Summon Staff Survey December 2011: Summary Report

Overview

34 staff provided responses to some or all of the survey questions. 21 of the 34 indicated that they have worked with patrons using Summon.

Staff identified positive and negative features for the Summon discovery tool. Both are worth keeping in mind when using Summon.

1. For some searches, the catalog is preferred. These include searches of Link+ and for course reserves. To a lesser extent it also includes book searches when the title is known, although using quotes around the title does improve retrieval.
2. Summon is very effective in searching for an article title, and in searching/discovery of resources on a topic.
3. There have often been problems linking to the full text, even though Summon indicates it is available. [Note: the Continuous Summon Improvement group continues to monitor this issue and take whatever steps are possible to resolve it. Meanwhile, users should be made aware of alternative avenues to the full text.]
4. There are many ways to limit the results, including by date, by type of resource, by location, and to peer-reviewed publications.
5. Features such as the abstract and the save option are valuable, but not obvious, since they can only be identified by mousing over the icon. In addition the save option provides a citation formatting feature which is very popular once found!
6. With Summon the user does not have to know what the best database for a topic is. This can be good for novices, as well as for interdisciplinary researchers. The interdisciplinary nature of the search results can also produce items previously unknown to a researcher.
7. Some may find the number of results overwhelming. The ability to interpret the results list, to know the differences in the types of resources, and to employ filters is key.

1. How would you rate Summon for known book title searching?
Of all the questions on how Summon performs in searching various types of resources, this one came in the lowest. More than 10% (5 respondents) rated it as very poor. Comments indicated that many thought the catalog does a better job of known book title searching. This is not unexpected; it is not a Summon strength. Nonetheless 32.4% rated performance as good or very good for this function. An illustrative comment:

- I get better results from the catalog instead of using the books-only limiter. For example, search Lulu in Hollywood - we own a book by this exact title, but searching the title with the books only limiter still doesn't retrieve it in the first page of results (it may be coded as a gov doc, it comes up if i remember to type quotes around the title). There is no way to know definitively if we do not have a book using Summon.

A counter view is expressed by this comment:

- When patron has wrong citation, Summon is very helpful to find a correct citation.
2. How would you rate Summon for known article title searching?
52.9% rated Summon as good or very good for this function. This was the function which rated second highest and is in fact a Summon strength, and one not replicated easily elsewhere (unless we look to google). Not all comments, even for this function, were positive. Representative comments include:

- might even rate it higher if you know some tips such as putting title in quotes, limited to content type and date; also depends on how unique the title is
- I am always amazed at the articles I can find if I know the exact title.
- Today I searched for a known article title from the New Yorker, "the girl in the black helmet" by Kenneth Tynan which we hold in print, and even with results from outside your library turned on I was unable to retrieve a full citation.
- Summon works even better for article.
- usually "Google Scholar" the title first.

3. How would you rate Summon for searching for media (including videos, DVDs, etc.)?
Only 25% rated this function as good or very good; however quite a few had not used Summon to search for this type of resource (19% indicated N/A). Representative comments include:

- Very hit or miss -- I've searched for known items and sometimes they are at the top of the list, and sometimes they are not on the list at all.
- works well if you know to limit to content type or a media location; however the location of unlv music media still appears to be missing.
- Wanted to know which films directed by G W Pabst are available here and found the same list using Summon and OPAC (plus one false hit about breweries in Summon).
- I have been able to pull video out of search results easily by using format limit - I haven't had a situation where I was specifically looking for a video and had great success (or difficulty).

