JUSP: Journal Usage Statistics Portal

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WHAT IS JUSP?

The Journal Usage Statistics Portal (JUSP) is designed to provide a one-stop point where higher education libraries can go to get access to usage statistics reports for the NESLi2 publisher deals to which they subscribe. JUSP provides a number of benefits for libraries. It avoids the need to visit multiple publisher sites and allows libraries quickly and easily to compare usage across various publishers and years. It also includes data from gateways and hosts to provide a truer picture of usage.

As well as being able to view and download standard usage reports, libraries also get access to a range of added-value reports to help them analyse usage and establish value for money, which helps in purchasing and renewal decisions.

The portal is run by Mimas at the University of Manchester in partnership with JISC Collections, Evidence Base at Birmingham City University, and Cranfield University. Mimas are responsible for JUSP project management, database administration and application support. Evidence Base are responsible for community engagement; Cranfield University for application development; and JISC Collections for legal review and sustainability planning.

These partners have significant skills and expertise following several years of research in this area. JISC Collections supports the provision of digital content for education and research and

manages the NESLi2 initiative with which the portal is closely linked. As a nationally designated data centre Mimas supports world-class learning and research. It hosts a significant number of the UK's research information assets and builds applications to help people make the most of this rich resource. Evidence Base has previously worked with Cranfield University on the study and analysis of NESLi2 deals and has wide experience of working with higher education libraries in projects concerned with the analysis of publisher deals.

From the start the portal has been fully supported by SCONUL and especially by the Working Group on Performance Improvement (WGPI).

Background

In 2005 Evidence Base worked with Counting Online Usage of NeTworked Electronic Resources (COUNTER) and with Cranfield University on a study and analysis for JISC Collections of the value and usage of the NESLi2 deals.[1] We worked with seventeen higher education libraries and three publishers and developed a methodology for analysing usage based on the COUNTER JR1 report (the number of successful full-text article requests by month and journal).[2] One of the main recommendations from this work was that there should be a usage statistics portal so that instead of going separately to each publisher's website armed with a special password to download usage reports, e-resource librarians could get all reports from a single point of access.

Other projects run by Evidence Base and based on the methodology of the NESLi2 study, such as the Analysing Publisher Deals and Measuring Up projects in which over twenty higher education libraries have taken part, demonstrated that there was a real need and demand for such a portal from information services within the higher education community.[3]

In 2008 this recommendation led to a call from JISC for the technical design and prototyping of a usage statistics portal to which Evidence Base and Mimas responded. Over the next year we worked with a group of five libraries, three publishers and an intermediary in successfully establishing the feasibility of the portal.[4]

We are now funded within the JISC Information Environment Programme to develop a service. The project started in April 2010 and is due to finish in December 2011. Against a background of increasing interest in understanding the value of activity and attention data and the importance of the shared services agenda, this is a timely project. We anticipate a staged expansion of participation in the service by both higher education institutions and publishers/service providers during the course of the project.

Access to JUSP

The JUSP website (http://www.jusp.mimas.ac.uk) provides an overview of the project, information about participants, news, our contact details and FAQ. An authenticated login to the portal provides access to a variety of reports and usage data for individual participating libraries. A user who logs in from a non-contributing institution is provided with 'dummy' data to view. This is a useful facility for people wishing to view features of the portal and check its functionality prior to joining JUSP.

Who is in JUSP?

Libraries
The project started in April 2010, involving the original five libraries from the prototype phase, and a further group of libraries that were invited to participate in July 2010. These were chosen on the basis of the number of NESLi2 deals they took and/or on their previous experience of working on usage statistics projects either with SCONUL or with Evidence Base. At the same time we have tried to maintain a spread across research intensive and other universities and across JISC bands. There are currently 22 libraries with usage data in the portal and a waiting list is being maintained of libraries wishing to join in 2011. A list of participants is given on the JUSP website.

Libraries joining the portal are required to sign a library participation agreement allowing us access to their usage statistics and accepting the benchmarking options to be clarified with publishers. A copy of the agreement can be seen on the JUSP website.

Publishers and intermediaries/gateways
We are continuing to work with Elsevier, Oxford University Press, Springer and IngentaConnect (Publishing Technology), who were involved in the prototype phase, and we have received a good deal of cooperation, particularly over the implementation of Standardised Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (SUSHI). Publishers have seen the benefits of the increased efficiency the portal can offer to their customers, and signed

agreements have so far been received from Oxford University Press, the John Hopkins University Press for Project Muse, the American Institute of Physics (AIP) and from Swets. We are in active discussion with a number of other publishers and expect more agreements shortly. A running total of publishers involved in the portal will continue to be publicised on the JUSP website.

The aggregation process involves a quality check on the data, and we have had considerable success in referring data errors back to publishers to be corrected at source. Where we have found discrepancies in the way titles are displayed in the usage reports, or have identified a library with what looks like excessive use of one particular title, we have found the publishers cooperative in looking into the matter and making changes where necessary. This is possibly more easily done by us than by an individual library.

WHAT DATA DO WE USE?

