Follett

The Integrated Library System Product

Follett is a well established company that offers products with multiple aspects of usability for library systems. The majority of Follett users are school systems and in fact, Follett claims to have 60,000 schools that rely on the company. As one of the nation's top school library vendors, Follett offers an extensive collection of books to purchase along with numerous other library materials, including supplies and furniture. Follett also produces several different product lines, including Destiny and Aspen, and offers numerous special services designed to assist librarians in developing a highly functional library system.

Within Follett's product Destiny Classic, two separate systems are available, Library Manager and Resource Manager. Library Manager is utilized by librarians to track and manage all things in the library. This can include books, magazines, or even equipment used within the library. Resource Manager is used to track other schoolwide resources, such as musical instruments and textbooks. A more recent product of Follett is Aspen. Aspen Student Information System has been developed to assist schools with managing student data. Provided within Aspen is the ability to manage actionable data including gradebooks, schedules, and more.

A way in which Follett distinguishes itself is by providing librarians numerous additional services. Some of the services offered include book processing and personal shoppers. Follett goes a step further by offering collection analysis, collection creation, and even virtual and in-person book fairs.

Modules and Add-ons

Follett hosts Destiny Discover as well as Destiny Classic for school library management. Destiny Discover is the patron "face" of Follett. Destiny Discover allows patrons to search the entire library catalog and read directly on the platform. Ebook functions include the ability to search entire texts, highlight, and hear the pronunciation of difficult words. Two apps are provided for Destiny Discover, allowing patrons to read directly from their phone. See Figure 1 and 2.
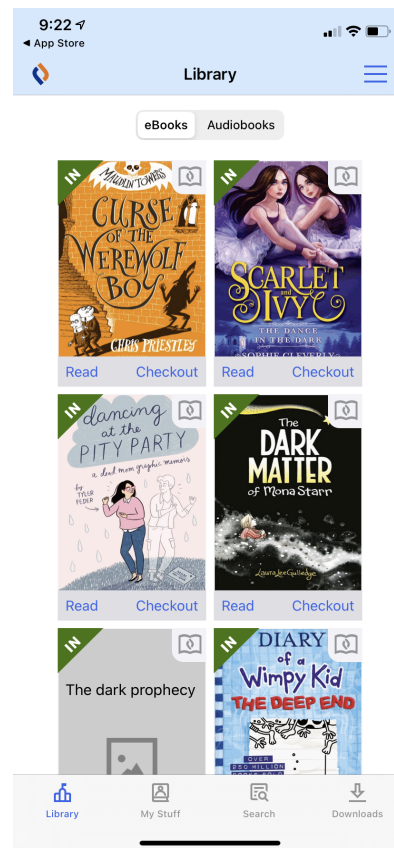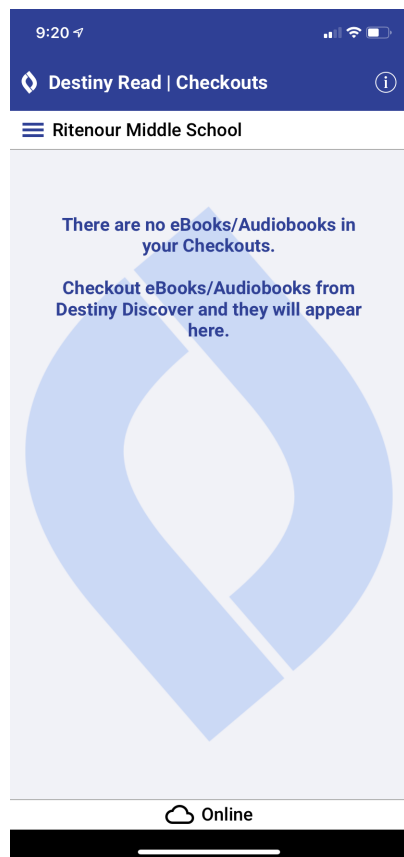
Figure 1. Follett. (2018.) *Destiny Read* (1.4.1) [Mobile app]. App Store. https://apps.apple.com/us/app/destiny-read/id1381553821. Screenshot by author.

Figure 2. Follett. (2021) *Destiny Discover* (1.2) [Mobile App]. App Store. https://apps.apple.com/us/app/destiny-discover/id1525130924. Screenshot by author.

