

Dear m-libraries Conference Committee,

I would like to submit the following abstract for consideration for the Third International m-libraries Conference in Brisbane next year. This paper is a practical case study of our investigation into and improvement of our discovery system for the mobile environment and should fit within the Mobile Users theme of the conference.

Paper Title:

Discovery in the mobile environment

Author:

Caroline Gauld, Library eServices Manager, Queensland University of Technology.

Email: [c.gauld@qut.edu.au](mailto:c.gauld@qut.edu.au)

Abstract:

In early 2010 Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Library implemented a discovery system as the primary search and discovery tool for library resources and collections. This unified discovery system, Summon from Serials Solutions, provides a fast, keyword-based search of books, databases, journals and articles, held online and in print, from a single search box. The discovery system auto-detected users on mobile devices and directed them to a mobile interface providing a simplified but fully functional version of the discovery system.

Although greater numbers of students were carrying Smartphones usage of the mobile interface grew very slowly during the year. Anecdotal reports indicated users faced challenges with the authentication, linking and hosting systems which integrate with the discovery system to provide seamless access to online or print resources. Unfortunately many of these underlying systems are not mobile friendly and some require significant work to support access from mobile devices.

Before investing staff time and resources into creating mobile interfaces for all the underlying systems we needed to be sure which features and functionality of the systems would be in demand in a mobile environment and how they could be implemented to support small screen and touchscreen devices. Did our users want a quick online search to locate a book on the shelf or did they want to find and read research while on the move? What were the major mobile usability issues with the existing mobile discovery interface and how could we improve them?

This presentation will explore our investigation of the mobile discovery needs of our users, the issues identified with the mobile discovery experience and how we have focussed our development efforts to deliver a mobile-friendly discovery experience for QUT Library users.

Regards, Carol

**Caroline Gauld** | Library eServices Manager | Library Services | Queensland University of Technology (QUT) | Kelvin Grove Campus, D Block, Level 3, Room D317 | GPO Box 2434, Brisbane, QLD, 4001 | Ph:+61 7 3138 3378 | E: [c.gauld@qut.edu.au](mailto:c.gauld@qut.edu.au) | <http://www.library.qut.edu.au> |

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