

Catalyst Fund Idea

Idea Title:	Universal Library User Identity System
ID:	7
Institution:	Boston College
Requestor:	Christian Dupont, AUL for Special Collections
Budget:	\$34,000
Goal (as pulled from the application):	“What if were to take the ORCID vision for an “identifier-enabled research information infrastructure” a step further and create a system whereby users of any library, archives, or other collecting institution would be able to freely register a permanent, universal user identity that would enable them to identify themselves to an institution, authenticate via appropriate policies and protocols, and access its collections and services without having to create a separate, locally maintained user account?”
Description:	<p>In recent years, researcher identification systems have emerged to address the problems that libraries, aggregators, and funders have faced in accurately and consistently identifying the creators of research products. ORCID is rapidly becoming the system of choice, as it is managed by an independent not-for-profit organization sustained by fees from member organizations. Its software and protocols are open. ORCID puts researchers rather proprietary interests in control, enabling individual users to keep their data private while empowering them to share what they wish with other organizations and software applications.</p> <p>Now, what if were to take the ORCID vision for an “identifier-enabled research information infrastructure” a step further and create a system whereby users of any library, archives, or other collecting institution would be able to freely register a permanent, universal user identity that would enable them to identify themselves to an institution, authenticate via appropriate policies and protocols, and access its collections and services without having to create a separate, locally maintained user account? What if library users could own, manage, and share their user data as they choose, and directly benefit from those choices?</p> <p>Most of us already have user profiles on social media services such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ that enable us to not only benefit from those services, but also selectively share information about ourselves with any number of applications and with increasingly sophisticated security and privacy controls. The elusive dream of seamless integration is becoming a pedestrian reality. To take but one example, you can login into Goodreads with your Facebook profile, import the books you purchase through Amazon, and receive tailored recommendations for future reading on your Kindle.</p> <p>Meanwhile at your local public or academic library, your user profile is maintained on an “integrated” library system that your library controls “for” you. The library decides how long your borrowing history will kept (or not, out of concern for “your” privacy) and “protects” it from being analyzed, even anonymously, by external services that could help you find other books of interest.</p>

	<p>There are good reasons why libraries should take an active role in safeguarding their users' privacy, but preventing users from owning and controlling information about themselves from which libraries benefit is a strategy that is working against the interests of both users and libraries in our Internet age. If libraries are worried about becoming irrelevant and users preferring their Kindle Owners' Lending Library to their collections, they need not wonder why.</p> <p>The idea that I would like to "catalyze" with fellow LYRASIS members is a universal library user identity system that will empower users of libraries, archives, and other information providers to drive their services to new levels of innovation—to literally "open" them up to the power of user networks and intelligent machine agents, on their own terms, as individuals and as user groups that share similar interests and sharing commitments.</p> <p>I envision the creation of a library user registry within a not-for-profit organization governed by member representatives from libraries and other collecting institutions (sounds a lot like LYRASIS?) that will be developed using similar principles, protocols, and business models as ORCID.</p> <p>How might it work? When you go to a new library, instead of having a local account created for you, you would instead create or link your universal user profile to their systems, granting them secure access as needed to credentials that authenticate you as a trustworthy user/borrower. Once linked, you will be able to request collections and services from the library and selectively share your transactional data with it and other agencies (anonymously, when possible and desired), and receive additional services, like personalized reading recommendations, in return.</p> <p>That's just for starters, but the question arises: is a distinct library user registry needed? Couldn't ORCID or other identifier systems expand to fill the bill? Perhaps, but that can only be determined if the requirements are thoughtfully articulated in conversation with others who embrace a similar vision and can offer relevant perspectives (my bid: as a special collections librarian, I worked with Atlas Systems to create Aeon, an automated user request and workflow management system specifically designed for special collections libraries and archives). This is the idea and the task that I would like to engage in with fellow LYRASIS members, with the support of the Catalyst Fund to help us together—the idea, or rather the ideal of forging a new kind of partnership between libraries and their users, one that will bring new levels of innovation and enrichment through new ways of cooperatively leveraging library resources and services.</p>
<p>Additional Details:</p>	<p><i>Note: if the idea is selected, LYRASIS will implement the project with engagement from Boston College and/or other members. The plan of work and budget below have been created by LYRASIS staff.</i></p> <p>Plan is to host a meeting of 30-35 people for a 1-day workshop in Boston to discuss feasibility, opportunities, options, interest, etc. Cost is based on \$800 travel round trip per person for 35, Meeting room \$300 for one day, Professional facilitator at \$1500 for one day, report writing will be two days at \$3,000, and \$1,500 for a survey of the field and preparation/research. Total cost \$34,000. Plan developed by Leigh</p>

	Grinstead (Digital & Preservation Consultant) and Michele Kimpton (Chief Strategist), at LYRASIS
Comments from Field Reviewers:	<p>1. This is a creative proposal, but I wonder about its application within academic libraries. Authentication identities less frequently assigned at the library level than they are at the institutional level using official campus credentials.</p> <p>2. The idea of a universal user identifier for access to library materials & resources across the country is a solid and very exciting one, something that has been discussed by a number of groups over the years. Basing the design around a model like ORCID is a good one, perhaps a breakthrough. My major concern is that a single summit meeting to dig into the concept may not yield a scale-able project. That said, this is one of the most creative and interesting of the proposals I've reviewed.</p>