

IUG2002 Conference Proceedings

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Session F1/Q1

Custom Forms and JavaScript in Innovative's WebPAC: Improved Functionality You Can Build Yourself

Coordinator/Presenter: **Hardy Pottinger, MOBIUS Consortium**

Presenter: **John McCullough, Innovative Interfaces**

Program Materials: <http://www.innovativeusers.org/iug2002/programs/F1/>

John McCullough, III Product Manager, introduced the III philosophy of extending the advanced searching capabilities of the OPAC to allow us to make improvements ourselves using JavaScripts. These capabilities include making the search URL's predictable on any system which then allows users to code search strings or use JavaScript to add functionality to search forms, improve the functionality, and validate input. He presented a brief introduction to INNReach.

Two FAQs are available currently on CSDirect, one which explains the inner workings of Advanced Searching, and the other which provides two shared JavaScripts contributed by Innovative users for general use.

Hardy Pottinger, I-NET Administrator for the MOBIUS Consortium presented several custom forms and JavaScripts that validate input and change layouts to match website design. He explained how the forms work with tokens to present and handle error messages and maintain the form input. The handout lists forms available for customization along with their function and filenames.

He walked through the process of adding a basic form validation JavaScript by placing the JavaScript correctly in the HTML and by calling the JavaScript function from the form.

A more complicated form validation that added functionality to the Advanced Search was presented. This JavaScript corrected a display problem that occurred when patrons had not entered both the "year after" and "year before" limits on date searches. This form is part of the handout.

The next form presented was one which used HTML and JavaScript to completely replace the system-provided tokens. The main problem with this method is that the patron who does not have JavaScript may not see the intended functionality, and may, for example, have to repopulate the form each time they wish to change some element of the

search or who will just never see additional functionality. Remember to always enhance the existing functionality and never take anything away.

Hardy claims to be the “laziest programmer in the world” who looks for scripts and solutions that have already been written. He recommends Webmonkey and javascript.about.com as good places to look for scripts to use with your forms.

Reporter: Angela Secrest, Houston Community College System