Follow up: check the unlv music media location limiter

4. How would you rate Summon for searching for UNLV digital collections materials?
Even more respondents than the previous function indicate they have not tried looking for this type of resource (48%). 19% rated it good or very good for this function. Representative comments include:

- I like the way the picture comes up in Summon.
- no obvious limit -- try archival materials and you get all of special -- try archival materials and online -- and you get a tiny few results -- way short of what it should be -- but in digital collections...
- about on par with our content DM search - searching for archival material on folies bergere brings back menus but not showgirls items.
- The one time I looked specifically for a digital collection it was not on the first page of the results. I haven't had them come up much in regular searches, but that could be the topics.
5. How would you rate Summon for searching for materials on a topic?
The highest number of respondents (19 respondents, 56%) rated Summon good or very good for this function, a recognition that its discovery function is its purpose and predominant strength. It is interesting however that there were few comments for this item (only 4). On the negative side there was mention of having too many results! Representative comments include:

- you have to be willing to wade through lots of stuff or know how to limit; great for undergraduates who need something now; the fact that every word in a book might be indexed leads to some dubious results.
- I find it frustrating that newspaper articles come up first unless you use facets
- this is its strength -- topic searching...

6. Have your views of Summon changed since its implementation in early Sept.?
56% of respondents (18) indicated that their views had indeed changed. Comments from the 18 mentioned going from negative to positive (4), and positive to negative (5). Some comments mentioned both positive and negative aspects (5). Difficulties linking to the full text were a frequent negative, as was the overwhelming presence of newspapers in the results. Representative comments include:

- It is an effective tool for discovery when discovery is separate from access. For the user base that Summon is intended to serve, discovery and access are one in the same. The major issues with Summon revolve around linking to fulltext. Summon is improving upon the amount of content that can be linked to fulltext in one click but I figured that most content in Summon would be clickable in one click when we went live in September. I have hope that this will get better in time. The best thing we can do about this issue currently is attempt to eliminate content that is problematic for access within Summon as much as possible. My opinion is that content that consistently has trouble being accessed in Summon should not be included in the Summon index (LexisNexis is one example). I do favor the concept of Summon in having a simple search with facets to narrow down results.
- At first I was somewhat apprehensive about it, but am getting more comfortable after 3 months.
- I thought it was going to be a much better product. Its suggested "did you mean" are woefully inadequate. I've found it including things I've told it to exclude.
- A little more concerned about failing links and weird results...
- It is often more frustrating than helpful. Full text articles rarely link correctly. Newspapers and obscure items overwhelm the results list. Forget title searching in Summon for books; it does not work. I believe Summon serves a place among the many search tools we have, but it cannot REPLACE the search tools we have. Additionally, I think it is a terrible resource for newer students. They do not have the capabilities to refine the lists to get effective results. Academic Search is much better for those types of students. It can, however, be very useful to graduate students needing a cross discipline overview of a topic or to those with a partial citation to an item.
• I am really trying to use it and understand web-scale discovery. Often I find it easier - as an experienced searcher - to use other tools (catalog, Academic Search Premier, subject databases). I hear from students regularly that getting to the articles is often difficult - dead ends, no full text. Early in the semester it was unavailable a couple times when I was teaching a class so I had to use alternatives. I go back and forth on its usefulness - when I'm successful - then I like it. When I'm not successful - then I'm frustrated. Still learning to anticipate which questions might have positive or negative result in Summon. Often I don't teach it to students - I assume that students will find/use it and I can help direct them to alternative tools that are a little harder to find but less erratic in delivering full text.
• I like it better than I thought, and use it more often. I used to start with Google Scholar (for personal research), but Summon has worked very well for me.
• I thought that Summon is pulling too many unrelated items, but now I found that it works great! Especially when I search by article title or author.

Follow up: publicize efforts to improve full text retrieval; publicize elimination of Lexis Nexis from default results.

7. If you use Summon for your own discovery needs, please rate its effectiveness.
22 respondents rated Summon on this item. More than half (15) rated it effective or very effective.
  • Depending what I am after, it's been adequate.
  • At the end of the day, this is a kludge. It's equivalent to bolting a supercharger onto a Model T.

8. If you DO NOT use Summon for your own discovery needs, what tool(s) do you use?
20 respondents indicated the tools they use. The list includes the catalog (11), databases (8), google (5), worldcat (2), Amazon (1), Wikipedia (1), and the A-Z list (1).