Digital resources can be found and utilized on Destiny Discover including free and paid databases through One Search and easy access to teacher approved websites through WebPath Express. Patrons can also sign on to Biblionasium which is a platform built to support healthy reading habits and to generate action data for educators. Collections within Destiny Discover allow administrators (and students) to create groups of books, websites, videos and more, all in one place for research (Follett, 2021).

Destiny Classic serves as the "back of the house" product for librarians. Destiny Classic integrates with Titlewave for collection development ease and MARC downloads. Classic offers resource management for libraries in a user friendly form. Within Classic, librarians are able to print multiple statistical data reports, look up patron information, and add or delete books from the catalog. Classic directly connects to Discover real-time so that changes made in Classic are immediately available to patrons using Discover. Destiny integrates with student information systems seamlessly and allows for all patrons to have multiple points of data stored. Other options available through Follett include hardware for sale and standards alignment. One of the most useful librarian tools within Follett is the addition of collection developers who use their time to develop collections based on the librarian's descriptors (Follett, 2021).
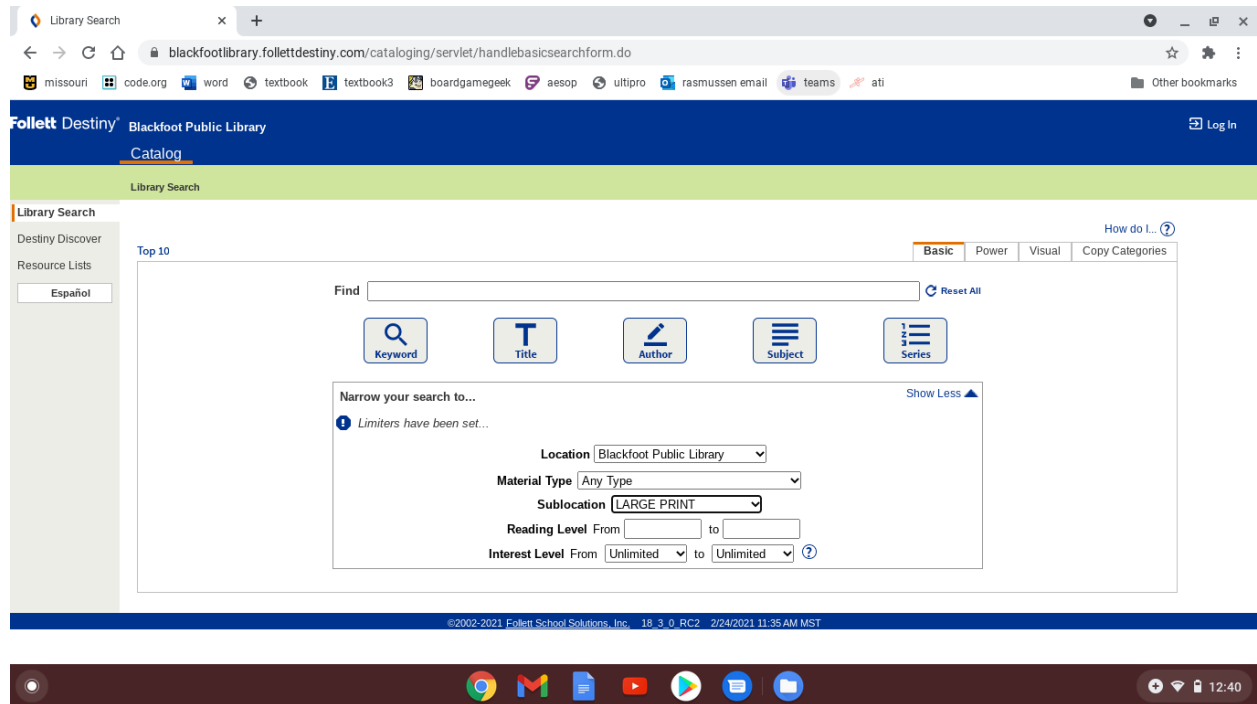
The Public Access Interface

Figure 3. Follett Destiny Blackfoot Public Library. *Library Search.* Retrieved February 24, 2021

from

https://blackfootlibrary.follettdestiny.com/cataloging/servlet/presentbasicsearchform.do?l2m=Lib

rary%20Search Screenshot by author.

