Connections with Mutual Benefit:
Veterinary Medical Libraries & Specialty Examination Reading Lists

Heather K. Moberly, MSLS, AHIP
Professor, Veterinary Medicine Librarian
William E. Brock Memorial Library
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater OK   74078 USA

Vicki F. Croft, MSLS, AHIP
Head Librarian
Animal Health Library
Washington State University
Pullman, WA   99164 USA

Diane A. Fagen
Librarian / Copyright & Permissions
AVMA Library
AVMA
Schaumburg, IL   60173 USA

Allyson N. Caldwell
Student Assistant I,
William E Brock Memorial Library
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK   74078 USA

Kathryn M. McMillan
Clerical Assistant II
Animal Health Library
Washington State University
Pullman, WA   99164 USA

Abstract

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS:
Librarians who collect veterinary medical literature and candidates studying for veterinary specialty examinations have vested interests in the examination preparatory reading lists. Our objective is to collect, verify, and distribute reliable information about items on these lists. Additionally we hope to establish a dialogue between librarians and specialty veterinary organization representatives.

Veterinarians practicing in the United States must pass state and national examinations. Specialization requires acceptance into the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Recognized Specialty Veterinary Organizations (RVSOs), often including specialty examinations.

Reading lists for these examinations are valuable collection development tools for libraries and individuals and access to these materials is critical for the candidate, often already in private practice. Non-veterinary libraries may view these as expert specialty lists.

We collected RSVO reading lists and created an Excel workbook using standardized bibliographic information from WorldCat. WorldCat.org is the vehicle for organizing and distributing these lists to both librarians and examination candidates. This freely-available version of the WorldCat database, including the "Find a Copy" function that displays holding libraries sorted via zip code, will aid candidates in locating locally available study materials.

Ultimately, the VMLS website will host this project.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS:
Several "core" lists for veterinary medicine exist although there is no Brandon/Hill or Doody's.

In August 2009 we formalized our project with the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section of the Medical Library Association and they formed a task force to assist with and support the project.

We already received sufficient feedback to announce that the next step in this project will be to expand the information base, develop metrics, and publish a formal basic list of veterinary medical books as a companion to the "VMLS Basic List of Veterinary Serials." Our timeline is not yet finalized. Our intent is that, as with the "VMLS Basic List of Veterinary Serials," it will be submitted as a referred publication and be available on the VMLS website.

Recognized Specialty Veterinary Organizations

The first two veterinary specialty organizations approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Executive Board in 1950 were the American College of Veterinary Pathologists and the American Board of Veterinary Public Health. An additional 18 have subsequently been approved for a current total of 20 organizations covering 39 specialties. As of December 2009 there were 9,800 diplomates, although it must be acknowledged that some are certified in more than one specialty or by more than one specialty organization.

