

## Against the Grain

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# Optimizing Library Services- Tracking E-journal Perpetual Rights: A Discussion Among Publishers, Vendors and Librarians

Carol Seiler

*EBSCO Information Services*, [cseiler@ebSCO.com](mailto:cseiler@ebSCO.com)

Caroline J. Campbell

*IGI Global*, [ccampbell@igi-global.com](mailto:ccampbell@igi-global.com)

Lindsay Wertman

*IGI Global*, [lwertman@igi-global.com](mailto:lwertman@igi-global.com)

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### Little Red Herrings from page 52

My only experience with **Elsevier** is having to pass on many products because it takes so much of our scant resources. The content is fine, of course; it is just the king's ransom we must pay to make **Elsevier** materials accessible requires us to say no, more often than not.

And that brings us, finally, to the leopard and its spots. Can he change them?

I suppose the best answer for now is that there is a first time for everything. Even for **Elsevier**. 🐆

### Rumors from page 40

the future of how research information gets published, shared and accessed. There's also the steering committee for **Metadata 2020**, a group effort to advocate for richer shared metadata. **Scott** says he will keep pushing for open data and a more open, affordable and transparent scholarly communication ecosystem. He's not going to go looking for consulting gigs, but if some interesting projects came up, who knows? **Scott** plans to do some professional and personal writing, he is doing a lot of exercising and even cooking

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## Optimizing Library Services — Tracking E-journal Perpetual Rights: A Discussion Among Publishers, Vendors, and Librarians

by **Carol Seiler** (Account Services Manager, EBSCO Information Services)  
<CSeiler@ebSCO.com>

Column Editors: **Caroline J. Campbell** (Promotions Assistant, IGI Global) <ccampbell@igi-global.com>

and **Lindsay Wertman** (Managing Director, IGI Global)  
<lwertman@igi-global.com> [www.igi-global.com](http://www.igi-global.com)



*A recap of the 2017 Electronic Resources and Librarian (ER&L) session “Tracking E-journal Perpetual Rights: A Discussion Among Publishers, Vendors, and Librarians.” Presented by Teri Oparanozie, Sam Houston State University; Jackie Ricords, IGI Global; and Carol Seiler, EBSCO Information Services.*

Tracking perpetual access rights is an essential part of the electronic library system. But who is responsible for tracking this information? What information needs to be tracked? This session provided a forum for discussing how librarians, publishers, and vendors can collaborate to make tracking

e-journal perpetual access and entitlement easier and more efficient.

The well-attended session, led by the session moderator, **Teri Oparanozie**, started with a detailed look at what issues and questions exist with perpetual access.

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*What information needs to be tracked in the license?*

- **Titles, including individual titles and large packages:** With the package titles, it is important to note if the title is subscribed to, access only or open access. Look at what the perpetual access clause is in the contract.
- **The timeframe of the perpetual access:** When pertaining to a package of titles, does perpetual access start with a fixed year (e.g., 1997) or from a specified volume (e.g., volume 1) to date cancelled? Is it only for the years for which a subscription was paid?
- **Other publishers' transfer policies:** Are there policies for when the title transfers to another publisher? Or if it ceases to be published? What are their policies when titles merge or there is a title change?
- **Cancellation fees:** Are there fees for access after cancellation (i.e., post cancellation fees)? What format will be provided for post cancellation access? PDF? Digital download? Self-hosting? Is it within an archiving system such as Portico or CLOCKSS/LOCKSS?
- **Post-cancellation access:** When does post-cancellation access begin? How long is the subscription-access grace period?

*What changes need to be tracked?*

- **License terms:** Often, license terms change from year to year (or after multi-year agreements).
- **Journal titles:** These titles may change or the title may merge with another title or split into two or more titles.
- **Access to the platform:** Platform for access may change — verify that perpetual access issues are available on the new platform.
- **The status of the publisher:** The publisher may change, title might be sold, or the publisher might be acquired by another company within the industry.
- **URL:** The URL might change, especially when the platform or publisher changes or the title itself changes.
- **The journal's status:** The journal may cease publication.
- **Library orders:** A library may cancel or add new orders, especially swaps within big deals.