cricket   84% 1:12 PM

blackfootlibrary.follettdestiny.com/cataloging/s   21 ⋮

Follett Destiny'   **Blackfoot Public Library**   ⊡ Log In

Catalog

Library Search

Library Search

Destiny Discover

Resource Lists

Español

How do I... ⑦

Top 10 | Basic | Power | Visual | Copy Categories |

Find [   ]   ↻ Reset All

🔍 Keyword   **T** Title   ✎ Author   ☰ Subject   Series

Narrow your search to...   Show Less ▲

Location Blackfoot Public Library ▼

Material Type Any Type ▼

Sublocation Unlimited ▼

Reading Level From [   ] to [   ]

Interest Level From Unlimited ▼ to Unlimited ▼ ⑦

Figure 4. Follett Destiny Blackfoot Public Library. *Library Search.* Retrieved February 24, 2021 from
https://blackfootlibrary.follettdestiny.com/cataloging/servlet/presentbasicsearchform.do?l2m=Library%20Search Screenshot by author.

Both Blackfoot Public Library and Richland Public Library use the Destiny system by Follett. The two libraries' catalog landing pages feature nearly identical features, all in the same order, the sole obvious difference being Richland's additional "Reading Programs" field. The fields shared by both libraries are "Location," "Material Type," "Sublocation," "Reading Level," and "Interest Level." Interestingly, in both cases the "Sublocation" field does not appear directly beneath the "Location" field. Oddly, the "Location" field features the library's name twice and the phrase "Click * for catalog." Selecting the second occurence of the library's name removes the "Sublocation" field. The material type field lists the formats "Archival Manuscript," "Archive," "Book," "Computer File," "ebook," "Equipment," "Kit," "Manuscript Language Material," "Maps, Globes and Atlases," "Mixed Material," "Music (printed)," "Picture, Study Print, Photograph, Chart," "Serial," "Sound recording (musical)," "Sound recording (nonmusical)," and "Video." Thus, it would seem this field is not customized based on the individual library's collection but rather assumed to be sufficient and appropriate to serve all libraries. The "Sublocation" field, however, has different options in each library. Blackfoot's "Sublocation" options include a long list of genres, formats, and locations within the library as well as a state option. In addition to "Unlimited," Richland's merely offers "Undefined," "Large Print," and "Picture books." The interest level options are "Unlimited," "Preschool," "K," the options 1-12, "Young Adult," "Adult," and "Professional." The reading level field has no preset

options. Thus, users must know how to specify this themselves in order to use this function appropriately.

Both pages offer the search buttons "Keyword," "Title," "Author," "Subject," and "Series" as well as a reset function. In addition to those and the limiters discussed above, boolean operators can be employed.

Switching from the basic to the power search tab will provide three search term boxes already set up for this function along with three boxes which specify "All these words," "Any of these words," or "This exact phrase." In the power search, limiters from the basic search are supplemented by "Publication year," "Call number," and "Circulation type." There is also a visual search option, with pictures of a number of popular fields and subtopics to assist young children in finding materials of interest. The search function in any case returns a list of titles including cover art, description, location information, and availability. If you do not choose a search button a "Keyword" search will be performed by default. Results can be sorted by relevance, call number, title, author, date, type, or status. The option to browse by subject appears as an option, as does printing the page or adding individual titles, or the entire page of results, to one's list for further action. A perceived spelling error or a search term which turns up no results will also offer the browse subject function. Search function seems consistent between a laptop device and a smartphone (Figures 3 and 4, respectively). As mentioned previously, Follett Destiny also offers an app for searching the catalog and reading ebooks. The help option provides instructions on how to use the search functions in basic or power search mode as well as subtopics on things like genre features, managing sublocations, and using boolean operators. Thus, it seems designed to be useful to both library patrons and staff using the system. Destiny Discover has an eye-catching interface with cover art displayed in featured sections like

"Recently added books" and "Popular titles." Beneath those are listed topics to browse. The resources lists and copy categories tabs are not enabled for either library. Blackfoot also allows for translation of the webpage into Spanish.