(All of the information in this section is from web pages linked from the American Board of Veterinary Specialties at the AVMA website. It was verified accurate as recently as 14 May 2010. The base URL is: http://www.avma.org/education/abvs/.)
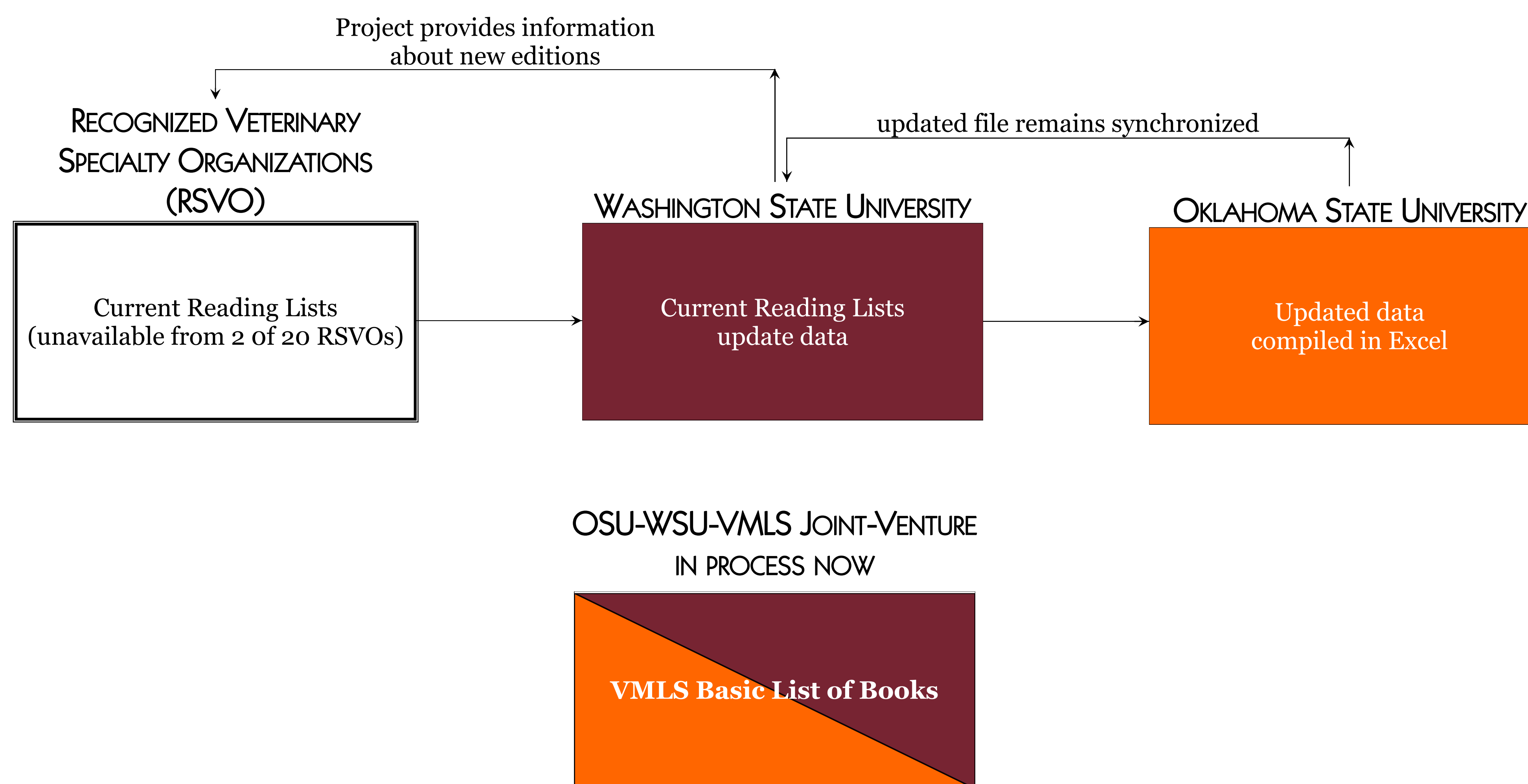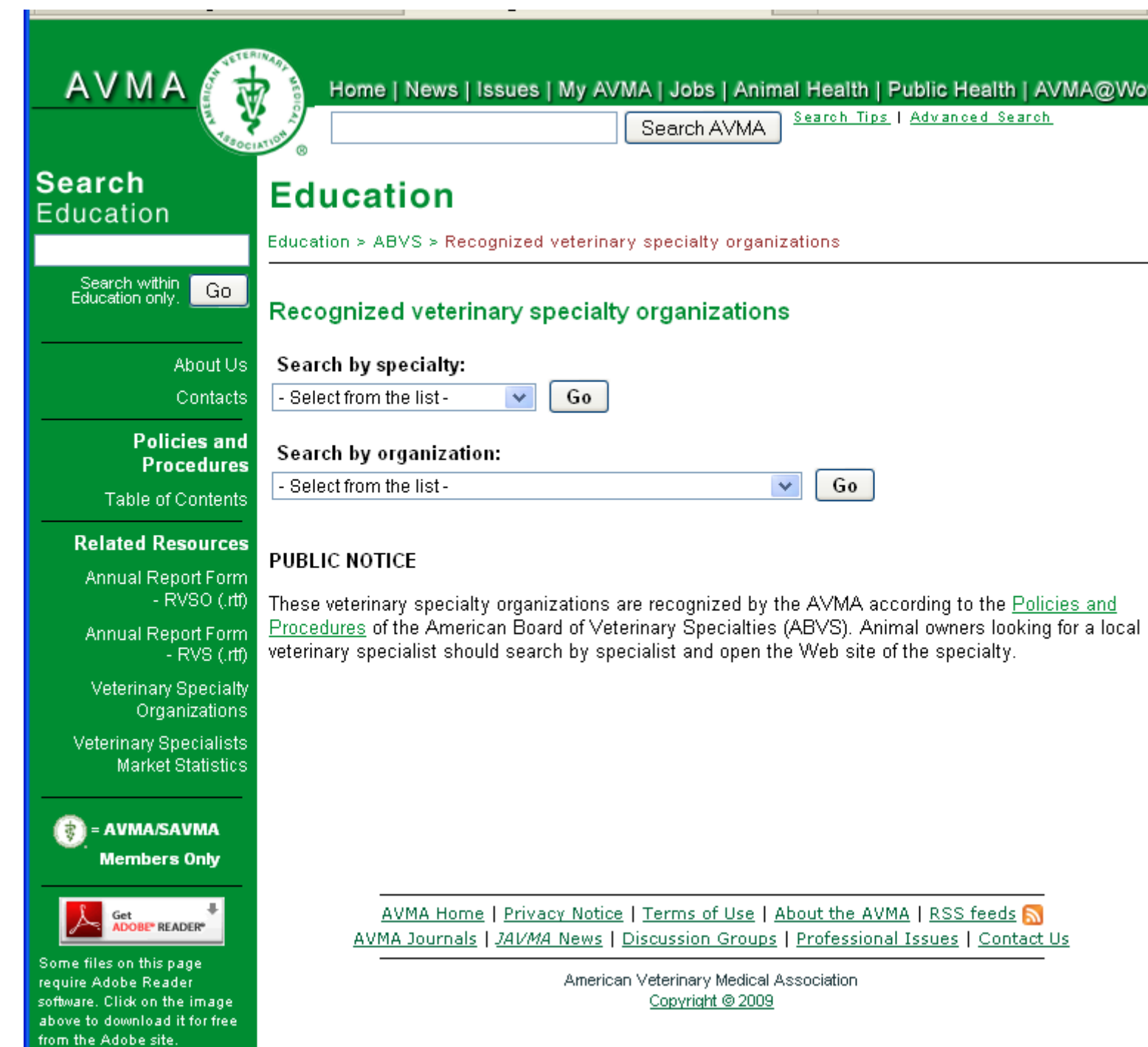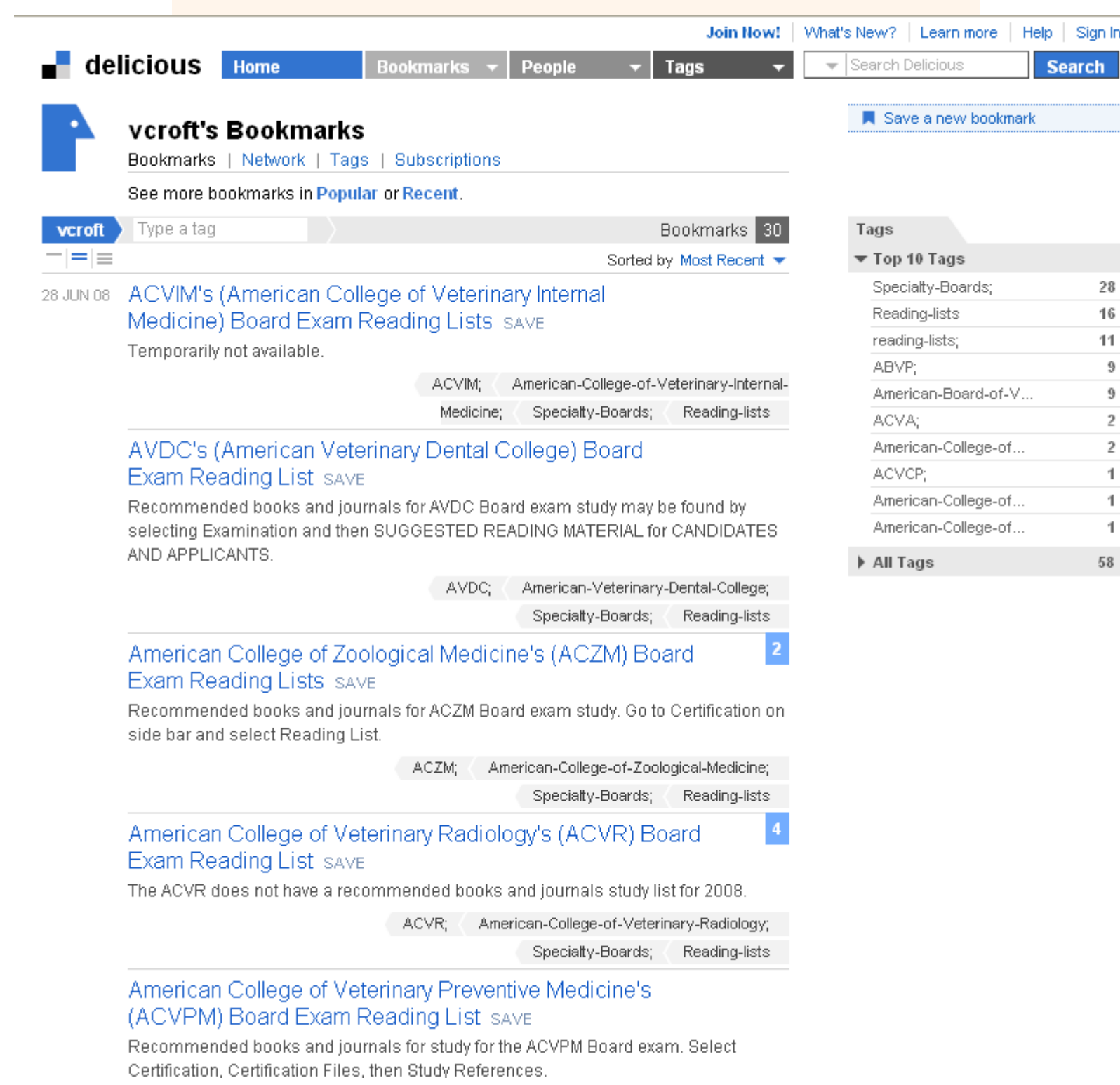

