

**DATE:** December 12, 2022

**TO:** Board of Library Trustees

**FROM:** Laura Shea-Clark, Library Manager

**SUBJECT:** **New Library Discovery Layer Selected**

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**SUMMARY**

The Library is implementing Aspen Discovery from Bywater Solutions as the new discovery layer product for the public-facing catalog.

**BACKGROUND**

Innovative, the Library's integrated library systems vendor, is focusing catalog development on a new product called Vega Discover, which will replace Encore, the current public-facing catalog. While support for the Encore discovery catalog is expected to continue for a long time, development may be limited. Last year, the Library had demos of three discovery catalog options—BiblioCore (Bibliocommons), Vega (Innovative), and Aspen (Bywater Solutions). BiblioCore had significant deal breakers, such as having one layout style for all libraries who use it, no control over relevancy ranking, and lack of integration with LibCal. After the demos, the Library favored Aspen Discovery.

Before proceeding with Aspen implementation this year, staff scheduled additional demos for Vega and Aspen in case anything had changed. After revisiting the Vega and Aspen Discovery layers and reviewing staff input, the Library has confirmed the decision to move forward with Aspen Discovery by Bywater Solutions. Both discovery layers provide functionality not available with the current Encore product, but Aspen Discovery provides additional features and customization not available in other products that were evaluated. Aspen Discovery will help Library users explore the collection online and discover new items in a platform that is similar to popular online streaming services.

The Library has started working on the configuration process so that Aspen will be implemented this fiscal year to overlap with Encore and with the goal of moving over to Aspen by June 2023.

Below is specific feedback from staff who participated in both Vega and Aspen discovery catalogs demos.

### Vega Issues

- The user interface has a lot of white space and is not engaging.
- Call number and location are not displayed on the same page.
- Item records would need to be added at time of order in order for title records to show up in Vega.
- Predictive searching/alternate spellings is not great.
- No control over relevancy ranking.
- No genre facet.
- Not integrated with LibCal or StackMap.
- Very limited customization.

### Aspen Positives

- No deal breakers or significant concerns.
- Very nice user interface that is engaging.
- Call number and location are displayed on the same page.
- Order records display in the catalog.
- Good predictive searching/alternative spelling.
- Genre facet.
- Integrated with LibCal and StackMap.
- Automatic loading of Overdrive, Hoopla, and RB Digital.
- Integration of staff-created book lists as well as outside sources, such as *New York Times* Bestseller lists.

- Facets for Accelerated Reading and interest levels.
- Linked accounts.
- Can embed web code to display content on our website (book lists, images, etc.).
- Very customizable.
- Positive feedback regarding Aspen and Bywater support from other libraries:
  - “Implementation for Aspen was seamless. The product is easy to customize.”
  - “Aspen support is great. We have a ticketing system set up with them, weekly calls, a full implementation schedule. They have done an excellent job with support.”
  - “I think staff and patrons are generally quite pleased with Aspen. As I mentioned, I’m still learning, but Bywater Solutions is very responsive to any issues that pop up, and there are multiple ways to reach them during the day (Slack, ticketing system, etc.).”

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021-12-12-22M-1