

NEXT STEPS FOR FAST

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A Breakfast Meeting

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As is the case with many great ideas, the FAST Survey began as a conversation over coffee. At IFLA in 2016 Xin Li (Cornell), Boaz Nadav-Manes (Brown), Mary Sauer-Games (OCLC), and David Whitehair (OCLC) imagined how an ad hoc group of colleagues from a handful of libraries could work informally to advise OCLC on the development of a particular service of mutual interest. Such a group would serve as a conveniently-sized representative constituency and sounding board for OCLC for ideas and concerns affecting new and existing metadata models and workflows. The focus would be on issues of concern to large research libraries.

THE FAST FIVE

Kate Harcourt (Columbia)

Marty Kurth (Cornell now Yale)

Jim LeBlanc (Cornell)

Boaz Nadav-Manes (Cornell now Brown)

Scott Wicks (Cornell now Harvard)

The composition of the group was the next step and the 2CUL Technical Services Alliance seemed like the perfect home. While 2CUL did not result in a combined Cornell & Columbia technical services department, librarians from both institutions have continued to work together on areas of mutual interest. We knew that our shared experience, strong relationships and the trust developed during 2CUL would make working in this ad hoc capacity both natural and highly productive. There are 5 of us in the group, hence FAST Five, and all members have a 2CUL connection.

The FAST FIVE AGENDA

Investigate OCLC's implementation of FAST in WorldCat in order to:

- Understand the circumstances and drivers behind OCLC's development of FAST
- Articulate the value and usefulness of further enhancements and services related to FAST for libraries and other member constituencies such as the PCC
- Understand OCLC's business model
- Propose beneficial approaches for removing obstacles to further enhancement

Our charge to ourselves was to address issues and concerns of mutual interest. We decided to address one concrete goal or issue at a time and FAST rose to the top as an area of concern to us all.

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Articulate the value and usefulness of further enhancements and services related to FAST for libraries and other member constituencies such as the PCC

Understand OCLC's business model

Propose beneficial approaches for removing obstacles to further enhancement

By working through FAST, we also hoped to obtain a better understanding of how projects moved from research into production.

SUMMER WORK



- Use cases
- Conference calls
- More conference calls
- Common ground reached
- A survey!

The 5 libraries began by sharing and documenting our use cases. Columbia for example uses FAST in its Institutional Repository. We also are uncovering hidden collections and reducing longstanding backlogs by using FAST. This allows more staff, including support staff, to do original cataloging more efficiently.


We held a series of conference calls in the summer of 2017 with Marti Heyman, Andrew Pace and other OCLC colleagues. I'd like to take a moment to thank them for their trust in us and willingness to hear our concerns. We learned that OCLC originally thought that the large research libraries would not be interested in FAST, and had targeted the smaller libraries who may not have the expertise to work with LCSH. They learned through our use cases of our interest in using FAST to shift some categories of original cataloging to support staff, using FAST in our Institutional Repositories, leveraging FAST for faceting in our discovery systems and our need to anticipate a transition to linked data. We gained awareness of their staffing and financial constraints.

By Sept, we agreed to prepare a follow-up survey to the RLP Metadata Manager Focus Group round-robin FAST questionnaire from June 2016. I know everyone in this room took our survey so I won't go into much detail other than to say that our goals were to cast a wider net this time around since FAST is often used outside of cataloging departments and get a better sense of both the barriers to adopting FAST and desired features and enhancements to improve user experience.

Karen Smith Yoshimura did a fantastic job working with us to prepare and test the

survey.

Survey Results



Analyzing the survey is just beginning. The FAST Five and OCLC are independently and together evaluating results.

- 586 individual responses mostly from the UK & USA
- More use & anticipated use than expected
- Drawbacks to use may be changing
- Benefits mirror FAST Five's use cases
- Some critical features identified

The survey had 14 questions and responses were thoughtful and detailed. The FAST Five and OCLC are just beginning to evaluate the results. We need more time to understand the feedback on FAST features and desired functionality. We need to make decisions on some complications with the data such as conflicting opinions from the same institution.

Some personal & general observations are:

586 individual responses mostly from the UK & USA

We saw more use & anticipated use than we expected

Drawbacks to use may be changing

The chief reasons for not using FAST are that some institutions prefer pre-coordinated subjects, some library systems don't provide FAST or managers worry about the stability of FAST if it remains as a research project. These reasons may diminish as discovery systems evolve and demand for FAST grows.

Benefits mirror FAST Five's use cases.

Cited benefits include more subject access, improved access in faceted discovery environments and more efficient workflows.

Critical features

The Survey indicates that the three most critical features are a mechanism to support ongoing maintenance, a production tool for FAST Heading look-up and

seamless addition of FAST at the point of cataloging.

NEXT STEPS



- OCLC anticipates Version1 in production this summer
- More use cases
- More analysis
- Stay tuned

Next steps for FAST are underway.

OCLC will put Version 1 into production this summer. Production means that at a minimum there will be the transfer of the product to a production server with 24x7 support. OCLC has adjusted staffing to productionize service and keep it cost-neutral, but the business case for further enhancements to FAST will depend on how widely the service is adopted.

To this end, Marti Heyman and Jody DeRetter are interviewing seven individual libraries regarding FAST workflow to get a better sense of relevant use cases. Those libraries are the British Library, Cornell, Columbia, Harvard, Brown, Ohio State and U. of Connecticut. Marti and Jody just added RMIT University Press to the group. The Press replaced LCSH with FAST in 2011 as part of their article publication workflow. This addition will give us a vendor perspective.

The FAST Five meanwhile will work on how to proceed with the survey and gather some empirical data regarding the benefits of FAST.