Link Everything Project: Promoting article request services to NHS Staff

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Abstract

The 'Link Everything' project is a method used to signpost the document supply service at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust to all users of the libraries within healthcare databases. This provides links for the core medical and nursing databases that the library has access to including Medline, Embase, CINAHL and PsycInfo. This was launched in May 2010.

Background

Like almost every library service the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust Library service provides article request facilities. This service had been in decline for a number of years with requests dropping significantly between 2006/7 (1347

requests) and 2008/9 (784 requests). The main problem with this service is that it is not easy to promote, especially to those searching in the databases, as access to articles not available electronically or in local collections is not displayed.

Starting Point - Nursing Union List of Journals

The initial project started off at a much smaller scale just providing links for the cooperative document supply scheme Nursing Union List of Journals (NULJ). We used the holdings held by all the libraries in the scheme and provided the merged holdings of the libraries that could be uploaded into a link resolver (OCLC WorldCat); this represented over 1000 unique titles.

Undertaking this provided links on healthcare databases for the user to request articles from the library and was implemented in February 2010. This small step resulted in a dramatic increase in requests for these articles from an average of 10 requests per month between financial years 2008/9 and 2009/10 to an average of 61 requests per month in 2010/11.

This increase in usage got us thinking about how we could better promote all the other articles that we can provide; this is where we embarked on the 'Link Everything' project.

Development of 'Link Everything'

We started by identifying the essential information that we would need to provide these links; ISSN, journal title, and the indexed years. We used the information provided by the database suppliers to create full listings of Medline, Embase, CINAHL and PsycInfo.

After this, the holdings were merged together to provide one list of titles. We found that we had many duplicate titles as journals were often indexed in more than one database. To overcome this issue we went through the combined holdings identifying the duplicates and merged these records together whilst making sure all the indexed years were represented in the merged data. Once this process was completed we had just over 20000 titles listed. Location details and a link to the libraries requesting webpage for all titles were added, and we added a note to each record that a signed form would be needed for copyright. The data was then added to the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust library link resolver in May 2010.

Results

The main result we have found is that any search conducted in the healthcare databases now produces results that include a 'request from the library' link for almost every record. This additional signposting has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of document supply requests from service users. The number of documents supplied can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Year	Articles Supplied
2006/7	1347
2007/8	1049
2008/9	784
2009/10	1066
2010/11	2456
2011/12 (first three months only)	878

This covers the past five years and the start of this year showing the general upward trend in articles requested following a decline. We have made other changes to document supply in addition to the Link Everything project, which has helped increase the numbers of articles requested so not all the increase is due to the project.

Where to go next?

We are looking at incorporating all the other databases currently provided in the NHS National Core Content including Health Business Elite, AMED and Health Management Information Consortium. Once we have included all the journals indexed in these databases we will be able to provide links to every record in these databases.

The listing does have to be updated annually to incorporate new journals that are added to each database and we are currently looking for a simple way to make these new additions. We have also provided this solution out to other libraries on request as an example of 'do once and share', as all that is required to transfer it to another organisation is amending the location and weblink fields which can be done in a matter of minutes.