*How are librarians tracking these changes?*

- Shared drives: on computer server or on the web (e.g., Google Drive)
- Spreadsheets
- Integrated library systems (ILS) — acquisitions, cataloging, etc.
- Electronic resource management systems (ERMS)
- Link resolver knowledge bases
- Journal platform administrator modules
- Publisher websites
- Subscription agency platforms
- University financial systems
- LibGuides

*What challenges may libraries face with perpetual access?*

- **Maintaining orders and invoices for several years**  
How many years need to be preserved?  
What format should be kept?  
What is needed to prove the right to perpetual access?  
Will a hard copy of an invoice be required or will a screen shot from a purchasing system suffice?  
If the invoice did not itemize the titles, will a title list be acceptable?

- **Updating and managing title lists**

Title lists, especially for big deals or memberships, may change, so keeping a copy of the list each year is important. An Excel list of the titles is helpful to facilitate comparisons with other lists.

Ideally, one title list will reflect the net changes for the year and a separate list will note just the changes for the year.

Combined multi-year lists with all titles and changes included in one list with columns to indicate the license year, date, and coverage for when a title is added or taken over, ceased, sold/transferred, title changed, etc.

- **Publisher and platform changes**

Past publisher information is important to preserve for orders. Librarians need to know who the previous and/or next publishers are and whether content will remain on the previous platform or move to the new publisher's platform.

Transfer digest provides helpful information and an example can be found here: <http://www.niso.org/workrooms/transfer/notifications/>.

Librarians are trying to find ways to save this information each year in order to preserve it.

- **Link resolvers and title changes**

Link resolvers can display each title and the sources in which it is accessible. Librarians sometimes add notes about perpetual access to titles in link resolvers.

There is the potential for titles or notes to disappear from link resolvers when vendors update content or make system changes.

Tracking perpetual access for title changes is more difficult if publisher platforms, title lists, and link resolver knowledge bases display only the most recent title and do not reflect past title changes (perpetual access may apply to an earlier title and not a more recent title).

NOTE: PIE-J Working Group of NISO Recommended Practices for the Presentation and Identification of E-Journals (PIE-J) urges publishers to accurately represent title histories.

After reviewing the issues, the publisher and vendor representatives were asked a series of questions. **Jackie Ricords**, IGI Global Director of E-Resources, noted she could speak on behalf of IGI Global and other mid-size publishers. **Carol Seiler** from EBSCO Information Services stated she would only be able to speak on EBSCO policy, but invited other vendors in the room to contribute to the conversation with their specific details.

### **Perpetual/Post-Cancellation Policies & Access**

*How does your company provide information to customers about perpetual/post-cancellation access policies?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** Before a subscription is placed for a package, a conversation takes place where details are disclosed. The addendum is added in the license agreement after the agreement is made. For individual journals, we work with vendors like EBSCO to ensure the details of the access are clear and available to potential purchasers.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We have a subscription management tool called EBSCONET where you can look up title by title or at the package level to get this detail. You can also pull various reports to obtain this detail.

*How does your company track perpetual/post cancellation entitlements of your customers and ensure that access remains available?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** We set up the perpetual purchase access when the title/package is ordered. It is an internal system. However, IGI Global is working on adding more information to our Librarian Corner which will allow a download of all titles and show the perpetual access.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We have publisher and title information departments and are constantly in touch with publishers to gather information to add it to our subscription management tools as well as reports.

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### Orders/Invoices

*How many years of customer orders and/or invoices do you keep for their e-journal subscriptions and how can they be accessed by the customer? Can more years be made available?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** We use a system called “Acumen” to track invoice information. We can track invoices back to 2006 in this system. Several mid-size publishers use this software. A title list is available with the invoice.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We have five years (current year plus four) available in our subscription management tool for the librarians to access directly.

*Do you provide summary reports of orders and invoices that include the journal titles and how many years of information are provided?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** Since we control our own platform and meta-data, we can work with the library or consortia to provide this.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We have several reports that can detail this information, but again, this is the current five years.

*Do your orders and invoices list all titles that are part of memberships/packages?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** No, it will generally have the name of the package and the number of titles. We provide the list of titles with the invoice but it is separate. However, if it is needed, we can provide the titles on the invoice.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We can provide the invoices in many formats. The PDF version is generally briefer. The Excel version contains more detail for each title, the priced and the non-priced. The Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) version has only the priced titles. We also have reports that will list which titles come with which packages/memberships/combinations.

