ERM Use Case – Library moves from institutional to consortium subscription

Developed with the University of Stirling (27 January 2011)

Generic Description – UC9 - Library moves from institutional to consortium subscription - A library decides to move from an institutional subscription to a resource (via an agent, or directly with the supplier) to a consortium subscription. They need to ensure that the consortium license meets their requirements and transfer their subscription to the consortium, recording all necessary details.

1. Use case description – What happens?

Activity – For SHEDL (the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library consortium) members, the move from institutional to consortium subscription involves planning (what publishers / titles to target), negotiation (consortium representation & the publisher) and enactment (cancellation the old and ordering / setting up access for the new – a standard set of processes). The move may also be part of the local migration from print to electronic (see Use Case 11), though that is less likely to be the case in the future. This use case focuses principally on the SHEDL process to the point of enactment.

- Institutions asked to recommend publishers for SHEDL negotiation
- SHEDL Working Group shortlists publishers
- Each institution signs letters of commitment to SHEDL based on current subscription level prior to negotiation with publishers
- Institution supplies list of subscription titles and current subscription values to SHEDL negotiating team
- Current subscriptions, cancellations and new purchases are placed on hold while negotiations take place
- If negotiations are successful, all print subscriptions are cancelled with the Agent and an electronic subscription taken out directly with the publisher [some publishers require that the library deal direct, not through subscription agent] there are two strands (‘print to electronic’ and ‘print plus electronic’) but Stirling has adopted an e-only model for SHEDL deals
- Pricing is shared by standard formula between all participating institutions – like any deal, this impacts departmental freedom to vary their requirement

- Licensing is standard for the consortium and should cover the range of requirements – such as access through VLE and for overseas users
- Contractual, financial and license agreements and access detail need to be managed by the institution

This activity therefore stops short of above campus ERM. There is also the question of how related existing services should fit with this direction – notably JUSP and SUNCAT.

Note – At Stirling, the only weeding that has been done to date on the back of SHEDL deals, is relegation to closed-access storage – staff time is required for checking print & archival content availability and for associated catalogue amendments.

Volumes – Numbers of print journals to be migrated; number of agreements; range of access rights variants

Actors – Information Services (LLD, LCM, ELD, Info Centre); SHEDL (Working Group and Negotiating Group); Publishers; Agents (Swets); Serials Solutions; Institutional staff (Academics, Senior Administrative Staff); possibly commercial storage providers if part of move to e-only; JISC Collections handle the actual negotiations with publishers.

Data involved – Current subscription lists (in-house and Agents); Publisher lists (incl. price); Catalogue records; Order records; Licenses; Information for Shibboleth, Serials Solutions, Link Resolver

Workflows – The overall process involves coordination with multiple actors (Internal (LCM, LLD, ELD), SHEDL, Agents, Publishers). The planning workflows involve multiple sources of information, not all of which is readily available (e.g. current license, current budget). The workflow following successful negotiation is a combination of cancellation and new subscription – cancel all titles in deal with subscription agent, place the committed new order for the SHEDL deal, advise Serial Solutions Knowledge Base by selecting the relevant library database [some but not all publishers have supplied SHEDL specific lists to SerialsSolutions] box (the titles appears in the SS e-journal portal in 24 hours).

Current examples – SHEDL: http://scurl.ac.uk/WG/SHEDL/index.html; NESLi2: http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/nesli2/

2. Motivation – what are the pain points?

What are the current problems – At Stirling the motivation is a combination of the move to electronic only and the value (time saved, increased access) available through the consortium. Key drivers have been increased reliance on e-content (especially for off-campus users) and pressures on space.

