

3-2009

## Using Link Resolver Reports for Collection Management

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### Repository Citation

Stowers, E., Tucker, J. C. (2009). Using Link Resolver Reports for Collection Management. *Serials Review*, 35(1), 28-34.

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**Title:** Using Link Resolver Reports for Collection Management

**Abstract:** In 2007-2008, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries conducted a large collection assessment project. The collection assessment committee identified several possible ways to conduct the collection assessment, one of which was using reports from the link resolver, *SFX*. The committee used several link resolver reports in conjunction with statistics from the Libraries' document delivery department to identify trends in journal usage among disciplines. The link resolver reports can help identify new journals for purchase and are useful for providing information on user behavior.

## **Introduction**

In spring of 2007 the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries began a collection assessment project to analyze usage of books, journals and databases. A collection assessment committee was organized and a subgroup was selected to gather usage statistics, collection specific information and other data as needed. In deciding what data to collect, the subgroup decided to investigate reports available from Ex Libris, the provider of the link resolver (SFX®) used at the Libraries. The group found that *SFX* offers numerous reports and the process began to analyze what type of information might be useful for the assessment project. The subgroup identified several *SFX* reports that provided information on user behavior, collection access, and information that would be useful for identifying potential new resources to purchase.

## **Literature Review**

There have been two articles written that have used SFX data for collection analysis. At the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library, SFX data, along with other usage data, was used to decide which print journals to cancel.<sup>1</sup> The library used SFX data for online journals accessed during a 3-month time frame. For SFX, the library ran statistics for journals that were only indexed in MEDLINE (3,465 journals). The SFX statistics showed that 14.8% of the journals were not accessed during the specified time frame and that 10% of the journals represented 56.8% of all SFX usage. The library compared the most frequently used print titles and compared them to the most frequently used SFX titles. The library used this data to reduce their serials expenditures.

The library at California State University San Marcos used SFX data to identify new journals to purchase.<sup>2</sup> The library used two SFX reports in their analysis. The library used “Query 4” to look at the number of SFX requests and clickthroughs by service type to analyze user behavior for interlibrary loan. The SFX data showed users at the university did not usually follow through with interlibrary loan requests when a journal was not available full-text. This occurred only 17.5% of the time. The library also used “Query 12,” which shows journals requested with no full-text, in conjunction with their own interlibrary loan reports to identify user needs. The library compiled a list of journals and calculated a ratio of SFX requests to interlibrary loan orders received. The analysis showed that there were four journals which had high levels of interest by users, but would not have otherwise been identified if it had not been for the SFX reports.

### ***SFX***

UNLV Libraries has subscribed to SFX since the fall of 2004. The link resolver attempts to connect users to the full-text of an article from a database that does not include the full-text of the article within it. The user can use SFX to request the full-text of the article. When the full-text is available, SFX will connect the user to the entire article. When the full-text of the article is not available, *SFX* provides two options to the user: clickthrough to check the online catalog to see if the journal is available in print or “borrow” the item through Document Delivery. If the user opts to clickthrough and request the item, the link takes them to a login page for *ILLiad* [OCLC’s ILLiad Resource Sharing Management software], the system used for interlibrary loans at the Libraries, and the borrowing form is automatically populated with the correct bibliographic data.

### ***SFX Reports***

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The company provides 20 reports to their subscribing libraries. When looking at the reports, the subcommittee found several reports that would be useful for the collection assessment. The subcommittee decided to run reports for 2005-2007 to compare the statistics each year.

The first report is “Query 3,” which provides statistics on type of resource: journals, books, articles, etc and the number of times the resource was requested by the user and how many times the user clicked through to try and link to the resource. For UNLV, the most often requested items were journals, books and articles. The requests for journals decreased 19% from 2005-2007. For books, there was a 172% increase and for articles, there was 37% increase in requests. For actual clickthroughs, the percentage for journals increased from 21% to 85%, for books the increase grew from 57% to 68% and for articles, the percentage fell from 63% to 52%.

“Query 4” provides the number of requests and clickthroughs by service type. This report represents a partial profile of our users. For example, the chart below shows that 97% of our users will request to get item and clickthrough to receive access to the full-text of the item. Only 21% will request to get the item and clickthrough to see if the Libraries owns the item in print. Only 16% will request an item and clickthrough for document delivery or inter-library loan.

**\*\*\*\*Insert Graph I here\*\*\*\***

Looking at the increase in usage of SFX from 2005-2007, the number of full-text clickthroughs in 2005 was 29,809 and in 2007 there were 180,514, which is an increase of 608%. This illustrates the fact that users have acclimated to using *SFX*.

The next report that the subcommittee identified was a combined report of “Query 6 & 8.” This report provides a list of databases where users requested or clicked on the “get text” button and what percentage of users clicked through. The numbers varied from year-to-year, but the report was useful because it identifies which databases users are accessing and how many times the user was unable to get the full-text of an article.

“Query 10” is very useful in that it identifies the most popular journals selected by target (vendor or platform). The library can select each target individually and the report provides both requests and clickthroughs. For UNLV, this varied each year, but the report allows the Library to monitor trends in usage across vendors and platforms.