Care & Maintenance of the Data

We recognize that this project will require frequent checking and updating. We are proposing an eventual collaboration with the specialty organizations based on a two-way information flow. We can notify them when there are new editions of items on their reading lists. They can provide us with updated information each time their lists are reviewed.

Recognizing that this could, and in our minds should, be a long-term project, Washington State University (WSU) and Oklahoma State University (OSU) are working to develop a methodology that could be easily transferred to others for future care and maintenance of the project.

Project provides information about new editions

RECOGNIZED VETERINARY SPECIALTY ORGANIZATIONS (RSVO)

Current Reading Lists (unavailable from 2 of 20 RSVOs)

updated file remains synchronized

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Current Reading Lists update data

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Updated data compiled in Excel

OSU-WSU-VMLS JOINT-VENTURE
IN PROCESS NOW

VMLS Basic List of Books

Uses of the Data

Several "core" lists for veterinary medicine exist although there is no Brandon/Hill or Doody's. In August 2009 we formalized our project with the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section of the Medical Library Association and they formed a task force to assist with and support the project.

We had already received sufficient feedback from a prototype to announce that the next step in this project will be to expand the information base, develop metrics, and publish a formal basic list of veterinary medical books as a companion to the "VMLS Basic List of Veterinary Serials." Our timeline is not yet finalized. Our intent is that, as with the "VMLS Basic List of Veterinary Serials," it will be submitted as a referred publication and be available on the VMLS website.

Our initial goals:

- assist people with finding the most current specialty organization lists
- share the bibliographic data for each item
- assist people with locating the items.

Our Delicious social bookmarking site links specialty organizations, their diplomate candidates, and other interested parties to the current lists at the specialty organization's website.

