EBSCO - Interview Summary

1. Do you like the EBSCO Discovery Service product? What things do you like? What things don't you like? Do your patrons feel the same way?

- Yes, because of the single search box
- A major factor in selecting was that EBSCO has APIs.
- EBSCO is very reliable and people like the interface.
- Implementation was rocky with anything using Linksource, Gale, or open source.
- Staff and patrons like the product. No complaints.
- It is very helpful to have our databases integrated with everything else. Some patrons like to see everything we have to offer.
- However, some patrons were very overwhelmed. They only want to see what is available at that branch. When we first implemented the product, it defaulted to the discovery product. We ended up switching that so the default was the classic catalog, and the second option was an advanced search to see everything we have available (the discovery product). Another thing we changed is to set it so that that branch's holdings come up first, and the other branch's holdings come after.
- More academic, but EBSCO is trying to make inroads in the public library market.

2. How much customization did your library do with the out of the box product?

- Doesn't know for sure how much as customized vs. out-of-box. (Hennepin)
- EBSCO has 2 sides of the product to work in: Regular Admin and Linksource A-Z. Very minimal. Primarily, we just changed some terminology. That was one reason we chose EBSCO Discovery Service—because it looked good and there wasn't much we had to do to it.
- Very minimal. (Brazoria County) Primarily, we just changed some terminology and the logo. Used EBSCO's templates. That was one reason we chose EBSCO Discovery Service—because it looked good and there wasn't much we had to do to it.
- O'Fallon worked with EBSCO over the phone to customize colors and other minor changes.

3. How well does the product perform searches and are the results relevant?

- Shannon has heard that other libraries have complained that EBSCO products always appear at the top of search results.
- Believes that this wasn't an issue for her library, because they worked with a person at EBSCO who understood their setup and how to adjust results ranking.
- Yes, results seem to be relevant, other than people getting overwhelmed with so many results.
- Patrons need to learn how to filter their results so they can manage the wealth of information provided.

4. Response time for remote users. Are your patrons satisfied with the response/performance time of the product? Why or why not?

- No issues. No complaints of slowness.
- I have not heard any complaints from patrons. The main problem seems to be our bandwidth, so we will have response time issues within the library at certain times of the day. I assume that might apply to remote users, but I have not heard anything from patrons.

5. How much training was involved in implementation of the product for staff and patrons? Were the training materials adequate? Was it worth the cost?

- EBSCO provides a support page, handouts, video tutorials, webinars, and Powerpoints that are included with the cost. They also can send reps to do in-person training, but they did not pursue this.
- Shannon didn't actually take any formal training, but thinks she should have.
- No formal training for staff or public, no complaints.
- We primarily trained staff, and assumed they would train patrons, but that doesn't always happen. I am still trying to figure out the best ways to train. We have 12 branches and 2 reference librarians who answer questions for all branches. I think we should have done more drop-in sessions at each branch, because live searching with patrons works best. You can have handouts, but they really don't do the trick.
- Ryan was trained by EBSCO "Train the Trainer" style for half a day. Very responsive to support questions and used email/phone to answer questions.

6. How satisfied are you with vendor support? Is it timely and are they readily available when needed?

- *Yes, very satisfied with support. Support has not really been needed.*
- *EBSCO invests in their own products and therefore they work!*
- Quick response – 24 hour turnaround in most cases.
- They are satisfied with vendor support now, but there were issues at the beginning. Questions were being referred to a general help desk, and individuals who did not understand their library's setup.
- I contact our sales rep when I need help, and response is very fast. We have other products with EBSCO [Flipster, Novelist, they have the Polaris ILS] and were very happy with EBSCO's service, and their price on the Discovery product was very competitive, so that is why we went with them. [I mentioned we were looking at BiblioCommons]: I saw a demo of that, and I liked the social media aspect, but is it that important? I wouldn't weight that heavily in the product decision. It's nice, but I don't know that it increases circs or brings in any more business. The data isn't there yet to show that it does.

7. If you had it to do over, would you choose EBSCO Discovery Service again?

- Yes, especially given the quality of the available alternative products. For example, OCLC was exciting, but appeared to still be in development, with no APIs. Serial solutions was geared toward academic libraries, and was expensive.
- I would, although our Tech Services head saw a demo of the new OCLC discovery product, and is very interested in looking at that. But I have not seen anything about that product.
- Under the hood stuff is so integrated and they are very sharp at developing needed improvements.
- Started as an academic product, but with new focus from EBSCO they are getting better for public libraries.

8. Do you have any advice for us?

- Play around, test it out. Try Linksource and make sure everything is working.
- Problem resolution will go better if you provide good examples, including screenshots.
- Try to work with a single individual at EBSCO who understands your system.
- What I would have done better is more public training sessions (drop-in sessions) when it first came out. Although you don't know if people will show up for them. You hate to go to all that trouble and have two people come. We have also done live training for school librarians, and that has worked well.
- I would also have pushed harder to get our other resources integrated into the Discovery product faster. For example, we have Hoopla (movies, TV, magazines, etc.), and I would have liked to see that integrated. Only a portion of it is in our catalog, and it would get more use if all of it were integrated.
- Students and teachers love the Research Starters. Once we started promoting these to the schools, database usage has skyrocketed!
- Marketing the product is essential and will help increase its usage and success. Get staff buy-in and they can help sell it to your patrons. The patrons need to know about the vast amount of valuable information that is available via the library vs from Google.