9 & 10. Have you worked with patrons using Summon? And Where did you work with the patron(s)?
61.8% (21) of respondents indicated they worked with patrons on Summon. All 21 have worked with patrons at the service desk, with ten also working with users in a classroom environment, and 11 doing so in the context of off-desk consultation.

11. Was useful information found?
10 commented yes; 8 gave a yes/no mixed response comment. Representative comments include:
  • A majority of the time, there was relevant and useful information found. Many times, there was relevant and useful information found in Summon that was not found in subject databases.
  • The information was useful, getting the actual items was horrible.
  • Usually.
• Depends. Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Often they were just asking for help finding the full text of an item because it was not linking correctly.
• Yes.

12. **If you worked with novice searchers, what was their reaction to Summon?**
The issue identified most frequently was getting access to the full text. In terms of reaction characterization, 6 indicated it was positive, 2 negative, 3 mixed, and 5 “nothing remarkable.” Representative comments include:

- They thought it was easy to use and encouraged their use of library resources.
- They loved it, lots of choices, easy to use.
- not any different than anything else used in the past
- Adequate--but sometimes overwhelming. At times, ASP is a much easier tool for a novice searcher.
- Confused at first, interested in ways it could assist them.
- They liked that they could find a book easier by seeing how the book looked in Summon.
- Oh cool, wait a minute why won't this thing I want come up?
- I can't say they had a reaction. They either were asking for clarification on how to actually get the items, or they reviewed the results list that came up.
- Initially, they liked it, but found that getting to what they needed was frustrating.

13. **If you worked with advanced researchers, what was their reaction to Summon?**
Many respondents (7) indicated N/A as a response, not having worked with advanced researchers. Of those that had, 5 indicated a positive response, 1 negative, 2 preferred the disciplinary resources, and 1 found it was good for resources outside their main field. Representative comments include:

- They already know the key journals and publications in their respective fields of study and therefore have less of a need for a discovery tool like this. However, in cases where such researchers were examining other fields they are not familiar with which have a relation to their own field, Summon was a useful starting point.
- They seemed to connect with it fairly well, but at times were overwhelmed and preferred to work with subject-specific resources.
- Would never use it with advanced researchers. They have specific needs which are better suited to specialized databases.
- amazed and excited.
- Early in term, when no notice had gone out, experienced faculty person at ref desk expressed great frustration to me that nothing behaved as it used to. I explained the intent/design - she got to a place of understanding - but was very frustrated.
- They liked finding the articles
- liked that it could access more. Don’t know if it is providing access to all the resources within UNLV Libraries, though (Special Collections search box, etc.).
- they don't use it.

**Follow up: publicize possible value of Summon to researchers.**
14. If you worked with interdisciplinary researchers, what was their reaction to Summon?
Only 14 commented, and of those 7 indicated N/A – so even fewer contacts with interdisciplinary researchers than with researchers in general. Representative comments include:
- Depending on the topic, this worked fairly well--using a multidisciplinary approach.
- As other option to locate information.
- even more amazed and excited.
- haven't done that

15. What populations do you see as benefiting most from Summon (for example by status, e.g. undergrads; or by function, e.g. those searching by topic)?
21 respondents answered this open-ended question. Categories identified, in order of the number specifying, are undergrads (12), grad students (4), researchers (4), novices (3), those searching by topic (3), faculty (2), community users (1), article title searchers (1), and browsers (1).

QUESTIONS 16-19 ASKED RESPONDENTS TO RATE SPECIFIC SUMMON FEATURES FOR THE VALUE THEY ADD TO THE SEARCH. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE VERY FEW COMMENTS, THEY INCLUDE IMPORTANT AND ILLUSTRATIVE CAVEATS.

ABSTRACT:
56.7 % rated it valuable or very valuable. Comment: Valuable when not absent. Often absent.

SAVE:
38.7% rated it valuable or very valuable. Comment: students do not know the save function is present

Follow up: publicity/instruction concerning the save function, which leads to the citation formatting feature. Also explore why the save folder might only hold items for half an hour or so – as one respondent mentioned.

