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UX Report: Reviewing the ONEMercury Search

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October 28, 2015
U&A WG 3:15-5pm

Problem: The Leadership group tasked the UA group with reviewing why the ONEMercury search and the DataONE search were returning different result sets, and propose a FAQ to explain the differences.

Answer: The reason why the ONEMercury search and the DataONE search are returning different result sets is that the ONEMercury is acting like a search query and the DataONE is returning all result sets and then the search “box” is acting like a keyword filter. Thus, the result set is being generated in two different ways between the two search products.

The current “search” box in DateONE search looks like and is labeled as “Search” which leads users to treat it as a search rather than the key phrase filter that it is.

Also, noticed that the facets are hard coded and are not responsive to the result set that is present in the results area.

Recommended Options: There are a number of possible options to address the discrepancy between the two search products. Ranging from working with the logic (changing search logic) to adding in a cosmetic change (adding in instructional text).

Option 1: Distinguish that the new search uses filters rather than search queries (as does ONEMercury). In the new DataONE search, “Search: Anything” leads the user to assume they can apply a search (e.g., soil and moisture) when to correctly use the search the user needs to enter single keywords or key phrases. Move “Search” box down into main “Filter by” area with the rest of the filters and label as “Key phrase.” Also, add brief instructional phrase at top of filter area where box used to be and say “Refine search by using any filter.”

Option 2: Add a basic search option to the new DataONE search that employs Boolean phrases (and, or, not) or an option to have an advanced search. Add this basic search functionality to the “Search” box that is currently at the top of the page above the filters and make it a true search box with query capabilities rather than just filtering capabilities. Currently, if the user enters “soil and moisture” they would receive zero results rather than results for soil AND moisture. This change would better meet user expectations when viewing a search box that it will perform a search query for them. Users can then still use the filtering options to filter the returned search results.

QUESTION: We are also curious how users typically get to the DataONE searches. How do most users reach ONEMercury? Is it through the website? Depending on how users come to the new DataONE search could impact their perception (and perception of the functionality) of the search. If the user came to the DataONE search through Google, it may be unclear how to

start a new search (it looks as if the user came into an ongoing search). This is where clarifying the use of filters (rather than a regular search box with Boolean functions) will aid users.

QUESTION: Which fields are the keyword box filtering over?