The bonuses are in

- Reduced number of local deals and orders
- License negotiation and management
- Better coverage leading to increased usage and lower unit costs – as evidenced by the 2010 evaluation report.[i]

The downside should be recognised

- Internal processes – fund code changes, move to core collection etc.
- Effort in compiling lists and values for unsuccessful negotiations
- Time it takes for negotiations – all activity with the publisher is on hold during this time
- Content coverage, post cancellation rights, restrictions on use

Efficiency assessment – Reduction of deals, staff time, information for decision making readily available

Economy assessment – Access to more electronic content than would otherwise be affordable (better value for same money); also staves off pressure to be seen to be building the local collection

Effectiveness assessment – Coverage benefits for users; making resources available across research pools, thus reducing the barriers to collaborative research; Making resources available to walk-in users/franchise institutions/ etc. There are also the intangible benefits experienced in Scotland of working collaboratively, closer relationships and the cultural potential to leverage other shared opportunities – trust is the key characteristic that must underpin the venture.

3. Intended Benefits – What is the business case?

Library Service – More useful content than affordable as an individual institution; Single invoice; Data readily available for decision making purposes; Space saving; Document Delivery reduced in major areas

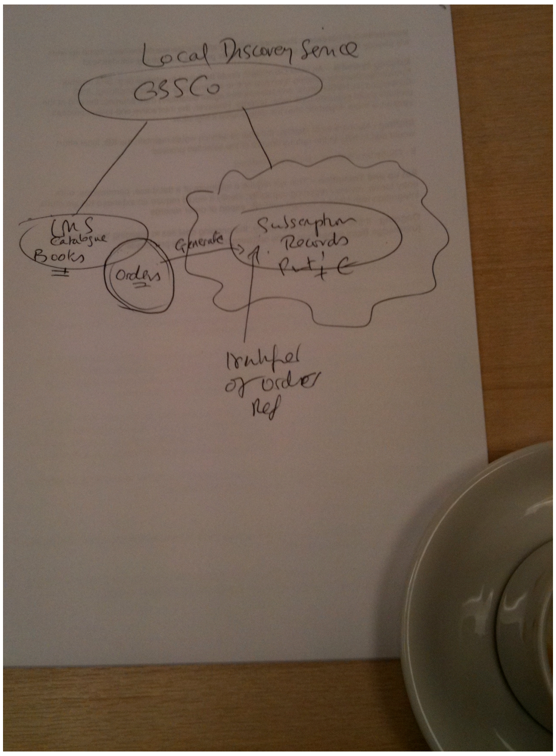
Users – All types of user gain access to content previously unavailable at Stirling; less requirement for document delivery

Suppliers – Publishers are guaranteed income (3 years), extended reach (therefore increased evidence of demand) and save on sales, admin and support effort

4. Consequences of doing it 'above campus'

What will happen? – The SHEDL model illustrates the benefits of organising licensing 'above campus'; it has also highlighted some of the risks such as dependency on fellow consortium members, especially the large institutions. The licensing service could (should) be complemented with the 'above campus' management of electronic (and print?) subscription resource records – not just those in the deals but all records. Such a shared Knowledge Base service would open up a range of value added opportunities (referenced in other Use Cases as 'KB+'). From the Stirling perspective these may include

- Consolidation of usage and other decision support intelligence
- Definitive electronic resource / subscription resource records need not be in the LMS – that replication is at a cost
- The order could be generated directly by the corporate finance system (the LMS would not need to be in the loop); it is suggested that this is no more special than processes already in place for licensing software (e.g. Microsoft Office)
- The shared service provider (i.e. JISC Collections) could pool / consolidate regular orders for other subscriptions on a monthly basis
- The provider could also undertake the provision and maintenance of a shared link resolver and the A–Z list (if required)



Potential risks – These should not be underestimated, but should be carefully classified: Errors in the deal licensing; increased cost per download for some titles; loss of institutional independence; library loss of control to institutional purchasing; costs locked for 3 years; loss of a partner (e.g. closure); no gold plated cost model that works for all partners all of the time.

Potential opportunities – More efficient purchasing; More content for the money; More successful collaboration (what if the whole UK plc research community had access to the same resources?); Better usage data.