The report that had the most use for the project was “Query 12” which provides a list of the journals that had unsuccessful requests for the full-text of articles. A member of the subgroup ran “Query 12”, limiting the results to journals with ten or more unsuccessful full-text attempts each for the calendar years of 2005-2007.

Year	Journals	Hits
2005	3105	92,047
2006	1328	40,935
2007	1526	47,031

A substantial decrease in titles and hits was seen over the three years, perhaps indicative of the purchase of substantial electronic journal back-files. For purposes of this review only the 577 journals that had ten or more hits each year were considered.

The first analysis done was a comparison of the number of document delivery requests made by patrons to the number of unsuccessful full-text retrievals. This was

only possible for 2006 and 2007 because ILLiad was not used for the entire year in 2005 and therefore complete statistics were not available.

### **2006**

Of the 577 journals, 135 (23%) had document delivery requests. Of the 135 journals in the list that were then requested through document delivery in 2006, the percentage of ILLiad orders compared to Query 12 hits on a journal ranged from 1.19% to 259% (the only instance in which more document delivery requests were made than there were SFX Query 12 hits). This merits explanation an explanation – the title in question was in dental medicine. The University's dental medicine program is relatively new and when it began the Libraries had no dental medicine resources. Although the collection has received funding, the depth is shallow. In addition, requests made from the remote dental medicine campus are filled through Document Delivery even if the item is owned in print. For those reasons, dental titles are heavily represented in ILLiad statistics.

### **2007**

Of the 577 journals, 224 (39%) had document delivery requests.

Of the 224 journals in the list that were then requested through document delivery in 2007, the percentage of ILLiad orders ranged from .66% to 60%, the median being 12.77%. What this data shows is that for a majority of the time, if the user does not obtain full-text access to the article, the user does not request the article delivered via document delivery. We assume the user resumes their search for other articles that are available full-text. This is an important aspect of user behavior and shows that users want access to the article in full-text.

The breakdown of journal holdings for the 577 titles is indicated in the graph II below:

\*\*\*\*insert graph II\*\*\*\*

The two categories the Libraries is most concerned about were no current access and print only. See Table I for a list of journals with no current access. See Table II for a breakdown of journals with no current access by discipline. For titles which the library has no access to, each title was investigated to see how many document delivery requests occurred and the journal price was gathered through EBSCONet to pass along to the appropriate Liaison Librarian for recommendation of purchase.

In 2006, 77 of the “no current access” journals were ordered through DDS (530 article requests). See Table III for a list of journals with no current access ordered through DDS. This accounted for 57% of the Query 12 titles that were ordered, but only 13% of Query 12 results (ten and over titles). The DDS requests fell into the following categories:

Health (includes nursing)	29
Psychology	15
Dental Medicine	11
Other	8
Science	7
Engineering	7

\*\*\*\*Insert Graph III\*\*\*\*

In 2007, 125 of the “no current access” journals were ordered through DDS (944 article requests). See Table IV for a list of journals with no current access ordered through



DDS. This accounted for 56% of the Query 12 titles that were ordered, but only 22% of Query 12 results (ten and over titles). The 125 DDS requests fell into the following categories:

Health (includes nursing)	54
Psychology	23
Dental Medicine	13
Engineering	10
Other	10
Science	8
Architecture	5
Education	2

**\*\*\*\*Insert Graph IV\*\*\*\***

In addition to the information about the largest amount of titles with full-text requests, the *SFX* report allowed the Libraries to discover issues with journal access to current online subscriptions. Two titles had numerous requests and it was discovered that the link addresses in *Serials Solutions* was incorrect. When users attempted to obtain the full-text article, they were told the Libraries did not have full-text access to the title when the library actually did have access.

“Query 19” lists the most popular (top 100) journals spanning all services and targets. The report provides number of requests and clickthroughs for each journal and is extremely useful in identifying titles for consideration of purchase. The report is also useful because it complements use statistics and identifies the most popular journals for various disciplines.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the *SFX* report was extremely helpful during the collection assessment. The report allowed the Libraries to see which journal titles had full-text requests and the

information was used in the same manner as interlibrary loan requests in that it helped identify journal titles for future purchases. The report also illustrated how users behave by showing that in a majority of the cases when the full-text article was not available, the user continued their search for another full-text article and did not use interlibrary loan. This illustrates that users want online access to full-text articles. Finally, the report allowed the Libraries to discover access issues with specific journals that were not linked correctly or that did not link directly to the full-text article.

The collection assessment data, which this is part of, is still being evaluated and the committee has not created any action items as of yet. The data from the *SFX* reports will be used in conjunction with ILL and other usage data to review the UNLV Libraries' journal subscriptions. The data will also be used to identify journals that may need to be added to the collection due to high demand or due to the fact that there are weaknesses in the journal collection for a specific discipline, in this case health sciences and dental medicine.

### **Notes**

1. John Gallagher et al., "Evidence-based librarianship: utilizing data from all available sources to make judicious print cancellation decisions," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 29 (2005): 169-179.
2. Mark Stengel, "Using SFX to identify unexpressed user needs," *Collection Management* 29 (2) (2004): 7-13.