The WorldCat Share lists provide bibliographic data to disambiguate the items for diplomate candidates and librarians alike.

We perceived early on that this could be a powerful collection development tool for librarians in the veterinary, medical, animal science, and agricultural disciplines. This collection development tool could also be used by practitioners who want

- a core collection of materials in their practice
- an up-to-date expert opinion about selections.

Who knows better than the specialty organizations about their discipline?

Recently we provided rough data from this project to four colleagues to use as a resource for four diverse projects:

- tool for spending one time collection development money
- criterion for downsizing a collection
- criterion in analysis for a collection development chapter
- metric in creating a core list of journals
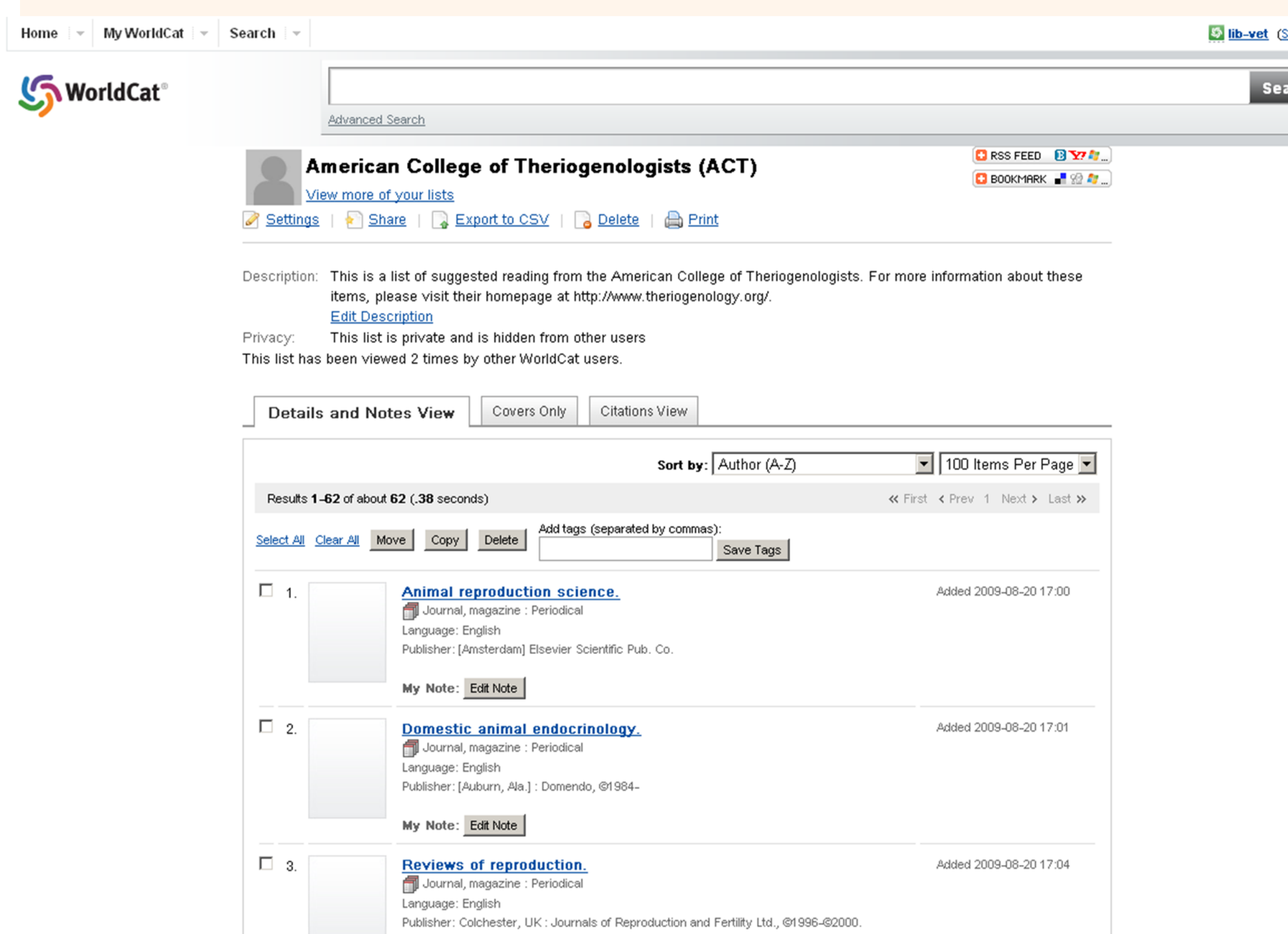
Output 1: Delicious

