

BLUEcloud Visibility: Phases of Success

Improving your library's web presence is about process, not product. Know what phases you can expect along the way.

Open web catalog visibility is perhaps the most exciting development in library technology in years. But web visibility is not as simple and instantaneous as a product installation as much of the activity is out of library hands. When your library is ready for web visibility, know what to expect. Make your process easier by anticipating and taking steps to learn about and understand your visibility along the way. Help your library track its progress to visibility and know what to expect from each phase of your adoption.

Pre-Adoption

Before your library implements BLUEcloud Visibility, take the time to map out goals for your visibility. When your library chose to adopt BLUEcloud Visibility your leadership team likely determined that Visibility would help you accomplish your library's mission and better serve end-users. If your team did not already document specific desired outcomes, be sure to do so now.

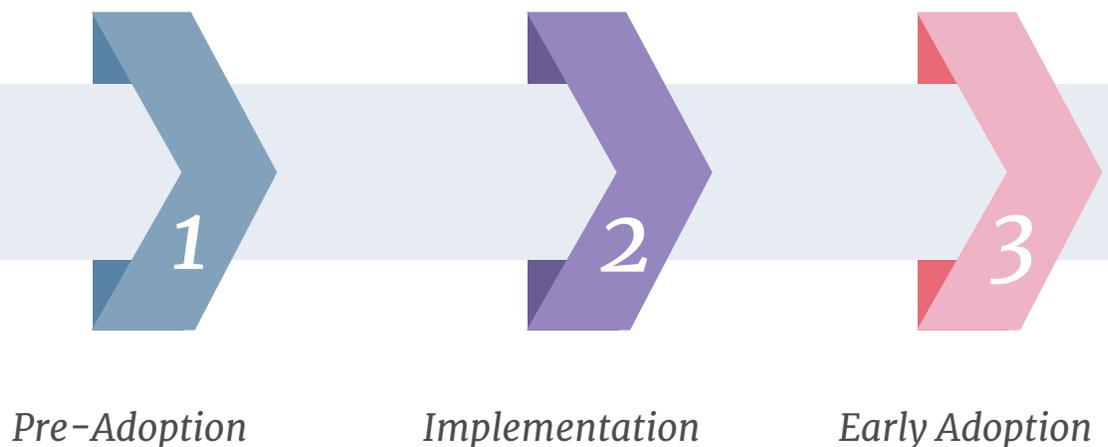
Once you have established your big-picture goals, determine how your library will quantify its progress. Does your library have an existing system for measuring impact and relevance? Begin by ensuring you have baseline understanding of your library's relevance, then determine your library's goals for the future. Where do you want your baseline to be in one year? In two?



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Establish documented goals for your library's future and a schedule for revisiting your progress. Plan goals that are long-term and schedule to revisit your goals no sooner than 6 months intervals. Over time, the measures by which you quantify your relevancy may change as you become familiar with BLUEcloud Visibility; even your overarching goals may change. A shift in goals is fine, but it is important that you maintain documentation of these goals over time as it will help your library understand what you want to accomplish and ensure your library is on track.

Relevance and visibility are abstract and difficult concepts to measure. Thorough documentation and concrete goals maintained over time will give your library strong points for assessing the progress and value of your visibility. Documentation will also help you articulate the case for visibility to decision makers down the line.



Implementation

The implementation of BLUEcloud Visibility involves two major steps. The first step is the publishing of your library data. BLUEcloud Visibility converts your MARC records to BIBFRAME records; your BIBFRAME records are then published to the Library.Link network. After your data is published the web steps in. Each of your converted MARC records is represented by an individual web page. The search engines web crawlers harvest the data from these pages and index the harvest data to be searched on the open web. Initial indexing requires at least two weeks; for subsequent indexing, search engines will continue to index large amounts of records over the coming weeks and months.

This implementation stage is the time during which you and your team should become familiar with the Library.Link network. Check your Library.Link reporting page to view your converted and published records. Look at your individual instance links and familiarize yourself with the new converted records.