The Company Behind the ILS

The Follett Corporation headquarters is located in the western Chicago suburb of Westchester, Illinois. The Follett Corporation was founded in 1873 by Charles M. Barnes in Wheaton, Illinois and is currently a fifth generation family business with 10,000 employees (Follett, 2019). Follett provides services to educational institutions, ranging from preschool to college, in both the United States and around the world. According to Follett, they serve over half of the students in the United States and work with 80,000 schools to provide education technology, service, and print and digital content. Additionally, they operate nearly 1,200 local campus stores and over 1,600 virtual stores (2020). Follett offers a wide range of products including books, technology, and professional services.

The Follett Corporation has evolved and expanded since it was established over 140 years ago as a used bookstore to become the business that it is today. Operating units include the Follett Higher Education Group, Follett School Solutions Inc., Baker & Taylor, and Follett International (Follett, 2020). Follett is the leading provider of library management products in the education field. While library software represents a relatively small part of Follett's overall business, Destiny Library Manager has become the dominant automation system for school libraries in the United States. The Annual Library Systems Report indicates that the total number

of installations increased from 75,032 in 2019 to 76,032 in 2020 (Library Technology Guides, 2020). This is significantly higher than other library management systems used predominantly in school libraries such as OPALS and Atrium.

The Place of this ILS Product within the Industry

Destiny Library Manager sales have increased dramatically since it was developed in 2003. According to *Smart Libraries Newsletter*, "Follett's dominant market share in library management products for US PreK-12 public schools is unsurpassed among its peers serving other sectors" (Breeding, 2016, p. 1). The Annual Library Systems Report illustrates the growth that Destiny Library Manager has experienced over the last 18 years. In 2003, Destiny had 25 contracts in 508 libraries, while in 2020 Destiny had 3,225 contracts in 3,225 libraries (Library Technology Guides, 2020). While Destiny is the leading ILS in the education field, turnover still does occur and alternative products are selected for use. In 2020, 257 libraries migrated away from Destiny with 87 libraries migrating to Apollo, 33 migrating to OPALS, 30 migrating to Atrium, and 21 migrating to Koha ByWater Solutions (Library Technology Guides, 2020). See Figure 5. While used by significantly fewer school libraries, both OPAL and Atrium saw fewer migrations from their systems than Destiny. In 2020, OPAL had 11 migrations away from its system and Atrium and 25 migrations away from its system (Library Technology Guide).

New systems selected by the 239 libraries migrating away from Destiny (counting number of institutions)
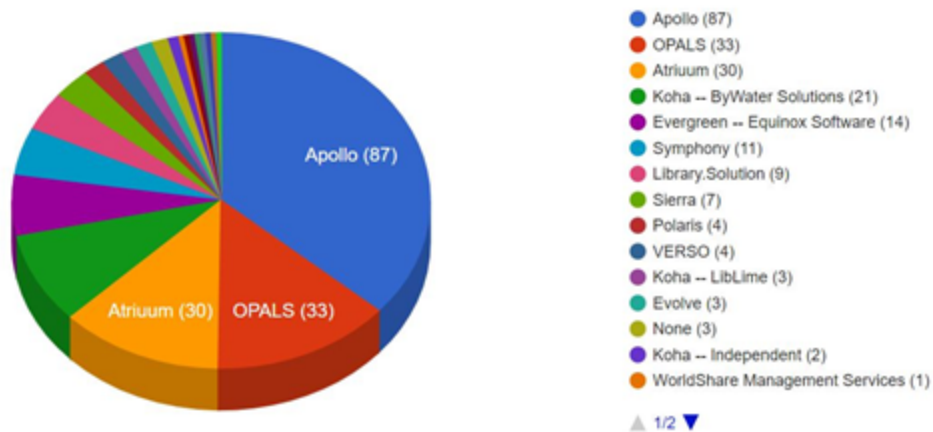
- Apollo (87)
- OPALS (33)
- Atriuum (30)
- Koha -- ByWater Solutions (21)
- Evergreen -- Equinox Software (14)
- Symphony (11)
- Library.Solution (9)
- Sierra (7)
- Polaris (4)
- VERSO (4)
- Koha -- LibLime (3)
- Evolve (3)
- None (3)
- Koha -- Independent (2)
- WorldShare Management Services (1)

1/2 ▼

Figure 5. Library Technology Guides. (2020). *Product Directory*. Library Technology. Retrieved on February 23, 2021 from https://librarytechnology.org/product/destiny/. Screenshot by author.

