

Group Therapy: Managing OA Journals

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GRIPLE:

Submitted by **Nada Jensen** (Technical Librarian, Health Sciences Library, Midwestern University, Downers Grove, IL)

We would like to provide links to open access journals from our web page or catalog. I would appreciate hearing how your library manages open access journals. Do you include them on your web page/catalog? Is there a comprehensive list of open access journals available? How do you keep track of them? Any suggestions on how to start such a project would be really appreciated.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Barbara Dietsch** (Serials Coordinator, UNC-CH, contractor to the EPA Library, Research Triangle Park, NC)

When I first began to add open access titles to our electronic journals webpage, I actually used the list that Stanford University Libraries' HighWire Press had already prepared (<http://highwire.stanford.edu/lists/freeart.dtl>) to start compiling titles to add to our site. This was before I knew about the Directory of Open Access Journals or perhaps it was even pre-DOAJ. I believe that most of the science and medical open access titles available through the HighWire Press platform are now posted on our journals webpage. Of course, many of the titles are those that we actually subscribe to, but many we do not and had originally discovered through the HighWire Press list as open access titles.

So, I frequently use HighWire Press to confirm open access (for some reason, journals don't always advertise that they offer their archival coverage for free), get the URLs, and to obtain journal information like the online ISSNs which can be hard to find elsewhere. I find their journal gateways easy to use, and again, it makes it much easier to find those ISSNs! They are always in the same place (lower right corner of the journal's homepage). We need those for our "link outs" from Web of Knowledge, PubMed, and Dialog.

We have found that our researchers usually know exactly what issue they need, so we link them directly to the archive page. An archive webpage example from the American Journal of Public Health is <http://www.ajph.org/contents-by-date.0.shtml>. I have found that HighWire Press has shown consistency and thoughtfulness with their URLs. Additionally, they are short and easy to type or copy into webpages, spreadsheets, or forms by librarians.

We are a science and technology library, and HighWire Press has been a tremendous resource for me. I must say that even with the strengths of DOAJ, I find myself strangely loyal to HighWire Press. I love the format of the listing and ease of use! Kudos to the librarians and staff at Stanford University Libraries for a job well done!

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Diane Hollyfield** (Head, Acquisitions, Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries)

The Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries (VCUL) manages free e-resources very similarly to paid e-resources. VCUL follows the philosophy that it should apply the same criteria to all resources that we present to our users as part of our collections. Further, if a resource is selected, then it should be included in the catalog as well as other appropriate tools, such as the A-Z list of e-resources, or the journal locator. Cataloging and processing are definitely NOT free, so e-resources are not added unless they are judged to be of value to our community.

Collection Management Librarians adhere to the same collection development guidelines in selecting free e-resources as they do for paid resources. Collection managers use an online form to submit any e-resource, free or paid, for approval. Once a collection manager submits the form, the Head of Collection Management gets a system-generated email notification, clicks the links to a database where the full information on the e-resource is housed, reviews the item, and approves it. If she questions the resource, she'll discuss it with the individual who recommended the title. Another system email is then sent automatically to the Head of Acquisitions. The Head of Acquisitions ensures that there are no licensing issues, verifies the URL, and determines the nature of the resource (journal, database, etc.). Acquisitions adds order records and activates the title in SFX. After Acquisitions approval of the resource, a system email goes to a catalog librarian. The catalog librarian gathers the information about the resource from the database, catalogs the item, and approves the request. Library Information Systems receives the last system email, which prompts them to add the resource to EZproxy and MetaLib.

Collection Management Librarians become aware of free e-resources in various ways in the course of their work. Acquisitions will provide them with lists for review as they come up, such as new titles added to the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) or to the "free" sections of SFX, or email notices of open access journals.

