

ELECTRONIC JOURNALS AT STIRLING UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

By

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Abstract

Many libraries are wrestling with difficult issues surrounding the management of electronic journals, and are looking for the best ways to present journals in this format to their users. The paper demonstrates the way these issues are handled at Stirling University Library covering: the library's web page layout; management of usernames and passwords; embedding e-journals into the information gathering process and integration of e-journals into the library catalogue.

Web Pages and Catalogue for E-Journals?

At Stirling University Library (SUL) e-journals appear both on the web pages and within the library catalogue. There are a number of reasons for this duplication.

- **Interim solution:** cataloguing journals takes considerable effort and time. During a period when many e-journal titles were becoming available to the library through bundled deals it was quicker to let users know that they had access to a list of journals via the library web pages. A hyperlink to the publisher's service was all that was required. This was a quick solution whilst cataloguing, and the issues of how best to do this, could be worked on.
- **Central access and information point:** the web pages not only hold a series of hyperlinks to e-journal services, they can also be used to collate all the information required for using e-journals in a way that the catalogue cannot. So instructions for the use of different services, access conditions, authentication information, etc could be brought together in one central location for the user.
- **No web based catalogue:** since SUL did not have a web based catalogue it made sense to have access to web resources actually on the web – making linking to pages as easy as possible.

In general, the way of dealing with e-journals within the library has been an evolutionary process. Even now changes are still being made to our procedures and this is necessary simply to remain up to date in the fast paced environment of electronic publishing.

Stirling University is presently (May 2000) awaiting the installation of a new web based catalogue. We have now also resolved many e-journals cataloguing issues and catalogued the majority of our many current titles. These two major changes will allow us to bring a new cohesiveness to e-journal provision. The current web pages will be much reduced and, if appropriate, hyperlinks created to them from the web catalogue.

SUL E-Journal Home Page

From the library's home page the SUL e-journal page is located within the section Information Resources and beneath the heading Journals, the link reads *Electronic journals for University staff and students*.

The page is divided into the following five sections:

1. E-journals and the library catalogue

The introductory section to the page is a brief explanation of the situation regarding the complementary nature of the library catalogue and the e-journal web pages. Essentially this is that work is on-going in the cataloguing of e-journals and that users should first check the library catalogue to find out if they have access to a particular title. A telnet link to the catalogue is provided on the page to make this as easy as possible. If the title is not included in the catalogue then users should check the e-journal services the library has access to by using the hyperlinks further down the page. It is indicated whether a particular service's titles have been catalogued, so that unnecessary searching is not undertaken.

2. Major sources of titles (bundled deals)

An alphabetical list of hyperlinks is provided to the major services, these have a very brief description of content eg IDEAL – *Academic Press journals (1996-2000)*. All titles included in the Library Catalogue. The hyperlink takes the user to a page of information about that service. This page will give a fuller description of content, conditions of access (access from campus only, whether passwords are required, etc), a hyperlink to instructions for use of that particular service, and a hyperlink to the service itself.

3. Individual e-journal titles (not covered by bundles)

Individual titles available outside the main services are divided into four main subject areas, reflecting the Faculty arrangement at Stirling University ie Arts, Human Sciences, Management and Science. These four headings are hyperlinked to A-Z lists of titles for easy browsing. The title lists have hyperlinks to the journal and, where relevant, information about that particular title, this may include conditions of access, password requirements, etc.

4. Major current awareness services

Since the release of e-journals often pre-dates that of the paper version, they are a valuable source of very up to date information. A hyperlink is provided to a list of current awareness services, and details on how to register are provided. These services either provide journal contents pages via the web or have an email alert service.

5. Other useful information for using e-journals

One of the aims of the SUL e-journal web page was not only that of an access gateway but also to be a source of all the other auxiliary information required.

Therefore the following were also gathered on the web page:

- Username and password information: whenever particular conditions of access should be met and/or a username and password required this is indicated

- Hyperlink to information about the Acrobat reader, Acroread: since many e-journal articles are available in acrobat format instructions are given on how to download a copy of Acroread.
- Hyperlink to the *Directory of electronic journals, newsletters and academic discussion lists*: access to a web version of this publication allows users to find out about other journal titles that are available electronically.

Management of Usernames and Passwords

A substantial proportion of the time spent on the administration of e-journals is in learning about the various authentication systems different services and publishers use and in management of large numbers of usernames and passwords.

