History and Development

**WebBridge** provides an openurl resolver for locating appropriate full-text from library subscription databases and ejournals. The WebBridge product was purchased in 2006 and implemented in late 2006 / early 2007. The WebBridge service, dubbed “Find it!” was launched for the public in March 2007. There are currently 25 origins, or starting databases, and more than 135 resources, or target databases and ejournal packages, in the system. There are entries for more than 25,000 individual ejournals or books in the WebBridge knowledge base.

WebBridge has added some steps to cataloging and processing tasks: ejournal setups or changes must be recorded in the knowledge base as, to a lesser extent, must any changes for ebooks. The Special Formats Cataloger has assisted the Web Services librarian in populating and maintaining the knowledge base. Periodically, large ejournal collections from aggregators such as Ebsco or ProQuest must be updated. Patron satisfaction with the WebBridge service depends on reliable data in the knowledge base; an error reporting link allows patrons and library staff to report instances where the service did not perform as expected.

Although initially set up as an external resource, WebBridge can also send searches out of the OPAC (a service called “Find More!”) or out of various staff Millennium modules. This integration with the ILS sets WebBridge apart from other openurl products available from vendors such as Ex Libris, Ebsco, or Serials Solutions.

Management Interface

WebBridge consists of several components:

- The origins, resources, external lookups, and other behaviors are managed through a passworded web interface at [http://library.uark.edu/webbridge/edit](http://library.uark.edu/webbridge/edit).
- The knowledge base is maintained in the Millennium Admin module.
- The WebBridge pages, which show users how to link to appropriate full-text, are maintained as part of the Web OPAC and their behavior is controlled to some extent by various wwwoptions.

No part of WebBridge is managed by the text-based admin function.

Patron Use and Statistics

WebBridge statistics are accessed through the web interface at [http://library.uark.edu/webbridge/edit](http://library.uark.edu/webbridge/edit). In 2007, there were more than 50,000 “click throughs” or choices to visit a WebBridge resource when it was offered.
“Click through” statistics can be viewed by database of origin and resource visited, as well as by date.

**Desired Enhancements / Improvements**

It is annoying that one must create a separate knowledge base from data that already exists in the OPAC – and then not be able to use the structured data in the knowledge base. An important enhancement would be the ability to export all or part of the knowledge base; this could save us tremendous time in creating the monthly ejournals list. The purchase of the Electronic Resources Management (ERM) product might help to leverage the content of the knowledge base better in that we would only be maintaining electronic holdings in one place.

A disturbing development this year is that III has split the WebBridge product into two components: PathFinder Pro (contextual linking product that has the OPAC as an origin) and WebBridge LR (the external linking component). Current WebBridge customers worry about continued support and development of the “classic” WebBridge product. At the last IUG, the product manager indicated that current customers could get full credit towards one of the new products but not both. This is very disappointing, as we have only recently purchased the “classic” product. The ongoing development of the two new products should be monitored to determine if we need to upgrade to one or both. WebBridge LR (the external linking component) would be more important to patrons but it would be bitter sweet to give up the OPAC linking functions, since that is a function that set WebBridge apart from its competitors.

bj 03/08