

# METALIB REVIEW – 2 YEARS ON: THE LIBRARIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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# Why Metalib?

- ⦿ Federated searching facility
- ⦿ Modern look and approach, unlike this ...

## Welcome to Electronic Resources

From September 2007 all access to E-Resources will be via [Metalib](#).

- [Electronic Journals](#) (including [A-Z list](#))
- [Electronic Databases](#)
- [Electronic Newspapers](#)
- [Electronic Books](#)
- [Maps and Spatial Data](#)
- [Online Reading Lists](#)
- [Electronic Resources Trials](#)
- [Voyager](#)
- [Useful Links](#): [other libraries](#) in the region, [online catalogues](#), and [directories and timetables](#).
- [Exam Papers](#)

# Why Metalib?

- Greater functionality
- Better promotion
- Good portal to our data
- Branded name:-



# From design to implementation

- Project team
- Design and functionality – differences of opinion
- Pre-launch pilot and evaluation
- What did our customers want?

# The answer to all our prayers?

- Not quite!
- Managing expectations
- One size does not fit all
- The Metalib 'brand'

# The Metalib experience

- Fear of change and the unknown
- Too many choices?

The screenshot shows the 'Basic Search' page of the Metalib Electronic Library. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'Basic Search', 'MetaSearch', 'Find Resources', 'e-Journals A-Z', and 'My Metalib'. Below the tabs, there is a search bar and a 'Search' button. The main heading is 'Basic Search', followed by a brief description: 'Basic Search allows you to choose a subject 'quickset' to search a range of core resources. [Basic Search help guide](#)'.

This sidebar shows 'My Sets' with a 'Temporary set' option. Below it, 'Quick Sets' are listed with radio buttons: Arts, Computing/Comms-Electronics, Engineering, Humanities, Medicine + Dentistry, and Social Sciences. Each category has a list of sub-topics.

The 'Find Resources' page is shown, featuring a navigation bar with 'Find Resources', 'Resource List', and 'My Metalib'. The heading is 'Find Resources' with a description: 'Find individual resources by [Subject](#) or [Title](#). [Find Resources help guide](#)'. There are two tabs: 'Title' and 'Subject'. Under the 'Subject' tab, there are three numbered steps: '1. Choose a Subject', '2. Choose a Sub-category', and '3. Choose a Resource'. The '1. Choose a Subject' dropdown is open, showing options like 'Arts and Humanities', 'Biological Sciences', 'Business / Economics / Management', etc. The '2. Choose a Sub-category' dropdown is also open, showing 'Agriculture(20)', 'Animal Science(18)', 'Biology(27)', etc.

The 'MetaSearch' page is shown, with a description: 'MetaSearch allows you to customise your search by selecting up to 8 resources of your choice. [MetaSearch help guide](#)'. It features a 'Simple' and 'Advanced' search mode selector. Under '1. Select from menus:', there are dropdowns for 'Subjects' (set to 'Biological Sciences') and 'Sub Categories' (set to 'Agriculture'). Under '2. Enter search term(s):', there is a search input field. Under '3. Select up to 8 resources', there is a table of resources with checkboxes and action icons.

Resource Name	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/> (ISTA) Food Science & Technology Abstracts (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> British Humanities Index (CSA) (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Source Premier (EBSCO) (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> CAB Abstracts (EBSCO) (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> ENGAGE in research (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> Environment Complete (EBSCO) (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> Fustalast (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> Google Scholar (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> Ingentaconnect.com (Ingenta) (1)	⊕ ⊖
<input type="checkbox"/> ISI Proceedings - Science & Technology (1)	⊕ ⊖

# The Metalib experience

- ⦿ Librarians versus everyone else!
- ⦿ Limitations:-
  - Poor metadata from publishers/suppliers
  - No standardisation of search strategy across the databases
  - See more but get less

# Marketing and promotion

- ONE search, MANY resources, ALL the results




The advertisement features a blue-to-orange gradient background. At the top left, the text 'MetaLib' is written in large white letters, with 'ELECTRONIC LIBRARY' in smaller orange letters to its right. Below this, a screenshot of the MetaLib website interface is shown, displaying a search bar and various search options. A pink starburst graphic with the text 'TRY IT NOW!' is positioned over the screenshot. At the bottom right of the advertisement, the text 'ONE search MANY resources ALL the results' is displayed in white.




# Marketing and promotion

- Roll up, roll up – have we got a show for you!

**METALIB**

 **ILS**  
Information and Learning Services

 **MetaLib** ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

**ONE search**  
**MANY resources**  
**ALL the results**

**Your gateway to  
quality electronic  
resources**

Want to find out more?  
[subjectlibrarians@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:subjectlibrarians@plymouth.ac.uk)

# Marketing and promotion

- Named and shamed in the University magazine!



**MAKE A DATE WITH METALIB**

Staff and students can all benefit from the electronic library launched by Information & Learning Services.

**T**he new facility, Metalib, enables the Library to bring together all online resources in one place and acts as a 'gateway' to a wide range of different services - anything from subscribed specialist subject databases and electronic journal collections to e-books, images, maps and popular websites. It offers the flexibility to search individual resources by subject or title and to also cross-search, or 'metasearch', several resources at the same time.

The project team, led by Fiona Greig, E-Resource Development Manager, and including Library and IT staff, spent a year implementing the new system with the aim of providing a service able to cater for the information and research needs of both staff and students.

"All Library and IT staff have played a crucial role in answering frontline queries and concerns about this new resource," said Fiona. "Metalib isn't entirely intuitive - some basic training helps enormously in understanding the functionality and flexibility that such an electronic library offers."

According to the team, if students can be encouraged to use this service instead of relying entirely on Google or Wikipedia, it must be a step in the right direction. And Metalib offers huge potential to academic staff and researchers who wish to search and save their 'favourites' or search in a more sophisticated way. Ultimately, it can be tailored to suit their individual research requirements.

If you have any queries about Metalib or would like to arrange a training session for yourself, colleagues or students, contact the Subject Librarians team at [subjectlibrarians@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:subjectlibrarians@plymouth.ac.uk).

# Metalib survey

- ◎ Method or mayhem?
- ◎ Core issues:-
  - Too many logins
  - Time out period too short
  - Difficult to use – general misunderstanding
  - Full-text is king
  - Metalib results – how it returns and ranks
  - Broken links
  - Training

# Two years on .....

## ⦿ What has worked well?:-

- The Metalib brand
- Good platform for e-resource promotion
- Flexibility
- Federated searching

## ⦿ What hasn't?:-

- Too many choices – too much confusion
- Customisation
- Federated searching

# So what of the future?

- ⦿ ‘Dumbing down’ in a ‘good enough’ culture
- ⦿ One interface, one search – the new ‘URM’?
- ⦿ No more ‘wading through treacle’
- ⦿ Quality metadata
- ⦿ Getting the right balance
- ⦿ Testing, testing ...1,2,3

Thank you!

Any questions?

