

Case Study

Oklahoma City Community College Improves the Search Experience for Its Website Visitors with OU Search™

Key Takeaways:

- OU Search™ provides quick and easy access to website content, giving visitors the information they want
- The administrative interface of OU Search includes numerous configuration options for customized searches
- Site visitors benefit from advanced search options, high-speed searches, and tailored results

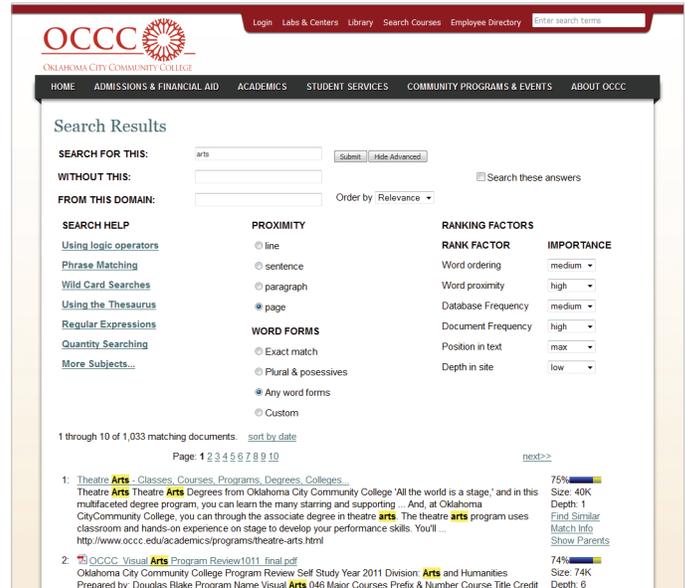
Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) was founded in 1972 after the South Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce petitioned the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to establish a junior college in the area. With an initial enrollment of 1,049 students, OCCC has grown to provide more than 28,000 students each year with an affordable, quality education. OCCC offers a wide range of associate degree programs, certifications, and education courses for students of all backgrounds and ages.

Opportunity for Change

As an institution committed to giving students the knowledge they need to succeed, OCCC recognized the importance of having information readily available and easy to find on their website. However, the college's previous site search solution, Google Mini, was nearing the end of its lifespan. OCCC had never achieved a completely ideal search experience with Google Mini. The device delivered results based on crawls of the entire website, causing a lot of extraneous and unhelpful results to appear in the searches. In addition, there was a lack of consistency; the search interface did not incorporate the design of the rest of the website, with only the college logo displayed in the search header. When the time came to replace Google Mini, OCCC began looking for a sophisticated, customizable, and inexpensive solution to offer visitors a better search experience.

Finding a Better Search

OCCC considered various alternatives, including the Google Search Appliance, but every option was found to be either lacking in functionality or cost-prohibitive. For instance, the lowest cost option for the Google Search Appliance was \$11,000 per year for 3 years, plus \$33,000 upfront. Finally, the quest for a new search tool came to an end with OmniUpdate's OU Search™ module, which had everything OCCC wanted—and more—at an affordable cost. OCCC was attracted to the ability to easily create tailored searches, customize the look and feel of the results, index numerous different file types, and promote content. With seven years as an OmniUpdate customer under their belt, OCCC knew OU Search was going to be a good fit.



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Implementation and Setup

OmniUpdate implemented and set up OU Search for OCCC, including customizing the search results template to match the OCCC website. A primary search field was added to the website header, and the search was configured to return results based on the crawling of specified URL patterns and file types. Site indexing could be scheduled to occur at any frequency to keep search information up to date, and OCCC settled on every 24 hours. A few of the college's departments also wanted visitors to be able to search within their individual website sections. Using simple lines of HTML code to place secondary search fields in the side navigation of department web pages, OCCC gave visitors the ability to find information within departments, such as the Division of Business, without filtering through unnecessary results from other areas of the website.

During the implementation, OmniUpdate provided training on the OU Search administrative interface to give OCCC control over the search customization options and query reports. John Richardson, Supervisor of Web Development and Social Media at OCCC, began taking advantage of several of the administrative features. "OU Search is the most incredibly configurable software I think I've ever seen," explained Richardson. Beyond customizing the style of the results and specifying the site content to be included, OCCC has been able to further improve search results using features such as "best bets," which feature web pages as top results based on the input of common search queries. In addition, the reporting feature in the administrative interface has equipped OCCC with decision-making data to improve website content and ensure visitors can always find the information they need.

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*John Richardson
Supervisor of Web Development and
Social Media, OCCC*

Satisfied Visitors, Satisfied Administrators

Outside of the administrative interface, OCCC has found OU Search to be an effective solution for delivering results to visitors in a timely and efficient manner. The search results are retrieved very quickly, and visitors have more power than ever to narrow down their searches through advanced search options, such as by word form, proximity, and ranking. "We are very happy with the decision that we made to go with OU Search," Richardson stated. "We think it's one of our best acquisitions in a while."

