

Serials and Those Pesky Related Internet Resources: Executive Summary

Mary Greci

Serials Catalog Librarian, University of Oregon

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Introduction

With the recent proliferation of World Wide Web sites, more and more publishers are creating sites that are related to their print publications. The possible relationships between these sites and their print counterparts are virtually limitless. Although there are as yet no universally excepted definitions of terms used to identify each of these possibilities, for this presentation I have identified them as follows:

- **Electronic reproduction:** an electronic publication that is identical in content to its print counterpart, as a microfilm or microfiche reproduction is identical to a print title. In most cases, this is achieved by scanning a print publication and displaying the results without alteration.
- **Electronic version:** an electronic publication that is equivalent in content to its print counterpart, containing all (or the majority) of the information included in the print title. Electronic versions are generally formatted differently than print titles, usually containing hyperlinks between sections, and may either include extra information (such as tables, illustrations, etc.) or be missing information found in their print counterparts.
- **Related Internet resource:** an Internet site which contains information that is in some way related, but not equivalent, to that of a print title. These sites may contain information, such as tables of contents, that is also present in the print title; or, they may consist of entirely different information, such as new images, tables, etc.

Because of the virtually unlimited possibilities of the Web and the dynamic nature of Web sites it is not always clear where to draw the line between each of these types of entities; however, precise type identification is not really necessary. While this presentation is meant to focus specifically on providing access to related Internet resources from within the bibliographic record for a print serial title, the issues, questions, and strategies outlined can, with the adoption of a one-record multiple version philosophy and a less strict stance on links between serials and monographs, be applied to all three of these categories and to both serials and monographs.

Variety Is the Name of the Game

Catalogers may encounter related web sites in a number of ways, including: notes and links that are already present in cataloging copy; URLs printed on a piece in hand; notification from the

publisher; and, notification from subject specialists/public service staff. While the types of related sites encountered are virtually limitless they can generally be categorized as follows:

- Supplements
- Updating information
- Selected articles from the print publication
- Abstracts
- Indexes
- Tables of contents
- Subject-related sites
- Sites for the issuing corporate body
- Advertisements
- Subscription information
- Other

Of these, three categories need some added explanation. WWW supplements come in at least as many varieties as print supplements, including tables, statistics, extra graphics, extra articles, completely different information posted specifically to supplement another title, etc. Sites containing updating information can be compared to looseleaf updates issued between editions of a paper title. Subject-related sites are usually not bibliographically related to the print title, but rather contain information which may be of interest to a person reading on a particular subject.

It is not uncommon for a web site to start out in one category and later change so as to fall into another, completely different, category. For instance, a site that originally contains only advertising and subscription information may be changed to include abstracts, articles, or entire issues. Likewise, a site which originally includes selected articles or entire issues of a title may later be found to contain only tables of contents or to have transformed into a corporate body advertising site. As with all questions concerning the Web, this dynamic quality must be taken into account in any policies and procedures that are put into place.

Questions, Issues and Decisions That Must Be Made

Decisions made in regard to providing catalog access to related Web sites are strongly tied to issues of workload and workflow, ongoing maintenance, and providing the best patron service possible in a constantly changing situation. A number of scenarios are possible and each library must decide for itself which one is best for their situation and their patrons.

The most basic question is: Does your library want to provide catalog access to Internet sites that are related in some way to items that are physically housed in your collection? If the answer to this is yes, a number of other questions follow and specific decisions of how best to arrive at this goal must be made. If the answer is no, the library may be called upon in the future to back up this decision or to re-visit the question entirely.

There are a number of very good arguments that can be put forth for choosing one of these options over the other. The library that chooses to provide catalog access to related Web sites

will probably be doing so in order to provide better service to their patrons. There are currently a number of examples of print publications that are supplemented by totally new and different information published only on the Web. When the library does not provide catalog access to these supplements, they are denying their patrons easy access to this important information. Including these sites on records for the print publication is much easier and less time-consuming than cataloging them separately, and so may be viewed as a better use of resources. On the other hand, a library that already has a large cataloging backlog or is being faced with staff cuts may decide that they do not have the resources for even this more limited type of service, while another library with extra staff time on their hands may decide that it is better to catalog these sites separately. Regardless of which option is chosen, there should be sound reasoning behind the decision made.

If the Library chooses to provide catalog access to at least some of these related sites on the bibliographic record for the print publication, there are still a number of other issues to be dealt with, including:

- What types of related sites will be included in the catalog?
- Are there some types of sites which will never be included in the catalog?
- Is there a need for review of related sites by subject specialists?
- Could a system be instituted where review by the subject specialist is only necessary in certain instances?
- How much effort will go into adding this information to records for newly cataloged titles? Will catalogers actively look for sites? Will they just verify information found on pieces or in cataloging copy?
- What are the specific cataloging routines that will be instituted? What types of notes will be added? How will linking notes be formulated? Will added entries be made for related titles?
- Will this information ever be added to records already in the catalog? If yes, what criteria will be used to select titles to enhance in this way?
- What will be done about record maintenance? Will the library try to maintain the links at all? Only in certain cases? Never? Who will actually do the maintenance and what procedures will be used?

This presentation will include some possible answers to these questions, outline some of the scenarios which follow from these answers, and discuss what is happening at a few institutions around the nation.