Athens authentication

Where possible the library uses the Athens authentication system. The Athens system is used by all United Kingdom higher education institutions, and an increasing number of users in allied sectors. Athens enables authenticated access to many databases and e-journal services, ie a user has one username and password for many resources. The authentication can be set up so that remote access from off the university campus is also possible. The remote access option is much appreciated in the academic environment which now supports many users who are seldom, if ever, on the university campus.

The SUL e-journal web page includes a hyperlink to a page describing Athens authentication and instructions on how to register to use the system. The pages also indicate when access to a particular title requires an Athens username and password, and these pages are interlinked to provide in context help.

Non-Athens

Where the Athens authentication system is not available as an option, usernames and passwords are added to an alphabetical master list that is kept at the library enquiry desk. This list is also available to library staff over the university network. We are currently considering making some, or all, of this list available on the university Intranet. However all the security implications of such a move are first being investigated.

Embedding Within the Information Gathering Process

At SUL we do not recommend that the various publishers e-journal services are used as a method of finding literature for a research interest. Although many of the services provide sophisticated search engines, the literature within these services is often from a single publisher or small group of publishers. In the main this means a search is only conducted on a very small subset of the literature available.

Therefore it is still recommended that a user's starting point is the suitable abstracting and indexing publication, whether that be as a database on the web, CD ROM or paper. Once the search has been completed and a selective bibliography compiled then the journal articles themselves should be sought. Increasingly this is not a two stage process since many databases are now linked to the full text of articles.

Librarians have now become very accustomed to using e-journals and understand the place they hold within the literature. However this is not always true for the library user, many students at the university are still learning about this new format of journal articles and how it fits into the information gathering process.

To encourage our users in the subject oriented approach and to clarify the place of e-journals within the information gathering process the library's web pages provide:

- Recommended subject guides

- The steps involved in locating a journal containing an article of interest

Recommended subject guides

The SUL web site includes a list of recommended subject guides for each of the many subjects studied at the University. Each guide has a number of sections including: finding reference works; data; information in journals; specialised information such as conferences, statistics, legislation; and Internet sources. The guides cover printed sources as well as electronic sources.

Locating a journal containing an article of interest

This web page is located within the Journals section of the library site. It gives a four step flow diagram, outlining the series of steps needed to track down a particular article of interest. In summary:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Step 1 | Check the Library Catalogue (gives instructions on how to search for journals). If title not found go to next step. |
| Step 2 | Check the e-journal services that have not been fully catalogued. If title not found go to next step. |
| Step 3 | Search SALSER (a web based union catalogue of serial holdings for Scottish university's and other libraries). If title not found – or don't wish to travel to another library go to next step. |
| Step 4 | Use the library's inter-library loan service – page includes hyperlink to web form for making a request. This is automatically emailed to the library and the request is processed. |

E-Journals on the Catalogue

Although the development of the web pages was important and they performed a number of roles the ideal goal was always to integrate e-journals into the library catalogue. The fairly rapid creation of the web pages allowed time for the consideration of the best way to catalogue e-journals. The library has now gained considerable experience with this cataloguing, though no doubt there will be more to learn.

Decisions were made on extra MARC fields that should be used for cataloguing e-journals. See Table 1 for a list of these fields and see figures 1 and 2 for samples of how records appear to the user on the library catalogue.

Table 1 Extra MARC fields used at SUL for the cataloguing of e-journals

MARC field	Use in catalogue records
530	Alternative format – used for print and electronic journal Displays as <i>Availability</i> Eg <i>Full text also available from ingentaJournals</i>
Or 258	Physical description – used for electronic only journal Displays as <i>Medium</i> Eg <i>Computer journal</i>
856	Path to source eg URL
505	Content note (searchable field) Used for web resources other than e-journals

