

IAMSLIC LINKING LIBRARIES PROJECT

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ABSTRACT: The Coastal Information Library (www.csc.noaa.gov/cil/) is a Web site that allows users to locate coastal resources by searching the on-line catalog systems of a number of libraries throughout the United States. Users may choose which catalogs to search or may search all of them at one time. Users may also search the entire record or just the title for a keyword. A list of titles is returned to the user. Each title is linked to the catalog record for that item with instructions for borrowing the item through interlibrary loan from the originating library. The interface was designed to meet the needs of coastal resource managers and the public rather than librarians.

Recently, the developers of the Coastal Information Library were approached regarding the feasibility of creating a similar system for IAMSLIC. The membership of IAMSLIC was contacted and those with Z39.50 catalog systems were asked to contact the developers with the Internet address and access parameters for their catalog. Upon receipt of this information, the developers added the catalogs to the Coastal Information Library.

The opportunity now exists to either update the Coastal Information Library to better meet the needs of IAMSLIC or to create a separate IAMSLIC catalog search page. Either way, the current search interface, resulting list of titles, and catalog record display pages can be changed to accommodate the requirements of the IAMSLIC membership. For example, the search interface can be refined to include Boolean searches, commonly searched for terms, and additional fields, such as author and publication date. As another example, the resulting list of titles could be sorted alphabetically or by publication date. The pages can be changed in the future to reflect changing demands or new ideas. The developers are anxious to incorporate suggestions and to help IAMSLIC better serve its patrons. The IAMSLIC Linking Libraries Project was started as a way to help IAMSLIC members share on-line public access catalogs.

Instructions for Participation:

To participate in the project, you need to have an on-line catalog that is Z39.50 accessible. Hopefully, this will not be difficult. Many library catalog systems, such as SIRSI, INNOPAC, and DRA are already Z39.50 accessible and can be directly linked in.

If you are using one of these systems, or another standard library package, contact John Ulmer (see contact information at the end of this article) so your catalog can be included.

If your system is not already Z39.50 accessible, don't despair. As long as your catalog is in an electronic format, you most likely will still be able to participate. First, you will need to either purchase some Z39.50 software or download a free version. You can find a list of sources for the software at the Library of Congress' web site lcweb.loc.gov/z3950/agency/. You will need to select one that works with your operating system (UNIX, NT, Windows, etc.). You might also look for one that recognizes the format of your catalog records, typically MARC. If you are using a database to store your records, you might find a Z39.50 server that will work directly with your database. If you can't find one that works with your database, you might consider exporting the contents of your database into an ASCII text and using that file for indexing.

Most Z39.50 software packages include client, server, and indexing software. You will need to read the instructions that come with your package to determine how to index your catalog and install a server. Most Z39.50 software packages understand the MARC format and will automatically index it appropriately so text within select fields, such as title and author, will be searchable. If you are not using the MARC format for your records, you will need to define the start and end of these fields yourself according to the directions included with your software.

Once you've indexed your catalog, you will need to install the server and make it available through the Internet. You might want to install the server on the same system that is used for your web page. Once your server is up and running, contact John Ulmer with the following information on how to connect to your site.

IP address of your Z39.50 server (ex. 140.138.40.52)

Name you gave the index of your catalog (ex. "CSC")

Port number of the server (ex. 80)

Your name, phone number and email address

If you have any questions about the above steps or need further information, please contact us. We will do our best to help each of you get your catalogs on-line. If you do not have a system that you can install a Z39.50 server on, please contact us. In certain cases, we may consider hosting the catalogs of other libraries.

We hope to have a searchable web site available for IAMSLIC in the next month or two. In the meantime, please visit the Coastal Information Library and give us suggestions on how to improve it for use by IAMSLIC members. We hope you will all choose to participate in this project to better link our libraries.

Related web sites:

Coastal Information Library
Z39.50

www.csc.noaa.gov/cil/
lcweb.loc.gov/z3950/agency/

For further information, contact:

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