School libraries are Destiny Library Manager's dominant agency. Out of its current 1,544 implementations, 1,158 (75%) are in school libraries, 300 (19.4%) are in public libraries, 49 (3.2%) are in academic libraries, 34 (2.2%) are in other libraries, and 3 (0 .2%) are in special libraries (Library Technology Guide, 2020). See figure 6.

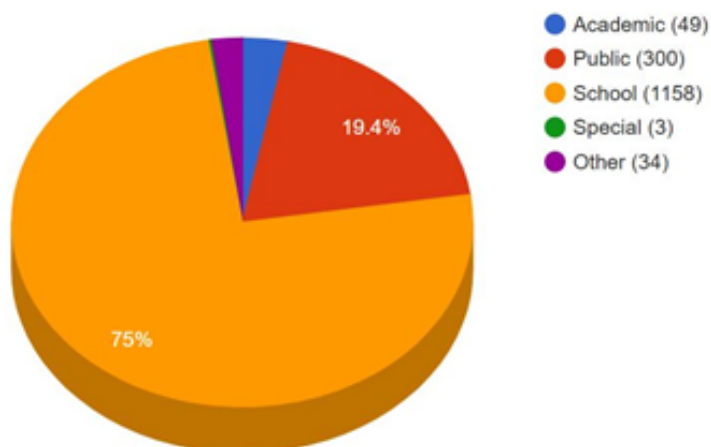**Distribution of 1544 Destiny implementations by Type**

- Academic (49)
- Public (300)
- School (1158)
- Special (3)
- Other (34)

19.4%

75%

Destiny Library Manager maintains good customer satisfaction ratings. Ratings have fluctuated over the years, but have increased or remained steady the past 2 years. In 2020, Destiny received a median rating of 8 in the areas of ILS satisfaction, ILS functionality, print functionality, company satisfaction, support satisfaction, and company loyalty (Library Technology Guides). Customer satisfaction ratings for similar library systems are slightly higher. Apollo, Atrium, and OPALS all received a rating of 9 in the areas of company satisfaction and support satisfaction (Library Technology Guides).

Conclusion

With 60,000 schools relying on the company, Follett holds a clear place in the market. Indeed, it is one of the nation's top school library vendors, offering an extensive collection of books and materials to purchase. While it's newer Aspen system focuses on helping schools manage student data, Destiny endures as a leading library system. Destiny Discover, the patron "face" of Follett Destiny, allows patrons to search the library catalog and read directly on the platform, with features like full-text search, highlight, and pronunciation. Destiny Classic, which serves as the "back of the house" product for librarians, integrates with Titlewave for collection development ease and offers Library Manager and Resource Manager to help track library items and school resources. They offer various services, including collection analysis, collection creation, and book fairs.

The library catalog landing page helps patrons narrow their search. Basic and power search are options, with power search providing search term boxes with boolean operators and additional limiters. Results can be sorted. There is a visual search option. Destiny Discover has

an eye-catching interface to assist patrons in browsing by subject. Follett Destiny offers an app for searching the catalog and reading ebooks. The help option provides instructions on how to use each of the search functions.

A fifth generation family business with 10,000 employees, the Follett Corporation provides services to educational institutions from preschool to college, in the United States and around the world. They also operate a few thousand school stores. Operating units within the Follett Corporation include the Follett Higher Education Group, Follett School Solutions Inc., Baker & Taylor, and Follett International (Follett, 2020). Destiny Library Manager has seen significant growth over the last 18 years and maintains good customer satisfaction ratings. Their endurance in the field suggests they will remain an important player in library systems into the future.

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Figure 1. Follett. (2018.) *Destiny Read* (1.4.1) [Mobile app]. App Store. https://apps.apple.com/us/app/destiny-read/id1381553821. Screenshot by author.

Appendix

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Modules and Add-ons, Carin Rook

The Public Access Interface, Owen Reissmann

The Company Behind the ILS, Jillian Lentz

The Place of this ILS Product within the Industry, Jillian Lentz

Conclusion, Owen Reissmann

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