Consequence of not doing it – Continued duplication of non-differentiated effort across the sector in managing the data and the access that derives from the licensing; also blunting of potential for a cascade of innovation based upon the core (already recognised) shared service and Knowledge Base.

5. Implementation pointers – things to be taken into account

The following pointers relate to the implementation of the ERM / KB+ shared service proposed above.

Mechanism – ERM data, print subscription data and perhaps purchase order data is linked to a shared service Knowledge Base that is maintained to the highest standards (e.g. ExLibris updates SFX weekly). This is likely to involve partnership with a global KB service provider.

Inputs and outputs – Some but not all of the following can be automated

- If data about existing electronic subscriptions is not already in the selected Knowledge Base, then it will need entering
- Data about print subscriptions, the associated licenses and post-cancellation entitlements will be required so that the KB has a full record
- Data from purchase orders may be required, closing the loop between institutional finance system and subscriptions
- Output of management information in a range of formats (not just reports) for local use

Standards & Protocols – DLib ERM data specification; Counter usage stats; SUSHI; Onix-PL license descriptions

Existing systems –Transition away from spreadsheets and 'Access-like' databases, local LMS and supplier external systems (e.g. SwetsWise, SerialsSolutions). Exploitation of the JUSP and possibly of Suncat and other public funded service developments.

Staffing – The shared service will need to balance centralised data entry against the possibility of crowd sourcing some aspects of the KB+ from the community (as in the Royal Holloway and Warwick selection Use Cases) – though this Use Case principally requires central data entry.

6. Challenges & Costs – Direct and indirect

The challenges and costs identified here relate to the operation of a shared licensing service, not to the potential movement of ERM and wider ordering functions to the Shared Service (as considered under Section 4)

Setup and transition – Establishment of an acceptable governance mechanism, taking account of the importance of trust (in this case SHEDL and JISC Collections already existed); agreement of an equitable formula for division of costs (in this case current expenditure was used pro rata); there were no systems requirements

Ongoing – Local extraction of annual data to inform selection of publisher targets and license negotiation; data entry arising from the annual cancellation and new subscription process; no systems changes are currently planned

[i] Mark Toole has provided the following detail that sits behind the independent report commissioned by SCURL from RIN on the impact of SHEDL after its first year of operation (with three publishers). The “public” report has data that relates to specific institutions removed. To try and preserve institutional confidentiality only Stirling’s figures are quoted in this summary.

The main headline is that SHEDL is a major success so far, for Scottish universities in general and for Stirling in particular. The baseline average in the UK for the annual growth of usage of e-journals is 22%. Usage by Scottish institutions in each of the three publishers involved in the first phase of the SHEDL deal rose by an average of 41.3%. Usage by Stirling of these publishers grew by 307.7%. Excluding those institutions with low usage, Stirling’s growth is the highest of any Scottish HEI. Stirling saw particularly large growth in accessing economics and marine science publications.

Another key metric the reviewers were asked to analyse was the “cost per use”. Across Scotland this fell by between 11% and 17% for the three publishers involved in the first round of SHEDL. Once again, Stirling has benefited more than the average Scottish HEI with reductions in cost per use of 45.3% to 84.6%.

In summary, the University has significantly benefitted from its participation in the SHEDL initiative: a larger range of titles is available to the University which is resulting in staff and students making more use of e-journals which in turn is driving down the cost per use. All Scottish HEIs have benefitted, but Stirling much more than the average.

There are a number of caveats to this analysis: it is only one year’s figures and only covers the first three SHEDL publishers. It is however very encouraging and vindicates the University’s strong proactive support for the initiative. There may also be some hidden dangers. These include: if Stirling has benefitted more than the average, the University may be asked to contribute more (financially); publishers may be less willing to strike SHEDL type deals, particularly at a UK level; there may be negative implications for more specialist journal collections. [Mark Toole – October 2010]