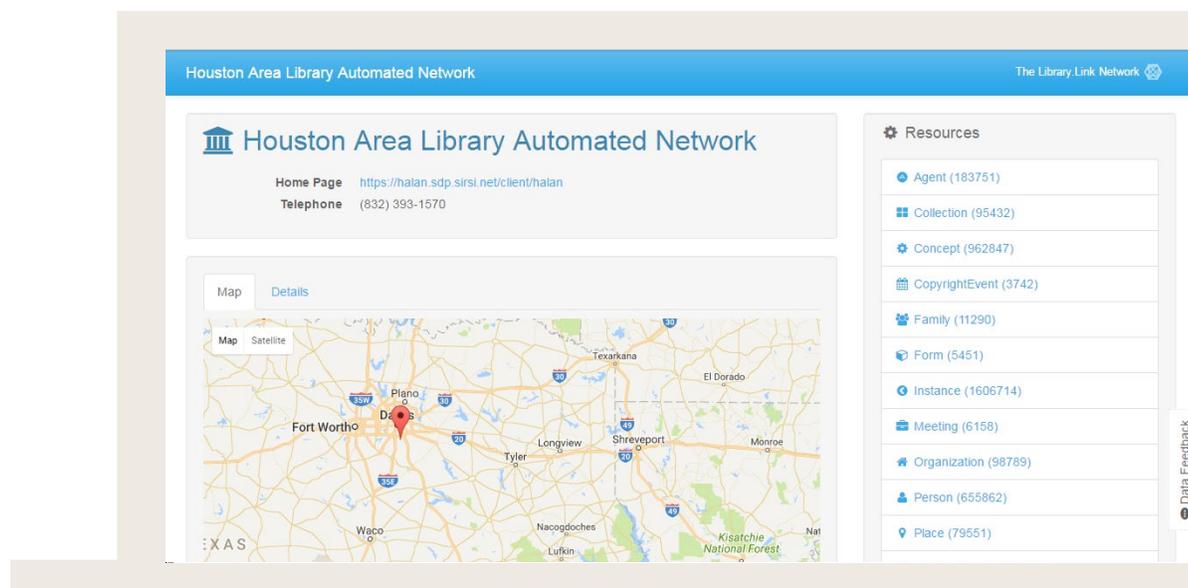
Mid Adoption



Ongoing Monitoring



Long Term Application

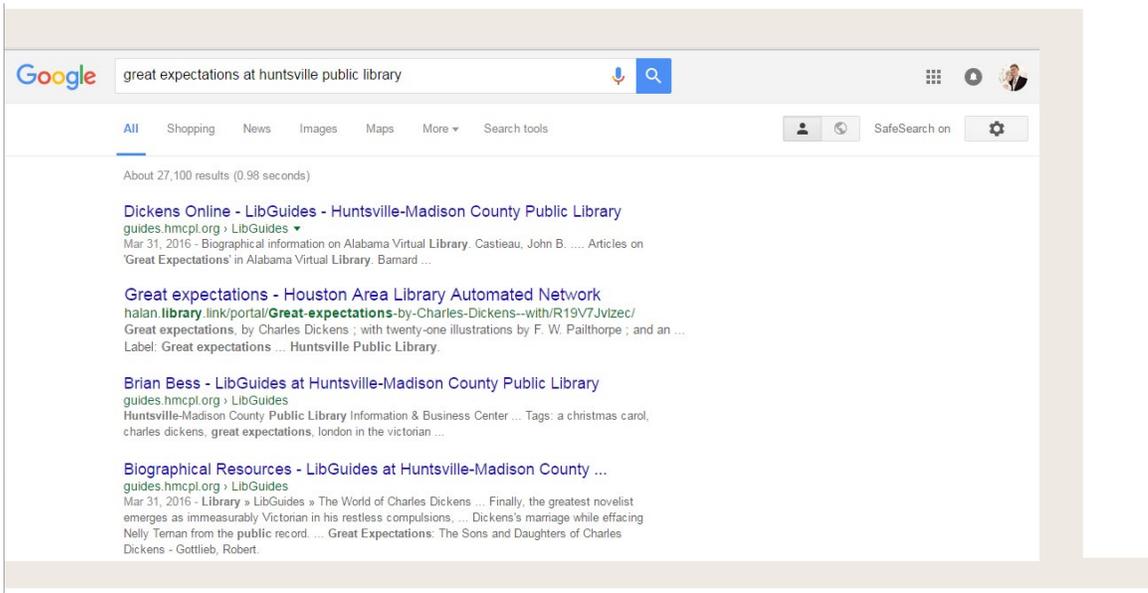


At this point, it will be too early to search for catalog records on the open web, but you can see your published records grow by searching your domain Library.Link URL. Search your URL every two to three weeks during the indexing phase. Checking back allows you to watch as the number of records in your domain increase. Use these record instances as an early proof of concept to decision-makers.