LIMIT to SCHOLARLY/PEER REVIEW ITEMS:
80.7% rated it valuable or very valuable. Comment: wish this limited to PR'd articles only and not all items (eg letters to editor, non-scholarly columns) from PR journals.

Follow up: forward this suggestion to Summon.

DATA RANGE SPECIFIER
61.3% rated it valuable or very valuable. Comment: Critical feature but it works very poorly - dates in records are not in a consistent format, plus the slider doesn't work well especially for older materials.
**Follow up: report this to Summon.**

20. **What other features have you found particularly valuable?**

   Only 14 respondents commented on this question. 9 of the 14 mentioned filters/facets.

   - combination of filters.
   - I really appreciate that location information is included in the results items in a way that is easy to see.
   - Filters.
   - Aggregator for type of resource.
   - If you search for any items by a particular author, Summons pulls up all things by the author. This is useful when people don't remember the name of particular article or book of an author.
   - I do like that when I type in things like "Nature" and "Time" things called *only* Nature and Time are the top search results.
   - Frankly I don't use it. It slows me down.
   - limit by content type though you do need to know to click for more options.
   - I use limit to content type quite often, have used the subject facet occasionally and think the location facet would be valuable to patrons who want it now and don't care if CSN or NSC have the book.
   - exclude feature.
   - I like the refining by format options that come up when you choose More... (the include/exclude table) but I tend to use those only when I'm looking for a known item.
   - The remove newspaper article facet.
   - Excluding items.
   - "full text" notice.

21. **Do you feel Summon forwards the library’s goal of enabling self-sufficiency on the part of users? Why or why not?**

   Of the 31 respondents, 18 (60%) said yes; 13 (43.7%) said no. There were 24 comments on this question. The most frequently mentioned point in favor of increased self-sufficiency was that now users don’t need to know what database is most appropriate to search. The most frequently mentioned point against the accomplishment of increased self-sufficiency is that instruction and assistance is still required. Representative comments include:

   - It encourages use with its simplicity of searching. However, in cases where many of the results do not bring the user to access (fulltext), Summon will discourage use.
   - Not convinced it is any easier to use. Still teaching the same searching skills on desk.
   - It provides a much better window on collections than the catalog.
   - Yes and no. It is a better online tool than the old system, however we have to provide education on how to use it and maximize Summon's value.
   - Google still runs rings around it.
   - more of a one stop shopping experience than the catalog & searching individual databases.
   - its an excellent first step for everyone to find the content hidden in all our journals without needing to know the "correct" database to pick.
• Students can locate adequate resources with minimal effort, but Summon will create a false sense of expertise that will not serve students doing grad-level academic research well.
  • tough. if they are looking for specific item- they are not going to be very self sufficient...
  • they might be able to find something, but usually not the best thing they could get.

22. **What do you like most about Summon?**
24 respondents commented on this question. Representative comments include:

• Simple search and uncluttered results screen. Users can get started easily and can filter results organically. I like especially the central concept that users can search and then identify resource types they want rather than having to identify and find discovery tools for specific resource types before they can search.
• Lots of hits, found things I did not know were available, discovered new information.
• article searching w/o having to select a database first.
• it's wide range of sources.
• drives users toward more scholarly content.
• The concept of having a single interface to access various types of resources.
• The quick access and that you always get something back.
• Vast resources can be discovered and easily aggregated.
• I like how colorful the items are displayed when searching Summon.
• It is just one box. Just like google. Kids like that.
• I like the way it displays and gives a lot of information concisely on the results page.
• That it indexes all the articles in the journals we own and that it allows other content (e.g. to be included).
• The ability to search across databases.
• Searchable by article title.
• one place to search everything (almost everything).
• The ability to search content simultaneously--regardless of where it lives.