Over the past few years the success of the COUNTER Code of Practice has meant that libraries can now be very much more confident that publishers are recording e-journal usage in an accurate and consistent way. The JR1 report has in effect become the 'industry standard' and is used in many contexts, including by SCONUL in its *Annual library statistics*, as the recommended measure of e-journal use. The JR1 report and the separate report on backfile usage (JR1a) form the basis of the Usage Statistics portal. We are also investigating the JR5 (number of successful full-text article requests by year and journal), which some publishers offer as an alternative to JR1a for reporting on backfile usage.

HOW DO WE COLLECT DATA?

Initially, libraries joining the project have been asked to download and send us JR1 and JR1a reports from participating publishers and intermediaries from 2007 onwards. In this way the portal has in its database around nine million records as of November 2010 and is able to demonstrate trends over time as well as to give libraries direct access to their older data. The speed with which JUSP libraries have responded to requests for data and for other information has been impressive.

For collecting current data, the introduction of SUSHI has been one of the major benefits to the establishment of a portal such as this.[5] The SUSHI protocol is a machine-to-machine way of gathering usage statistics that avoids the need to access individual publisher websites to obtain data. It automates a tedious and repetitive process to save librarians time and effort. So far we have successfully implemented SUSHI to collect data from three publishers, and have plans to extend this form of data collection to further publishers over the next few months. Some publishers have experienced a delay in implementing the SUSHI protocol although all are working towards COUNTER compliance. Automated data collection is key to the success of the project and it is expected that full compliance will be evident during the course of the project. Few organisations have implemented SUSHI, so our work in this area is pioneering. We have also developed a SUSHI server that enables libraries to download their statistics from the portal. We have not had anyone using this yet so we are keen to get feedback from people trialling this new service.

HOW DO WE USE DATA?

As well as presenting all the data from the JR1 and JR1a reports, which libraries can download in csv format, JUSP currently offers the following additional reports:

Usage recorded by intermediaries/gateways
Previous experience with earlier projects had shown that libraries were often not clear whether usage by intermediaries and gateways had to be added to usage reports from publishers or not. The process of adding in this usage on a title-by-title basis was time-consuming. In the portal, libraries can see total usage, including usage through intermediaries and gateways, and can also get a summary table showing the proportion of usage through each route. This is an important feature of the portal, allowing libraries to get a full picture of usage for their NESLi2 deals.

Usage of backfile collections
Libraries will often purchase backfile or archival collections separately, either as part of a NESLi2 deal or outside it. This usage is separately recorded in the COUNTER JR1a report. However, as the JR1 report includes both use of the current deal and the backfile collection, it is not easy to show separately usage of the deal itself. The portal provides a separate report on current and backfile usage, and gives a summary of the percentages on each.

Trends over time
As the portal contains data going back to 2007, it is able to chart trends over time, by looking at each deal separately or at all the deals. We are

investigating alternative ways of displaying this data through graphs and charts.

Titles with the highest use
One table shows the titles with the highest use, either for one publisher or across all publishers. The report can be restricted to a particular year or present usage across all years.

SCONUL return

Of particular interest to SCONUL members is the SCONUL return option. This presents usage data for participating publishers in the format required for question D7 in the SCONUL statistical return. Once all NESLi2 publishers are included, this will mean substantially less work for libraries down-loading the usage data they need from individual publishers.

Some experiments

We have made a start on some tables that will give added value to the portal and which we know are of interest to libraries. These include average and maximum number of requests and tables indicating which titles in the JR1 reports are actually included in the deal to which the library subscribes. We are particularly aware of the fact that JR1 usage reports will often include a number of titles that are not available within the deal subscribed to, or are titles that have ceased publication, changed name or changed publisher and are no longer fully available. These considerations make us cautious about publicising nil usage, making comparisons or giving average use, but it is an area we are continuing to work on and hope to resolve.

What we do not cover

In order to respect both publisher and library confidentiality, the portal will not include details of how much an individual library has paid for a particular deal. However, libraries will have easy access through the portal to all their usage data, so that they can readily work out the 'cost per use' and can compare this across the various NESLi2 deals they take.

We also do not currently cover usage of full-text journal titles within databases, as this usage is outside the NESLi2 deals.

Feedback

Feedback on the portal has been extremely positive. When asked in a recent survey what they thought was the most successful aspect of the portal, replies from participating libraries included:

> Loading all the usage data in one place and being able to easily manipulate it to compare.

> It delivers quickly and clearly what I need in one place.

> The ability to go from calendar year to SCONUL year. This is brilliant!

> The SUSHI implementation AND the aggregation of data.

Publishers and intermediaries have also shown their support:

> [OUP] is very pleased to have been involved in the successful portal pilot and is excited by the aggregated content concept that the initiative aims to deliver. Usage stats are becoming an increasingly important tool for librarians in judging the value of subscribed content and OUP is committed to making such statistics easily accessible in order to benefit both library and publisher under-standings of journals usage.

> Swets is delighted to support JISC with data for use within their usage statistics portal. Librarians require up-to-date, thorough and reliable information on the usage of their collections to help make informed collection decisions and we look forward to supporting all JISC customers with the information they need to remain in complete control of their holdings.

