search engines (material in the "Hidden Web" or "Invisible Web"), the information industry is actively working to overcome the web's architectural limitations. Search engines increasingly include bibliographic data through special arrangements with libraries and publishers to supplement their indexes generated by crawling the web.

This diagram shows how metadata can "trickle up" to search engines through various mechanisms, some of which are available only to subscribing institutions and others of which are freely available. A number of these mechanisms also accept digital objects themselves, but these are not distinguished in this handout.

This handout is available at
<<http://www.umich.edu/~kshawkin/projects/20050208/20060409.pdf>>.

A fully documented website on this topic will be available at
<<http://www.umich.edu/~kshawkin/projects/20050208/>>.

