Feedback on the New Look SUNCAT: Report on June 2014 Survey Results

Respondents

A total of 43 responses were received from the following institutions:

- Birmingham Women’s NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford University
- British Film Institute
- British Library (2)
- British Museum
- Brunel University
- Cambridge University (2)
- Cranfield University
- Dundee University (2)
- Edinburgh University (2)
- English Heritage
- Hertfordshire Libraries
- Hospital Research Department
- Hull University
- Imperial College London
- Institute of Education, University of London
- London Metropolitan University (2)
- National Art Library
- National Library
- Nottingham University (2)
- Reading University
- RIBA
- SOAS
- South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
- Southampton University
- Surrey University
- University (2)
- University of East Anglia
- York St John University
- York University

Of these 60% came from Contributing Libraries (CLs), 21% from non-CLs and 19% remained anonymous. Ninety-eight percent were Information or Library Professionals and the remaining two percent were Postgraduate Students.

Purposes for Using SUNCAT

The most popular reason for using SUNCAT was to locate journals for library users, with 88% of respondents selecting this. Following this was checking bibliographic information and using SUNCAT to assist with collection management. These reflect the profile of the respondents as Information Professionals using SUNCAT to both assist their users and with library management tasks.
Ease of Use

The vast majority of respondents, 88%, found SUNCAT quite easy or very easy to use. Five percent reported that they found SUNCAT very difficult to use and on further investigation this was revealed to be due to a compatibility problem with older versions of IE which has now been rectified.

How do you find using the new look SUNCAT?

No respondents reported on how they found using SUNCAT on a mobile device.
Popularity of New Features

The most popular features on the new SUNCAT with the highest proportion of respondents reporting that they were either “Very useful” or “Quite useful” were:

- Links to library’s local catalogues in the holdings display (91%)
- Icons differentiating print and online holdings in the holdings display (90%)
- Electronic only/non-electronic only format limit on the advanced search page (86%)
- More search options on the advanced search page (86%)
- Library information pages (linked to from library name in the holdings display) (82%)

The least popular features with the highest proportion of respondents reporting that they were either “Not very useful” or “Not useful at all” were

- Map of all CL locations on the basic search page (23%)
- Newsfeed from the SUNCAT Blog on the basic search page (14%)
- Auto-suggestions on entering search terms (14%)

However, despite being the least popular features, each of the above did have a higher proportion of users finding them very or quite useful rather than not useful.

Not surprisingly, the features which had been used the least were those which are not integral to using the service to search for serials

- Map of all Contributing library locations on the basic search page
- Newsfeed from the SUNCAT Blog on the basic search page

Respondents were also asked to comment on their favourite features. The most popular features were the format limiting, filtering and icons.

“I really like being able to tell at a glance whether a library has print or online holdings for a particular journal.”

“… is especially useful as it alerts to licensing issues etc. and therefore prevents requests that will fail and saves time I getting information to the library user.”

Second to these were the additional library information pages and the links to local catalogues:

“The improved links through to library information and the links to the local library catalogue is a big improvement.”

“The new library information pages are very helpful as I work in Interlibrary loans and this feature gives me important information very quickly without having to try and locate it on the library’s own website or in the BL’s directory of library codes.”

Followed by the clear design, ease of use and general usefulness of the new service:

“Cleaner, easier to read and navigate”

“much nicer interface - much more obvious in terms of how to use it”

“Only use SUNCAT occasionally and have always found it incredibly useful and easy to use. I recommend it to students.”
When asked to comment about their least favourite features, the most commonly raised issue was related to the incompatibility of the new service with older versions of IE, which has since been resolved.

Secondly, the problem of duplication of records was highlighted.

“Some titles have quite a lot of duplicate listings but this is probably due to the different ways in which libraries catalogue their records.”

This is a well-known issue with SUNCAT and other union catalogues, but one which EDINA is continuing to strive to improve. Currently the service includes a “Suggest a Match” feature which enables users to suggest records which should match together. EDINA plans to gather information from these suggestions to feed into the development of an improved matching algorithm to improve de-duplication of records in the longer term.

There were also a couple of comments about the map, questioning its usefulness (above that of a link to the list of CLs) and also the fact that it can cause delays in loading the page where there is a slower network.

“I'm afraid that I don't find the map at all useful. Unfortunately we have a fairly elderly IT system and the loading of the mapping information slows down our access to the site quite considerably.”

