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A Primo Book Finder

Invented by the French in 1789, the first library card catalog consisted of bibliographic notes written on the blank side of playing cards. With minor modifications, the system became the standard reference guide for people seeking library books through most of the 20th Century.

But in the 1990s, card catalogs were phased out as libraries — including the UC Santa Barbara Library — switched to computer-integrated systems, which revolutionized how people searched for books, journals, research data and other resources.

UCSB's last integrated system ran an amazing 16 years — to the point of needing an overhaul. To meet demand, the library has now upgraded to UCSB Library Search, a program supported by Ex Libris Primo software. The new system features a one-stop search box that locates print and electronic items, as well as resources available through interlibrary loan.

Instead of wading through two or more steps under the old system, students, researchers and other scholars — totaling 3.6 million visits in the 2016-17 academic year — can access materials faster and easier in the library or remotely, via a mobile friendly design.

"A discovery tool like UCSB Library Search is a way for people — particularly novice researchers or undergraduate students — to quickly avail themselves of a multitude of resources," said Alan Grosenheider, UCSB's acting university librarian. "Instead of

looking for titles of journals in our holdings, it can dive deeper to find articles in a journal on-site, online or via interlibrary loan.”

UCSB Library Search also features a filter system for advanced researchers. “Once the search comes up, it’s a very large set because the results are from the UC system and other sources,” Grosenheider said. “But an individual can limit the search to just UCSB holdings, or if they only want journal articles or only want peer-reviewed articles.”

To work kinks out before the fall quarter, the library activated the system in July. UCSB Library Search is intuitive, but librarians had to learn the system to assist students, according to Grosenheider. “One of the goals for moving to UCSB Library Search is to free up librarians to work more with faculty on specific classes to help students find, analyze and cite information resources,” he said.

UCSB’s library is the second in the UC system to switch to Ex Libris Primo software — a top-rated product for academic and research libraries — that greatly enhances its search tool.

“It’s not accurately called catalog anymore as it is not limited to just what we hold here on campus,” Grosenheider said. “UCSB Library Search is a portal for our students and faculty to be instantly connected with resources from around the globe.”

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.