23. **What do you like least about Summon?**
24 respondents commented on this question. Several problems were identified by multiple respondents:

  • Full-text often doesn’t work (6)
  • Too much stuff – confusing (5)
  • Can’t find book titles (4)
  • Definitions/coverage unclear (3)

Comments on issues not in the list above include:
• unpredictability of results. limited ability to refine searches.
• Its interface, presence of duplicates and not clear ranking criteria.
• Doesn't replace the catalog in terms of title searches. Would be nice if we could do it all through Summon.
• Doesn't show LINK+
• I miss the tag cloud in Encore. Don't like always getting inundated with newspaper articles when I do a general search.
• the limit for digital collections needs to be better (unless I just haven't figured it out - in which case it is not intuitive).
• The behind-the-scenes stuff like 'peer review' designation that we can't control and which is very expansively defined, and link resolver which is erratic, make this difficult to rely on.
• design (color, font, icos).
• confusing to new users, more challenging to teach.

24. How does Summon compare to other search tools (for example, Google Scholar)?
22 respondents commented, most comparing Summon to Google Scholar, with all possible views noted (e.g. Summon is better, worse, the same). Representative comments include:
• You can cite in Summon which is not possible in Google Scholar but Google Scholar has options for finding related content that Summon does not have (namely the related articles and cited by links). I prefer Summon to Google Scholar (it is cleaner and less cluttered looking in the results screens) but I still use Google Scholar fairly often.
• Broader, more diverse materials.
• Summon appears to be more cumbersome than search tool such as Google Scholar.
• about the same as GS.
• It is more confusing.
• Still a bit harder and complicated. But also more powerful.
• Summon does not take to directly to a full text article that we are supposed to have. Google Scholar on the other hand will re-direct you to an article if we own it.
• Google Scholar is a PhD. Summon is in middle school.
• Depends on the type of searching and the topic you are looking for. It fills a void, but it doesn't replace other search tools.
• When I am searching a book, I use Amazon. Somehow, I found it easier. But, it works great for searching article.
• I have not seen another product out there that does what Summon does. This is why the committee took over a year to recommend the purchase of Summon.
• For most of my needs and while at the desk I prefer Google Scholar because of the built-in limits.
• Summon is far more robust that Google Scholar--there is far more content.
• a lot worse.

25. The Continuous Summon Improvement group has discussed various means of evaluating Summon, including this survey, a patron survey, usability testing, use statistics, problem reports (number and type), replicating searches (e.g. top keyword searches), and ongoing feedback from staff such as the liaisons’ Summon Watch notes. Do you have suggestions for additional evaluation approaches?

There were 13 comments. All 13 are listed below.
• I think it would be useful for users to be able to rate specific evaluation criteria in terms of importance to them when they are rating the performance of Summon for specific evaluation criteria items.
• The group is doing a good job collecting feedback.
• no. I think usability testing and replicating searches would be good.
• These seem good.
• No.
• Not at this time.
• Usability testing with novice users is the only way to get good feedback.
• pop up box for patron comment.
• I question the need for constant evaluation when we have no way of closing the loop and fixing the parts of it that don't work optimally.
• No.
• No.
• Same.
• I do have a comment about the survey questions. When you ask users to rate their experience, what frame of reference should they use? If Summon is a new tool and our users have never used another discovery tool, how can they be asked to rate the performance of Summon. Are we comparing apples to apples or apples to oranges? When you ask how good is Summon at known item searching, maybe you need to compare it with something like the catalog in the question.

Follow up: clarify how results of this survey and other Summon feedback are/will be used. Consider adding to the usability test script to include importance of various criteria to users. Market the feedback option in Summon.

26. Additional comments?
Only a few responses, listed below.
• No
• I love Summon.
• Subject terms are so poorly implemented that I think they'd be better hidden - controlled vocab really only works when applied consistently and within the scope of a specific ontology.
• More links directly to full text.
• Summon seems awkward in the same way that our early (1980's) online databases were awkward.
• I know this won't happen, but I'd get rid of it and focus on making it easier for students to find better resources.

27. If you would like to add you department and/or division please do so here.
Only 13 identified their division: RED (7), User Services (4), Library Technology (1), LRDS (1)