

NATIONAL ACCESS TO E-RESOURCES

At its October 2008 meeting, the Committee considered a paper on the NSLA Open Borders Project.

The paper noted that the scope of that Project had not been fully clarified, but the broad objective was to improve access to e-resources. In particular, the paper identified the questions:

- How can Australian libraries ensure that the electronic resources which they license are used to the maximum extent possible?
- How can our discovery services be configured to allow users to search for articles, and automatically show the user those articles which they are entitled to access by virtue of their library memberships and their libraries' licences?

The paper noted that any discovery service which attempted to address this second question would need:

- information about the library affiliation of the user;
- information about the e-resource licenses of Australian libraries;
- article-level mapping from citation information to publisher URLs;
- authentication of users to verify their library affiliation; and
- processing of the above information by the discovery service, to support a higher relevance ranking for those e-resources which the user is entitled to access by virtue of their library memberships and their libraries' licences.

At its April 2009 meeting, as part of a discussion of the draft strategic plan for the Resource Sharing & Innovation Division, the Committee recommended that the National Library focus its efforts in this area on the e-resources licensed by public, state, territory and national libraries.

The third requirement above (article-level mapping from citation information to publisher URLs) is most commonly achieved through use of OpenURL resolver services. In April 2009, a survey conducted by the NSLA Open Borders Project sought information about current e-resource management solutions used by NSLA member libraries and sought opinions on the benefits of collaborative models for linking to e-resources. The survey showed that most NSLA member libraries have implemented vendor-supplied solutions for e-resources, including OpenURL resolvers.

At one point the Open Borders Project considered a collaborative scenario under which the NLA, on behalf of NSLA, would establish a shared Australian OpenURL resolver infrastructure based on CUFTS, the open source software and open Knowledge Base hosted by Simon Fraser University in Canada. It was thought that this infrastructure might focus on linking to the e-resources subscribed to by NSLA members and Australian public libraries. Such an initiative would have involved developing and maintaining a national Knowledge Base for these libraries. This

Knowledge Base, while not replacing the OpenURL resolvers implemented by NSLA member libraries, was seen as meeting the needs of many Australian public libraries.

After an examination of the ways in which access to public library e-resources is supported by state libraries, and an examination of the practical challenges and costs involved in building and maintaining the proposed Knowledge Base, this scenario has been shelved by the Open Borders Project.

The current preferred scenario is based on a set of partnerships between the National Library and selected e-resource vendors, linked to the National Library's new discovery service, Trove.

Under this scenario:

- article-level metadata, including the vendor's article URL, would be provided by the vendor to the NLA for inclusion in Trove;
- the vendor would also supply data about which articles are in which products and which products are licensed by which libraries;
- users of Trove would be encouraged to register with Trove and to provide information to Trove about which libraries they are affiliated with;
- Trove would index the article-level metadata and would use the subscription and affiliation data to give preference in the ranking to those articles which the user is entitled to click through to and read; and
- when the user does click through, he or she would be landed on the vendor's site where authentication and access to the full text would be managed.

To date two vendors (Cengage Gale and RMIT Publishing) have agreed to work with the National Library to expose their e-resource content in Trove along the lines of the scenario above.

The above scenario has the advantage of not requiring a national Knowledge Base. It would not require contribution of data by libraries. It would leverage off the infrastructure that has been built by the vendors, and would assign to the vendor the responsibility for authenticating users (to verify their library affiliations) and for ensuring that the user is linked to the appropriate URL for reading the full text of the article.

Recommendation

The Libraries Australia Advisory Committee to note the report.

Contact: Warwick Cathro
Assistant Director-General
Resource Sharing & Innovation
wcathro@nla.gov.au
02 6262 1403

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