Keeping track of the status of free e-resources after they are added to the collection is a challenge. For e-journals, Acquisitions codes the records with a budget code that indicates that it is "free" and also indicates to which library it belongs. Cataloging codes the records that they add so that they can be retrieved by group (i.e., DOAJ) in case of need. Acquisitions relies on alert library users and public services librarians to provide feedback on "dead" titles, broken links and the like. We have a special form for library staff to report problems, the Acquisitions Serials Problem Report Notification (ASPRN), also an online form. ASPRNs and their solutions are contained in a database so that the history is maintained. A similar problem report form is available to library users through SFX. We also may see email notices about titles or discover

changes in other ways. As part of the transition to e-resources in the serials section of Acquisitions, we plan to assign routine maintenance of groups of titles, probably based on publisher package, to particular staff.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Kristina DeShazo** (Electronic Collections Librarian, Oregon Health & Science University)

Our library uses EBSCO A-to-Z to manage access to free electronic journals. Through the service we obtain the list of free journals we want to make available to our constituents and others outside the system. We are a medical library so the resources we are interested in are decidedly more narrow in scope. They include DOAJ, Free Medical Journals, BioMed Central, PubMed Central, plus free access via HighWire Press and Blackwell Synergy. You can see our access by going to our journal search page in our catalog and clicking on the link "Free online journals (A-Z)" in the middle of the page. It is not very prominent but that's partly because we do already integrate the links into our catalog via an electronic resource management system (ERMS). <http://catalogs.ohsu.edu/search~S5>

The great thing about using EBSCO A-to-Z is that they maintain the links; we don't have to. We just do a semi-regular update load or re-load to the catalog through our ERMS. (This is not exactly simple but much easier than managing all those links ourselves!) Of course, you could just use the EBSCO A-to-Z interface as your access point for your patrons and make it more prominent. There are other vendors that offer similar products including TDNet and Serials Solutions.

Speaking of our ERMS, we use this to load electronic journals into the catalog which I think was a little more of what you were interested in than just what resources are available. The system allows us to load these records with brief bibs so that we don't have to spend a lot of time with catalog maintenance. The drawback is that they are not really subject accessible at this point. An individual would need to know what journal title they were looking for to begin with. We're considering ways to include subject access, but that's a project for another day!

As I'm sure you've discovered, "free" is not exactly free when you have to spend hours managing links and catalog records. Using the EBSCO A-to-Z service allows us to gather a variety of open source or free access links in a format that is ready to load to the catalog with a relatively small amount of work on our part.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Beth M. Johns** (Electronic Resources & Reference Librarian, Melvin J. Zahnow Library, Saginaw Valley State University, MI)

The Zahnow Library manages open access journals through its A-Z list (title list) provided by its link resolver, SFX by ExLibris Group. Due to staff and time constraints, the library is remotely hosted, meaning that the SFX knowledge base server is maintained by ExLibris off site. The

backbone of link resolver software is the knowledge base. It is through this component of the software that the Zahnnow Library manages its electronic journal titles, including those freely available, in its A-Z list. In the past year, links to online journals were removed from the library's catalog and therefore, the A-Z list has served as a replacement for this change (note: the A-Z list is not a catalog—it does not provide all of the information normally found in a catalog record for a periodical).

Staff at the Zahnnow Library has activated the full text service of several databases and websites (targets) designated as open access, such as DOAJ, Highwire Press Free, Pubmed Central Open Access, and others. Very little day to day management takes place in regard to the open access titles. ExLibris updates its server monthly. The library's A-Z list is updated daily (at midnight) to apply any changes made locally. Staff has applied "auto activate" settings within the target service so that new items are activated automatically during ExLibris' monthly update. Periodic checks by staff ensure that all of the object portfolios are activated.

The open access titles are fully searchable by title (if known) through the library's A-Z list and can also be located by target if a user is familiar with open access providers. One potential concern is that by activating all of the open access titles, many obscure or foreign titles are included in the A-Z list that receive little, if any use; this can be rectified by selectively activating object portfolios, but with time and staff issues this could be very burdensome when dealing with hundreds or possibly thousands of titles. Therefore it is easier for staff to activate all portfolios. There are occasional issues such as elimination of free access for any number of reasons and inaccurate or misrepresented thresholds. Overall, however, the open access titles require little management compared to subscription titles.

The Zahnnow Library does not consciously direct users to the open access materials at this time; it is simply a part of the library's entire online journal offerings. It is unlikely that students at the university realize they are accessing a freely available resource when they obtain journal articles from an open access resource. As long as they can access what they need relatively easily, they seem to be satisfied.