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Group Therapy -- Textbook Purchasing

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plurality of our many databases, presenting a simple search box, for simple search words, that reaches out into all those databases for stunning easy singularity.

Actually we fudge a bit on this. We note, in small font, that Library One Search searches most, but not all, of our databases. This disclaimer is a link to more detailed library-speak about coverage that cautions the user that he or she needs to subtract those publishers not participating in the product.

So library search has gotten easier, if by easy we mean searching participative content — or something like that. To be honest, that is quite a handful of stuff, a big bowl of not there. There are two depths to this.

Shallow water fun is the thin data that are harvested and indexed from all of your non-participating content providers. Your discovery service can provide simulacra for your difficult databases, those ornery ones who wish to meagerly prosper in this brave new world. They can, for example, provide complimentary indexing for products that overlap theirs — we know there are many. They can also crawl the Web and ingest what publishers provide for their Web publications.

At a certain point, the substantial holdings of a library online fall off the continental shelf. This is the world of information portals, specialized data sets and databases whose design, purpose, and subscription life address another way of doing content. Here are publishers who don’t need to integrate themselves with the Web or library.

Our sin and cross to bear: we want them. The library’s role in research is to provide both the tools and results of — research. And this is the depth of things where research isn’t easy.

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