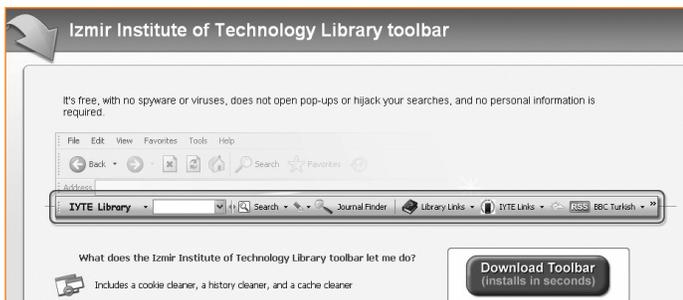# Downloadable Toolbar Puts Library on Users' Desktops

*At the Izmir Yuksek Teknoloji Enstitusu (IYTE) or Izmir Institute of Technology in Turkey, Library Director Gültekin Gürdal recently created and launched a library toolbar featuring a journal finder, useful links and more. Right away, in one week, over 200 users downloaded the toolbar. The library website also offers RSS and a blog for library information. As Gültekin is a big fan of the* Library Connect Newsletter, *he happily agreed to this interview focusing on the new toolbar.*

*Gültekin Gürdal*

### Tell us a bit about the Izmir Institute of Technology and your library and its history of innovation.

Established in 1992 as the third university in the city of Izmir, IYTE emphasizes research and graduate and undergraduate education in fields relevant to science and technology. Our institute was founded by Turkey's central government to be a center of excellence in science and technology. In keeping with the institute's international identity and mission, English is the language of instruction.

The institute's library, also established in 1992, provides information resources to IYTE students and faculty. By this June, the library is moving to a new modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

> *We must see library users as customers because they measure the quality of our services. And ... we need to be customer-oriented to satisfy their needs.*



The Izmir Institute of Technology Library toolbar is freely available at http://izmirinstituteoftechnologylibrary.mylibrarytoolbar.com.

### Why did you decide to launch a customized toolbar?

As we all know, customer service in libraries is getting more important. When I was doing research on "Measurement of Service Quality of University Libraries Through SERVQUAL" for my MBA, I learned we must see library users as customers because they measure the quality of our services. And I realized we need to be customer-oriented to satisfy their needs.

Given the extent of e-publishing, library users are using the Web more than ever. Therefore libraries' websites and online services are getting more important every day. Libraries must design and develop new services for this virtual world.

For this reason we developed the toolbar project. When I was using the Yahoo and Firefox toolbars, I started to think "Why am I not designing a toolbar like that for the library?" and that was the kickstart for my investigation. During my search, I found a website called Conduit which allowed us to design a customized toolbar for free. The site offered more special features than I expected and allowed me to save time and money. With the help of this site, IYTE's first toolbar was ready in 15 minutes. I kept working on the toolbar for four months more. Now we're using its latest version and updating it to reflect users' requests and needs.

### What features does the toolbar offer?

The toolbar is available as an extension to Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox and adds new functionality to these browsers. After a user installs the toolbar, its buttons and search fields provide quick access to resources including:

- ■ Search engines such as our library catalog and Google Scholar
- ■ A journal finder linking to IYTE's journal portal
- ■ Links to our library's homepage, OPAC, databases, theses portal and "My account" interface
- ■ Email provided by vendors such as Yahoo

### How many users is the toolbar attracting?

A Conduit admin module provides usage statistics. These show that between October 2006 and January 2007, the toolbar was used by 683 people — out of our entire user population of 2,738. Our promotional activities are driving this number higher.

### How are you getting word out to your users about the toolbar?

We promote it on our website and by word-of-mouth. Also by email we've invited all our users to download the toolbar and we're featuring it in our institute's monthly e-newsletter.

### What feedback have you received about the toolbar?

Our users have provided lots of positive feedback, especially saying this toolbar is helping make it easier to do research.

### The toolbar constitutes a new initiative in Turkey. Are you sharing your experience with other librarians in the country?

So far, no other library in Turkey offers a similar toolbar. In October 2006, I mentioned our toolbar in my speech to an annual congress held by an association of university and research librarians. During this year's congress sponsored by the same group, I'll deliver more detailed information. If you have questions, please email me at gultekingurdal@IYTE.edu.tr. **LC**

*Interview by Olivier Diesnis, Account Development Manager, Elsevier, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

▭▶ **http://library.IYTE.edu.tr**