What comes next?

More libraries
We shall shortly be inviting more libraries to join JUSP, and the ultimate aim is that by December 2011 all those higher education libraries that take NESLi2 deals will be members of JUSP and that data will be imported seamlessly into the portal via SUSHI. Already we have seen considerable interest from presentations given by members of the JUSP team and we are holding a waiting list of libraries wanting to join. Higher education librar-

ies that are not yet members of JUSP can look at usage reports for a 'dummy institution' from the front page of the portal by logging in through their institution's Shibboleth or Athens username and password, and can view the library participation agreement on the portal's front page.

As more libraries join the project we hope that we shall be collecting data routinely via SUSHI. Libraries joining will not be expected to supply earlier data, though consideration will be given to those who wish to do so in order to analyse trends and use the portal for long-term storage.

More publishers
Our aim is to include all NESLi2 publishers in the portal. As more publishers join, we will set up SUSHI harvesting. We shall not include publishers who are not SUSHI-compliant, though as this is a requirement for COUNTER release 3 and COUNTER compliance is a requirement of the NESLi2 licence, we would not expect to see any publishers in that category, though it is recognised that some are taking longer than others to reach this stage.

More features
Some of the features we are currently testing in the portal have already been described above. We shall be seeking the views of participating libraries on other features they would like to see included. Some possibilities for future consideration include:

Publishers' price lists
Attaching list prices to journal titles is one method of showing the value of a particular deal. Although journal price lists are available, they are not generally in a machine-readable format that can easily be added to the database. We shall be discussing this with publishers and investigating suitable options.

Subject category
The addition of a subject category can be a useful guide, as has been shown in the report on the first year of the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL) initiative.[6] Some publishers provide subject categories, though this is not always consistent and may not necessarily match the way libraries divide up their budgets by schools or departments. We shall continue to investigate this in consultation with libraries.

Benchmarking
There is strong support for a feature to enable libraries to benchmark against those in the same

JISC band. The portal currently enables JISC and the project team to view benchmarking data and this is something we would like to make available to institutions in the future.

We are planning to include full-time equivalent (FTE) student and academic staff numbers in the portal. This will be especially useful when looking at benchmarking.

Help with individual analysis
One of the important purposes behind the portal is that it will save libraries the time and effort involved in collecting usage statistics, and will present them with some basic analysis. Some libraries are already analysing usage to aid decision-making, as Bucknell describes in relation to the University of Liverpool.[7] It is hoped that the portal will help all libraries to gain a clearer picture of their usage of NESLi2 deals and to present their own reports based on the data in the portal. We are looking at how best to provide further support through guidance notes and templates, and possibly workshops and live tutorials.

Going beyond NESLi2?
Once the portal is set up there should in theory be no problem in extending its remit beyond NESLi2 publishers to include other publishers and other formats such as databases and e-books, and to include article-level statistics, as currently being investigated by the Pirus2 project, also run by Mimas and Cranfield University with COUNTER, CrossRef and Oxford University Press, and in the same JISC Information Environment strand.[8] This will depend on time and resources available.

How to get involved

JISC Collections are responsible for producing the sustainability model that will ensure the continued existence of the portal once the project itself ends in December 2011. As indicated above, we shall be adding more libraries as the project progresses. Regular newsletters highlighting progress are available from the JUSP website.

Anyone who is interested in joining JUSP should contact us at jusp@mimas.ac.uk We shall then ask you to sign the library participation agreement which is on the JUSP website (http://www.jusp.mimas.ac.uk) and contact you as regards setting up SUSHI access. Once this is done we shall get in touch when we are ready to start loading your usage data.

We are keen to get feedback as the project develops and would encourage you to take a look, get in touch and let us know what you think.

Notes

1   A. Conyers & P. Dalton, NESLi2 analysis of usage statistics: summary report. Birmingham: Evidence Base, 2005. Available at http://www.ebase.bcu.ac.uk/docs/jisc-nesli2summaryeb.pdf.

2   The COUNTER code of practice: journals and databases release 3. Available at http://www.projectcounter.org/r3/Release3D9.pdf.

3   A. Conyers, 'What do publisher usage statistics tell us? The analysing publisher deal project from Evidence Base', SCONUL Focus, 2007, pp 72-6. Available at http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletter/40/25.pdf.

4   A. Conyers et al. Usage Statistics Portal scoping study phase 2: phase ii technical design and prototyping: summary report, 2010. Available at http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/Reports/Usage-stats-scoping-study/

5   http://www.niso.org/workrooms/sushi.

6   Research Information Network. One year on: evaluating the initial impact of the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL). Research Information Network, 2010. Available at http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/using-and-accessing-information-resources/evaluating-impact-shedl.

7   T.Bucknell, 'Usage statistics for big deals: supporting library decision-making', Learning publishing, 21(3), 2008, pp 193-8.

8   The PIRUS2 project. http://www.cranfieldlibrary.cranfield.ac.uk/pirus2/tiki-index.php.

All web references accessed on 30 November 2010