What is Delicious? Briefly, and for our purposes, Delicious is a website that allows the user to bookmark web pages and to share those bookmarks with others.

Output 2: WorldCat.org Shared Lists - Bibliographic Standardization

WHAT IS A WORLDCAT SHARED LIST?
Worldcat.org is a freely available version of OCLC's WorldCat. Within Worldcat.org users can create and share lists of items. We intended to create an overall list with each item tagged with each of the specialty organizations requiring it.

Due to limits on the number of items that can be in a list we are creating one or more lists for each specialty organization. The ACT list is illustrated below:

Output 2a: WorldCat.org Shared Lists - with Links to Local Libraries

Sandbox:
Specialty Organization Project

About this project:
This webpage is a very early sandbox version for the Specialty Organization Reading List project by MLA/VMLS, OSU, and WSU. This project is currently in the prototype stage and being presented in conference poster sessions in 2009.
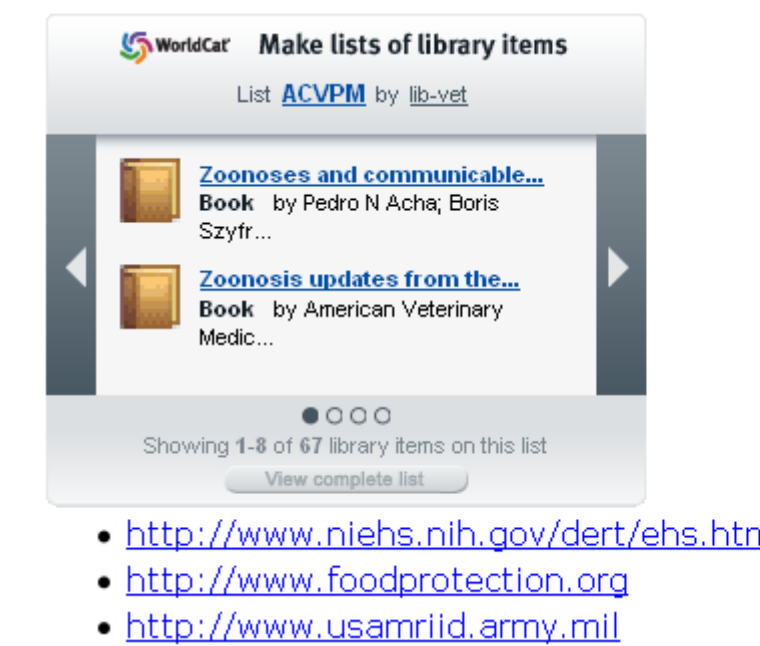
About WorldCat.org
WorldCat.org is a freely available. It is, in essence, a catalog of library catalogs. We have linked this list to our "favorite" libraries which are the libraries at the 28 accredited veterinary schools in the united states. You can enter your zip code at the WorldCat site and it will tell you the geographically closest libraries that it knows of that have each of the items you view.