Early Adoption

BLUEcloud Visibility has been fully implemented and many records have been indexed. You are now ready to begin case testing. Search for your catalog items using "Item Name at Library Name." Your records should now begin appearing in search results, though expect that your links will not land high on the list of results in these early stages. Note how your results are ranking so you can monitor their growth over time.

In addition to case testing, this is also the point at which you can begin receiving analytics on your clicks and impressions. Beginning in month four, we will begin sending you reports that contain this information for your linked data page. Clicks and impression analytics serve as good early indicators of progress and can be used as another early proof of concept for decision-makers within the first few months after implementation.



Mid Adoption

The mid adoption phase is when your library will want to develop a proficient understanding of search engine analytics. Roughly 6 months after implementation an increasing percentage of library records have been indexed. Sources like Google Analytics will start to show change. Analytics from our early BLUEcloud Visibility adopters show that libraries will want to pay attention to percentages of new sessions and new users. You should also monitor traffic to your catalog from Library.Link.

Monitoring your library's analytics should be done in moderation. Think of your analytics as a penny stocks. You will initially want to dedicate time to understanding how it all works. After your initial study-crunch plan to give your analytics breathing room. It does not require daily monitoring. Check in on your analytics every now and then and play around, but do not get too caught up. Remember, this is a long-term commitment, not a passing fad. Conserve your energy.

This is the phase in which many libraries find they want to do something to help improve their relevancy. Your records are visible, but still not top of the search engine results. Library catalogs are late coming to the world of information on the internet, so

it does take time to gain relevance in search results. Keep in mind, that search engines favor the authoritative data libraries offer, so while your data might take time to climb the ladder, ultimately your data is the kind that search algorithms prefer. Give it time. Use and longevity will help relevance improve. You can rest assured that as the Library.

Link builds relevance, all libraries in the network gain. Your library relevance benefits all libraries in the network and their relevance benefits you.

If it is appropriate for your library, the one thing you can do to help move the needle on relevance is to promote visibility use among your patrons. Higher traffic to your visibility pages will increase their relevancy. You can encourage your active users to help your process by promoting visits to your published pages. To make your visibility promotion as simple as possible, the SirsiDynix team has created a BLUEcloud Visibility Launch Kit. This free kit consists of customizable marketing materials your library can use to promote and inform patrons of your open web accessibility. There are a variety of materials available, use them all or pick only what works for your library.

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Ongoing Monitoring

Your library has been live on BLUEcloud Visibility for most of the year now. Your records have been published and continuously indexed by the web. What now? The best thing your library can do is to continue to monitor your web analytics. After your records have been published and the web has had time to react to your data, you can begin to analyze the analytics you are seeing, ask questions, and compare against the initial goals your library set for itself. Look at your search engine analytics and ask questions.

- Are you seeing higher traffic to your website?
- What is the average session length? Average bounce rate?
- Are visitors staying longer to look at more information?

“ There’s a large group that could use the library, but haven’t thought to go and look. Our thought process is that we will get our library’s catalog data on the Internet, it will begin to appear in search results, and this is a way to bring patrons who are not active patrons to the library. This gives them a little bit more information about what we have in the library, because we have all the new titles, the new movies, and the new CDs. All that stuff is here, so we may as well get the library’s holdings out where folks who are not library-users will see it. ”

Kendal Orrison | RSA NFP Executive Director

Expect that your percentage of new users will spike but will then go down. This is a good sign as new users become return users.

Begin to look for trends in your analytics over time. Can you see correlations between web activity and library activity, like a rise in visitors right before a programming event or in response to a newsletter. Spotting and understanding trends requires a large scope of time. Begin trying to analyze trends after you have been on BLUEcloud Visibility for more than 6 months, but expect that you'll gain a better understanding and perspective over a longer period of time.

Long Term Application

After your library has gained a better understanding of relevance, impact, and the processes involved in open web accessibility, your leadership will want to revisit your original goals. Consider the baseline numbers originally identified in your goals. Have those numbers shifted? In addition to looking at your search engine analytics, bring in your ILS analytics and compare against historic trends. Many libraries like to look at circulation as an indicator of success. You could also consider looking at patron registration, or gate count. Your library may want to redefine its goals or set new ones for the future.

Working to improve visibility can be difficult as it is both a long-term process and a process that cannot be rushed. The best preparation a library can make for visibility is to learn to understand and monitor the analytics and structures. An analytics expertise prepares your library to address changes when they arise and enables articulate value-add explanation to your decision-makers.