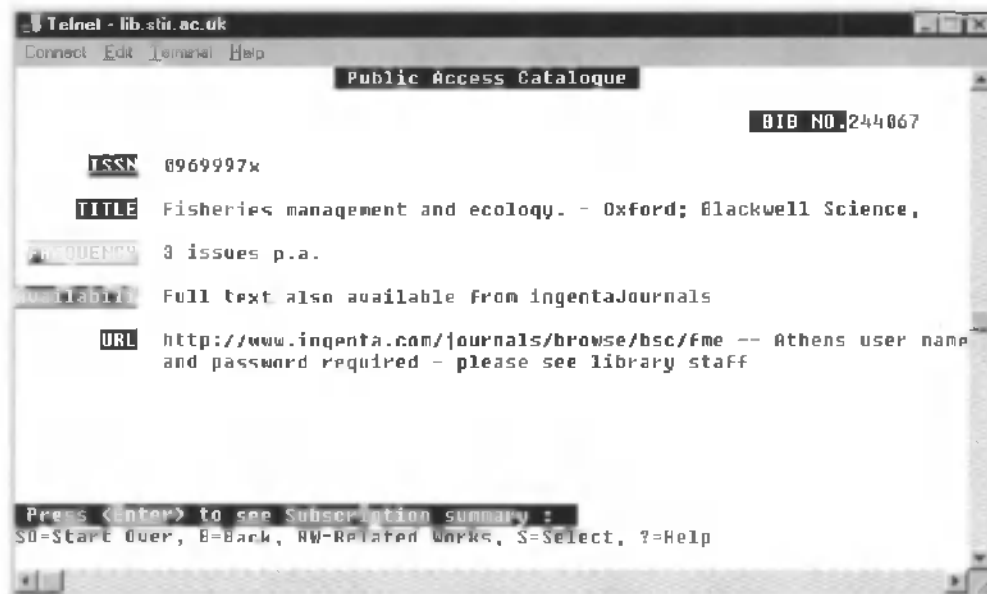
SUL catalogue now contains almost 1,000 e-journal records (electronic only and electronic + print). The catalogue also includes about 1,200 other web resources, for example, reference

works, research sites, web edition publications, organisation home pages and web based databases.