The Specialty Veterinary Organizations
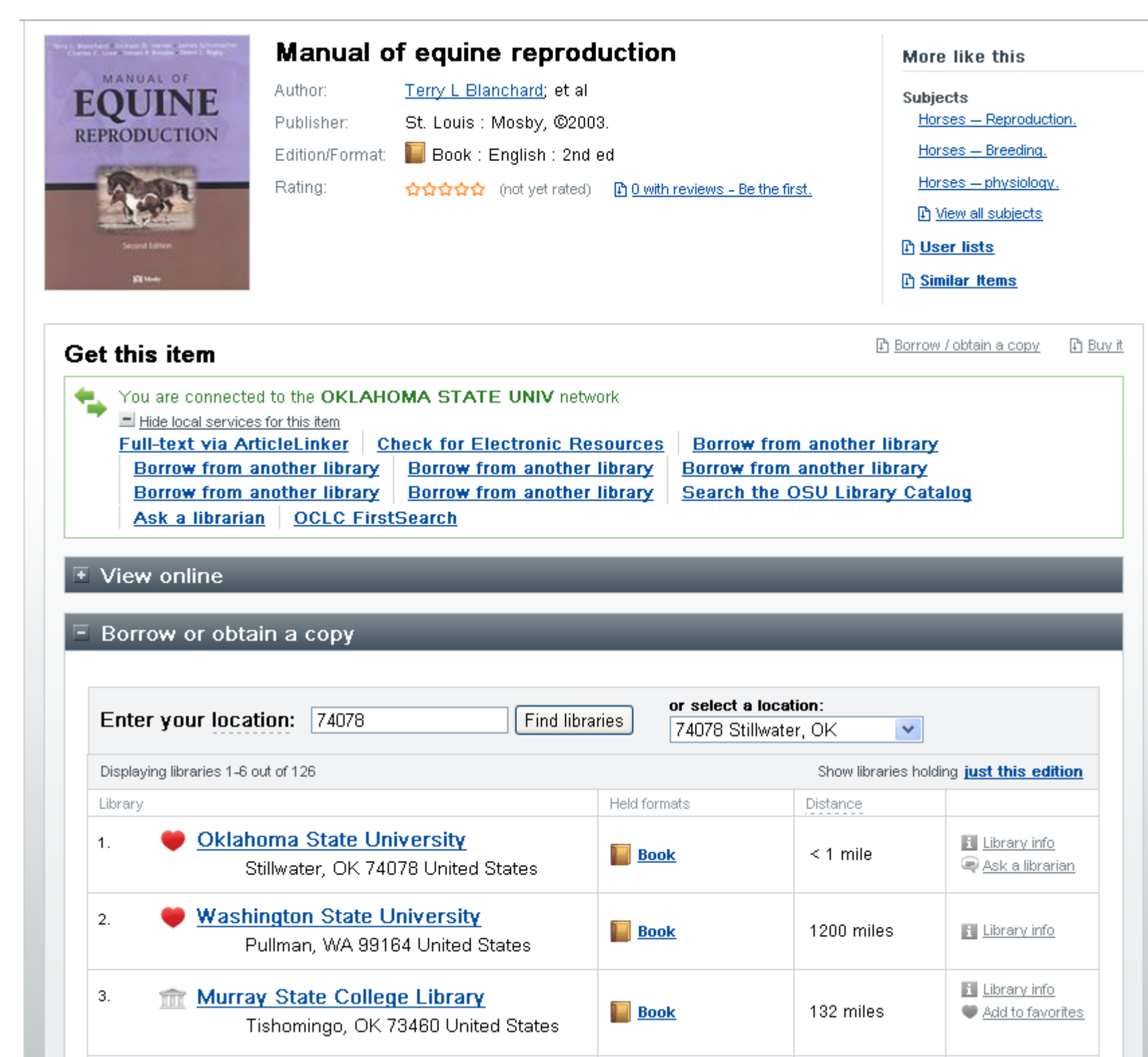American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine (ACVPM)

The widget below previews, and can take you to, a list at WorldCat.org which includes all of the literature listed on the ACVPM Suggested Reading list for the certification test except the websites listed here.

WorldCat List Widget

- http://www.niehs.nih.gov/dert/ehs.htm
- http://www.foodprotection.org
- http://www.usamriid.army.mil

A website will be hosted by the VMLS web. The purpose is to organize and explain the scope and particulars about the project. Unfortunately, at the time of this poster session, it is still a sandbox and not ready to share.

Output 3: Using WorldCat to Locate Items

WorldCat.org assists users to locate items locally. By entering their zip code a list of local libraries holding the item appears. Additionally we can list "favorite" libraries that display automatically. We have listed the AVMA accredited veterinary schools.