### Publisher & Platform Changes

*What systems does your company have in place to track the movement of e-journals between publishers and platforms?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** We have not had to have journals leave us but we have had some coming in from other publishers and societies. We do our best to communicate this information on our website and directly to members who had a subscription.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We have an e-resources department that tracks this information. It is detailed in e-journal alerts that populate the subscription management tool for our customer. We also have reports that have this information.

*Do you include past and next publisher and platform information? How do you share this information with libraries?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** This is not applicable for us.

**Carol/EBSCO:** [Note: For clarity, this section is expanded from the answer given in the session] For individual titles, yes. This is in your e-journal alerts in our subscription management tool. For packages, we do not have this detail but it is on our enhancement list.

### Title Changes & Link Resolvers

*How does your company track and present information about title changes?*

**Jackie/IGI Global:** Starting about four years ago, we have added extra columns on our spreadsheets that detail the previous title information. We also have the persistent URLs, but the detail is on the main digital object identifier (DOI) persistent URL.

**Carol/EBSCO:** We have the e-journal alerts as well as various reports that provide detail.

*How flexible is your company's link resolver knowledge base in allowing customers to add perpetual access notes and to control whether these display to the public or just to staff?*

**Carol/EBSCO:** You can add notes to display to authenticated users or just to staff. We also have something called “custom

labels” that provides another way to add specific information to your titles. This information can be downloaded in reports.

**Jackie/IGI Global:** Plea with Link Resolvers, please keep the detail updated per the reports we send you. If there is a better way to send the information to the vendor, that is a preferred way, please let us know. The goal is to get the correct information to the end users as quickly as possible.

Finally, questions and comments were invited from the audience.

### Audience Participation

*What issues are important to you? What suggestions do you have for dealing with these issues?*

**Audience member:** We are constantly having issues between our link resolvers and making sure they are up-to-date. The patrons suffer when vendors argue about who is responsible and cause delays in updating the content.

**Jackie/IGI Global:** I agree; it is frustrating as a publisher to provide detail that is not being given to the end customer.

**Audience member:** In the UK we use Knowledge Base Plus (<https://www.kbplus.ac.uk/kbplus/>) which is an independent, open, knowledge base that is there for link resolvers. It is run by the JISC (<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/kb-plus>). Maybe the U.S. could adopt this platform.

**Audience member:** Can you receive e-journal alerts from EBSCONET in email?

**Carol/EBSCO:** They are in EBSCONET and emails can be sent to alert new information is available.

**Audience member:** You can designate more than one person to get the emails; I recommend you talk to your EBSCO representative to set this up.

**Allison Zellner (EBSCO trainer in the audience):** In addition to alerts in EBSCONET for your e-journal subscriptions, in the link-resolver knowledgebase, there are also updates available. In the admin system, you can get reports of titles added or removed from packages, but not title changes. In the public interface (Publication Finder) the title details field will provide title change information.

**Audience member:** Is it possible in EBSCONET to have the date of when you first subscribed to an e-journal even if it is more than five years ago?

**Carol/EBSCO (with additional input from EBSCONET product manager in audience):** Great suggestion! This is not currently in EBSCONET but it is in our mainframe and is used with the publisher access model to determine what your actual access range is within our discovery tools. It is information we can consider adding to EBSCONET.

**Audience member:** When you are getting print only and move to print + online, there is a slight increase in price. Is there a consensus that you are entitled to perpetual access for these titles or is it determined on a publisher by publisher basis?

**Teri/Sam Houston State University:** I have just assumed that you were entitled to perpetual access for print + online titles. If it is the publisher's policy to provide perpetual access for the online-only version. Guess I need to check into this further.

**Jackie/IGI Global:** It is on a publisher by publisher basis. I suggest asking around renewal time and see(ing) what you can get.

**Carol/EBSCO:** If you had a print subscription and changed to online, will publishers retrospectively give you perpetual access to the years you subscribed in print?

**Audience member:** No. They'll sell you perpetual access to the backfile.

The presenters wrapped up the session by encouraging the audience to continue this important conversation. Information from the sessions is in the process of being shared in several key publications, including the Library Technology Profile Series (<https://www.igi-global.com/newsroom/igi-global-news/library-technology-innovation-series/>) by IGI Global and Serialist. 🌱