

“Then the Scientific Journals Went Digital. And My System Collapsed”: Responding to Changing Current Awareness & Personal Information Management Needs



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THE PROBLEM

The electronic environment has simplified information seeking and management in some ways but not all. The proliferation of information and ease of access has made keeping current more difficult, and personal information management (PIM) has become more complex.

Researchers and scholars still prefer paper for tasks like reading articles. There is no seamless system, and existing tools rarely play well together. Most current tools are insufficient, and users often adapt them for unintended purposes like using e-mail for note-taking. A one-size-fits-all solution is unlikely given disciplinary differences and highly individual organizational styles (e.g., pilers and filers).

The University of Minnesota Libraries' Web Services Steering Committee (WSSC) formed a Current Awareness and Personal Information Management (CA/PIM) sub-group to explore opportunities and solutions to help researchers with keeping current and PIM and subsequently make recommendations.



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WHAT WE DID

- Literature Review
 - Relevant literature limited, largely focused on information scientists creating CA/PIM tools
 - Despite clear roles for librarians, rarely mentioned
- Sought evidence of systematic approaches to CA/PIM at other libraries
 - Mostly individual liaisons or branch libraries
 - Primarily comparing citation managers and explaining /listing RSS feeds/search alerts
 - Is your library taking a more systematic approach? Let us know!
- Created rubric and systematically evaluated variety of existing CA/PIM tools

Current Awareness

- Alerts
- Portals
- RSS feeds/readers
- Social networking sites

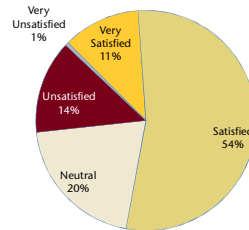
PIM

- Baskets (e.g., in OPACs)
- Social bookmarking sites
- Citation managers
- Document management
- Note-taking software
- To-do lists/task managers

CA/PIM SATISFACTION AND TOOL USE SURVEY

- Created informal SurveyMonkey survey on level of satisfaction with ability to stay current and PIM as well as tools
- 212 respondents from 38 departments across campus, about half faculty and half grad students
- Identified 138 tools and services and received 21 pages of comments
- Greater dissatisfaction with PIM than keeping current

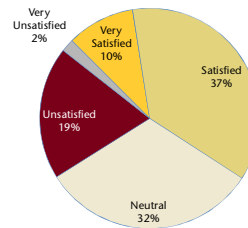
Figure 1. Ability to stay current in field



“I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SEARCH LITERATURE METHODICALLY - ALWAYS MISSING SOMETHING, CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT I'VE ALREADY FOUND, READ...UGH”

- STAFF, EPIDEMIOLOGY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

Figure 2. Ability to manage and organize research information



“FINDING ANYTHING ON MY COMPUTER IS FRUSTRATING, I ALWAYS SEEM TO HAVE TO GO BACK TO COMPENDEX AND RE-DOWNLOAD THE PAPERS BECAUSE I CAN'T FIND WHERE I PUT THEM”

- FACULTY, CIVIL ENGINEERING

Themes in Survey Comments

- Difficulty re-finding materials
- Lack of awareness of current library offerings
- Widespread self-blame for disorganization indicating systemic problem
- Challenge of managing paper & electronic versions of information
- Desire for faster computers with more storage space
- Need for more time

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Efficient
- Simple
- Stable
- Effective

Don't forget interoperability and co-existence of paper and electronic!



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PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create group to develop, promote, and maintain CA/PIM tools and services
- Build toolkit of resources for library users and staff
- Identify current experts in CA/PIM tools and develop plan to cultivate more
- Support range of citation managers users have adopted
- Map out how local tools work together & improve connections when possible
- Educate library staff about CA/PIM tools and services
- Reach out to library users about how to enhance or simplify CA/PIM tasks
- Communicate and work with relevant campus units (e.g., campus IT)

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Expedite getting electronic copies | E-book/mobile device staff expertise |
| Alumni citation manager solution | Pilot projects in 2-4 departments |
| Push resources out by affiliation | Student worker CA/PIM helpers |
| Embed CA tool links in website | Work with product vendors |
| New CA/PIM widgets | New book lists |

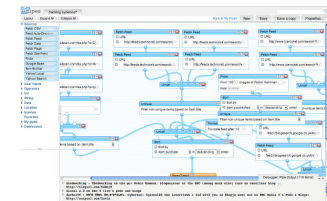


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Yahoo! Pipes