However, another respondent indicated that they found the map useful for directing users to the resources.

Another respondent commented on searches returning records for e-journals when a print ISSN has been entered. This occurs as a reverse to the duplication issue mentioned above. Records match above format in SUNCAT so there can be records in the same set for both the electronic and print versions of a title and sometimes the preferred record used for display will be for the print version and sometimes for the electronic
version. However, the format limit on the Advanced Search page does provide the ability to display only search results for either print only or electronic only holdings.

One other respondent also highlighted that the ability to be able to print information from the service could be improved and this is something EDINA will be investigating.

“Printing results. It would be helpful if you could print a short summary with selected location details without the need to print irrelevant web-page data too…”

Comparison with the Original Service

Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that they found the new service better than the original one. Seven percent found the new service to be worse; however these were all respondents who had experienced the initial compatibility problems with older versions of IE.

![Comparison with the original service chart]

Comments on the New Service

Comments on the new service highlighted the ease of use, clear design and additional new features, particularly those assisting with limiting, filtering or distinguishing between print and electronic formats.

“I find the search screens and information returned a lot clearer on the new service. The links are more responsive and take you to the relevant pages more often than the old system.”

“It clearly states what it aims to do and is attractive in appearance and simple to use.”

“I find it easier to enter the info I have to hand to find possibly locations holding the item.”

“Useful to be able to filter out e-only sites as we are mostly looking for libraries holding a particular volume in print so external readers will be able to access it”

“It helps me to do my job more quickly and efficiently.”
There were a few negative comments related to the initial incompatibility with older versions of IE and one user indicated:

“The new search screen with the map is very messy”

“The results do not display in the version of Internet Explorer which we use, so using the new version is completely impossible.”

**Suggested Improvements**

The final question asked respondents for suggested developments or improvements to the service. The following table summarises these suggestions and includes a response from EDINA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Improvement</th>
<th>EDINA Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the new service is compatible with older browsers</td>
<td>We have investigated this and believe that the necessary changes have now been implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add more libraries</td>
<td>We will continue to expand the coverage of the service and are currently in the process of adding new libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve deduplication</td>
<td>We are gathering information about suggested matches on the service and will use this information to inform the development of an improved matching algorithm which should improve deduplication in the long term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve holdings information</td>
<td>Unfortunately, we have no control over this as we rely on the holdings information supplied to us by our CLs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bulk upload facility of ISSNs to enable scarcity checks</td>
<td>We are in the process of developing a holdings comparison service which should assist with scarcity checking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKRR libraries limit</td>
<td>We are in the process of developing tailored or customised views onto SUNCAT, one of which could be for the UKRR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve relevance ranking</td>
<td>We will investigate possible improvements in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstate subject heading browsing</td>
<td>This will be made available in an upcoming release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide better options for printing holdings data Printing results. It would be helpful if you could print a short summary with selected location details without the need to print irrelevant web-page data too.</td>
<td>We will investigate possible improvements in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information about policies on ILL provision and licensing agreements</td>
<td>We will investigate the possibility of pulling this information from sources such as KB+, while bearing in mind that recent changes to UK Copyright Law might make licensing information less relevant for ILL purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move the British Library code to appear beside the library name</td>
<td>This information is displayed on the Library Information page which can be accessed by clicking on the Library name in the holdings display. We feel that adding this information directly to the holdings display could complicate and confuse the display for general users, but we will keep this request under consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split up electronic and print holdings or show more clearly</td>
<td>We are working to improve how the format filtering works and will consider adding the format limit to the basic search page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The results of the survey are very positive for the new SUNCAT service and indicate it now provides an overall improved platform from which to continue to develop the service further.

Unfortunately there were some initial problems with compatibility with older browsers, which the survey very usefully highlighted. Otherwise the responses to the new features are encouraging, with the vast majority of respondents finding the new service easy to use and an improvement on the original service.

Key features appear as those related to identifying, distinguishing between, limiting to or filtering out particular journal formats. This reflects a high number of users wanting to focus on non-electronic formats due to licence restrictions on providing copies from electronic formats. However, the additional information provided on the library pages and the links to local catalogues also proved popular.

We will give further consideration to each of the suggested improvements and where possible investigate developing these as part of future releases. In some cases the developments are already in the pipeline and the survey provides an additional confirmation of their potential usefulness.