A Little Context:
Academic Commons is the digital research repository of Columbia and its affiliates. In April we implemented Blacklight, an open-source search-and-discovery layer. Blacklight has some excellent features, including full Unicode support, which means that we can display non-Latin scripts on our site.

While our primary goal was to enhance the on-site user experience, we also believed that Blacklight would improve the ranking of our content in search engine results. What we didn’t expect was how that increased visibility would result in huge increases in the international visitors to our site!

What We Found:
- Asian traffic increased 300%
- African traffic increased over 400%
- Search engine traffic increased 1000%
- Academic Commons content is findable through non-Latin script search engines
- The most popular items with our international users are generally about international economics and business

So What?
Given that we are all trying to do more with less these days, building Open Access collections seems like an obvious way to enhance the library collections. Better still, these collections can support our work to bridge the international information divide.

The takeaway? Building collections is not enough: we need to build functional user interfaces, make sure the collections are visible in popular search engines, and actively promote them on- and off-campus.

Next Steps:
We are always looking to further enhance the international visibility and utility of our collections. Here are a few steps we will be taking in the coming months:
- Proactively promoting our content on Twitter and other social media
- Working with subject librarians to develop new, internationally-relevant collections
- Optimizing our metadata to support international search engines
- Continuing usability testing to ensure that our site is the best it can be

Email Us: Visit the Site:
Academic Commons, the digital research repository of Columbia and its affiliates, has seen a significant increase in international visitors since the implementation of the Blacklight search-and-discovery layer in April 2011. Since then, traffic from Asia increased 300% and traffic from Asia increased by more than 400%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Visits Before Blacklight</th>
<th>Visits After Blacklight</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1483</td>
<td>676%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>1167</td>
<td>116%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>550%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>516%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Asia</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>202%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>297%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>323%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1643%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>728%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Search engine traffic increased 1000%, in part due to Blacklight’s Unicode-based support of non-Latin scripts.

Content in Academic Commons is now discoverable through a range of global search engines. The most popular items among international visitors are about international economics and business.

Traffic continues to increase. Next steps include:
- Continued promotion of content via social media
- Collaborating with subject librarians to develop internationally-relevant collections
- Optimizing metadata to increase support for international search engines
- Ongoing usability testing to make sure Academic Commons is the best it can be

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