

CASE STUDY



ETH-Bibliothek

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich) is a science and technology university with an outstanding worldwide research record, a place where 18,000 people from 80 nations study, conduct research, and work. About 350 professors teach and carry out research in ETH Zurich's 16 departments, which focus mainly on engineering sciences, architecture, system-oriented sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences, and carry out research that is highly valued worldwide.

Challenge

ETH-Bibliothek had significantly expanded its print, digital and electronic collections over the course of many years. The library's own catalogue and databases, together with thousands of electronic journals, digital repositories, and e-books, provided a wealth of information – but in the library's complex search environment, finding materials was a challenging task for users

Primo Accelerates Discovery and Delivery at ETH Zurich

The ETH Zurich library—known in German as the ETH-Bibliothek—is the largest library in Switzerland and the main library of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), a world-renowned science and technology university. The library holds more than 6.9 million items, including electronic and printed journals, e-texts, databases, rare books, geodata, maps, archival material, and much more. Special emphasis is given to innovative library services and to the electronic resources that the faculty, staff, and students access at ETH Zurich.

The Quest for a One-Stop Discovery Tool

The University's quest for a discovery and delivery solution began in 2007 following the realization that the ETH-Bibliothek's rapidly expanding collections required a unified point of access. The library's vast resources encompass not only items found in the NEBIS library catalog (a union catalog of 90 Swiss libraries) and local databases but also thousands of electronic journals, digitized materials, and in-house publications as well as an increasing number of electronic books and images. For users, this abundance of diverse collections meant conducting complex searches in multiple information resources.

Formulating the university's vision for a single access point gave library staff an opportunity to articulate their long-term aspirations for the library and its community of researchers. The library required a solution that provides an intuitive interface for staff and end users and that can be integrated with different information resources, assimilated into ETH Zurich's existing technical environment (such as course management systems and institutional portals), and developed over time to adapt to the university's evolving needs.

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Solution

ETH Zurich decided to create a new knowledge portal that would enable users to access all of the university's diverse resources. The system underlying the portal would have to integrate with the technical environment at the ETH library and be capable of developing and adapting to future requirements. In the fall of 2008, ETH Zurich selected the Ex Libris Primo® discovery and delivery solution to power library services and resources for the new ETH knowledge portal.

Results

The ETH knowledge portal has changed access to resources dramatically. The newly designed Web site features a prominently located search box, which is the access point for all of the library's collections. A huge departure from database-oriented interface for searching in the library catalog, the environment now offers a search experience that users are familiar with from services such as Google.

In the ensuing competitive evaluation of several discovery products, Ex Libris Primo stood out as the only solution that could deliver all these essential requirements as well as providing deep-search technology; the refining of searches by faceted categorization; and social media functionality, such as ratings, tags, and reviews. "We evaluated a wide range of products and concluded that Primo is the best platform to fulfill our goal of integrating all information resources from the ETH-Bibliothek and ETH Zurich," explains Arlette Piguet, project manager of the ETH-Bibliothek knowledge portal.

Greater Access to All Library Resources

The implementation of Primo was completed in late 2009. The new knowledge portal—to be launched during 2010—will provide users with seamless access to a huge array of collections that cover print, electronic, and digital resources and university resources. The Primo search box, displayed prominently on every page of the ETH-Bibliothek Web site, enables users to search simultaneously in their local library Web site, the NEBIS library catalog, the institutional repository of ETH Zurich (ETH E-Collection), the ETH-Bibliothek image archive (Bildarchiv Online), the retrodigitized journal platform of the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries (retro.seals.ch, where over 50 digitized Swiss journals are stored), and the multimedia portal of ETH Zurich. Many more local resources will be integrated with Primo over the coming months.

"The new knowledge portal dramatically improves access to our scholarly resources," commented Andreas Kirstein, head of IT and Processes and vice director of the ETH-Bibliothek. For example, queries made via the knowledge portal simultaneously access the metadata of 19 million articles in the Digital Article Database Service (DADS) of the Technical Information Center of Denmark (DTIC), providing searchers with a fast, comprehensive overview of a topic. A huge variety of databases on all science and technology subjects, including databases from Elsevier, Springer, and many other publishers, then provide specific, in-depth literature searches. Through the deep-search capability of Primo, ETH Zurich is able to collaborate in this way with the DTIC to the benefit of the university's researchers.

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The screenshot shows the Primo search results page for 'Global warming' at ETH-Bibliothek. The search bar at the top contains 'Global warming' and shows 1692 results. The results are sorted by relevance. The first five results are listed in a table:

Book Cover	Title	Author	Year	Get it
	Global warming 101	Bruce Elliott Johansen	2008	Get it
	Global warming : the science of climate change	Frances Drake	2000	Get it
	Is global warming a threat?	Mary E. Williams	2003	Get it
	Our simmering planet : what to do about global...	Joyeeta Gupta	2001	Get it
	Global warming : understanding the forecast	David Archer	2007	Get it

On the right side, there are filters for 'Availability' (Online Resources: 208, Available for Loan / Local Use: 1,439), 'Resource Type' (Books: 1,481, Articles: 77, CD-DVD-Roms: 60, Journals: 42, Videos: 21), and 'Topic' (GLOBAL CHANGE + GLOBAL WARMING (CLIMATOLOGY): 1,552, CLIMATIC FLUCTUATIONS (CLIMATOLOGY): 293, Klimaänderung (203), GREENHOUSE EFFECT (CLIMATE) (CLIMATOLOGY): 178, CLIMATE MODELS + PROXY DATA (CLIMATOLOGY): 178).

A Primo results screen at ETH-Bibliothek

“The new knowledge portal dramatically improves access to our scholarly resources,”

“With Primo, the ETH-Bibliothek is adapting its services to meet the evolving behavior of our users,” adds Ms Piguet. “In the age of powerful search engines, the demands of our research community are constantly changing, and their standards are higher than ever. With Primo we can meet those demands head-on.”

A dynamic exchange of ideas

Crucial to the successful launch of Primo to power the knowledge portal was the library’s ongoing close cooperation with the Ex Libris implementation team. Intensive development collaboration between the ETH-Bibliothek and Ex Libris teams became increasingly important over the course of the project. One example of this productive relationship was the ETH-Bibliothek’s requirement that the Primo result window should support multilingual terms—displayed, for example, in German on the German interface or in English on the English interface. This request was accepted by the Primo development team and will be integral to Primo version 3.0.

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ETH-Bibliothek staff members are united in their enthusiastic reception of Primo. "The smooth and efficient implementation of Primo is a reflection of our close cooperation with Ex Libris and their eagerness to meet our requirements for high quality results in a complex environment," concludes Mr Kirstein.

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