Samples of E-Journal Catalogue Records

Figure 1 Print + electronic journal held at SUL

a. Bibliographic record



b. Copy record

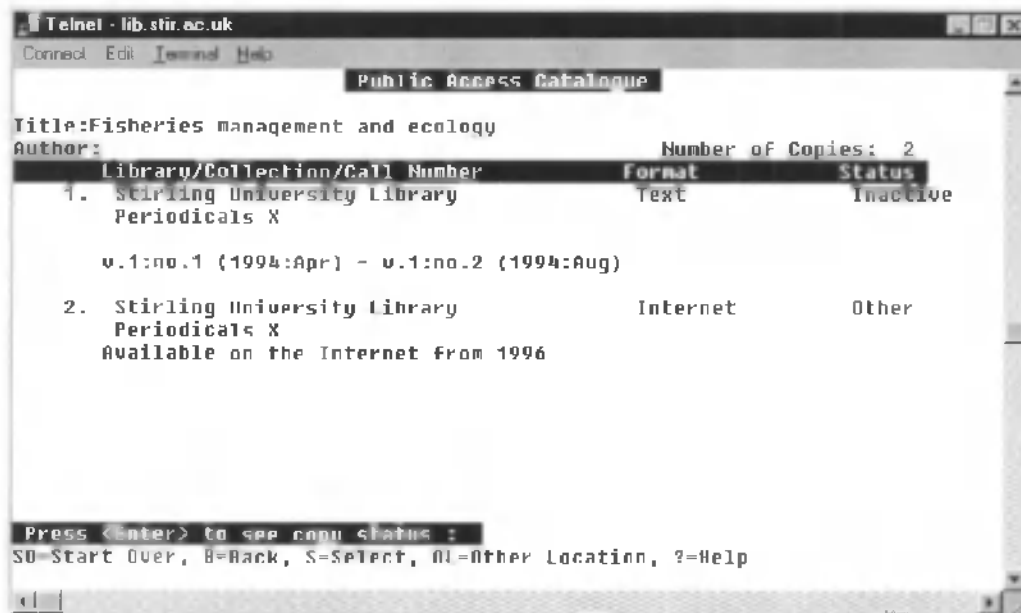
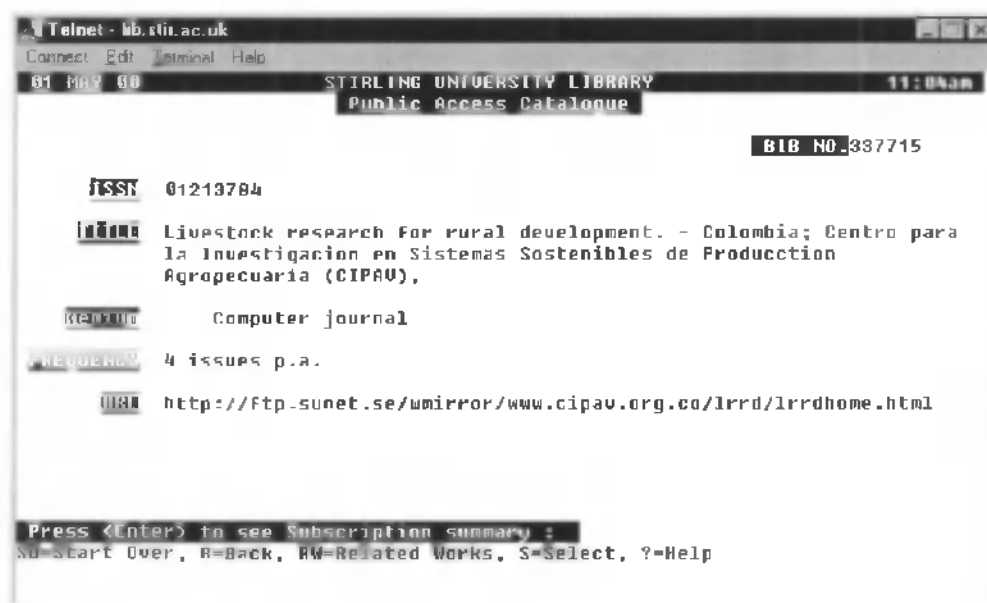
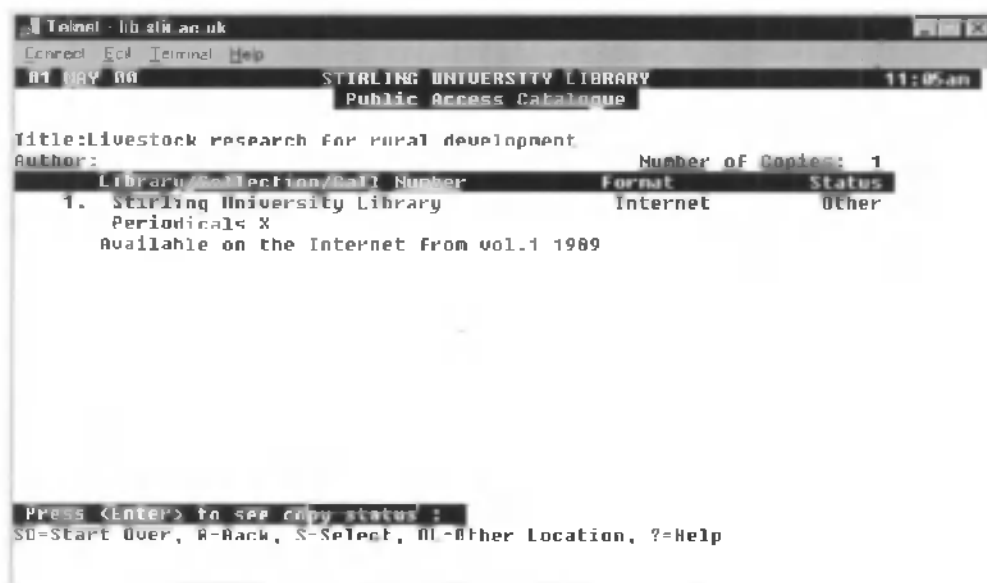


Figure 2 Electronic only journal held at SUL

a. Bibliographic record



b. Copy record



Conclusion

Finally, there is only one firm conclusion that can be made in this area of presenting e-journals to users in a comprehensive fashion. The library will need continually to change and update its methods and procedures for dealing with this type of publication. This article gives only a snapshot in time of the situation at SUL – it will already have changed. As librarians this is the environment we now live (and thrive) in.

References

1. *Stirling University Library* URL: <http://www.stir.ac.uk/infoserv/library/>
[4 May 2000]
2. *Adobe Acrobat Reader*
URL: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html> [4 May 2000]
3. *Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters and Academic Discussion Lists 7th Edition* URL: <http://db.arl.org/index.html> [4 May 2000]
4. *Athens Access Management* URL: <http://www.athens.ac.uk> [4 May 2000]
5. *Recommended Resources by Subject*
URL: <http://www.stir.ac.uk/infoserv/library/electinf/subject/index.htm>
[4 May 2000]
6. *Locating a journal containing an article of interest*
URL: <http://www.stir.ac.uk/infoserv/library/electinf/subject/locate.htm>
[4 May 2000]
7. *SALSER – Scottish Academic Libraries Serials*
URL: <http://edina.ed.ac.uk/salser/> [4 May 2000]