

THE UK NATIONAL ELECTRONIC SITE LICENSING INITIATIVE

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The aims of NESLI, the role of the Managing Agent and the impact of the initiative on end users, librarians and publishers.

Phase 2 of the National Site Licence, known as 'NESLI', is due to go live from January 1999, and will run for three years.

The initiative, which is sponsored by JISC, will be for electronic journal provision only. It is intended for the UK Higher Education market, that is approximately 180 UK institutions.

'Top-slicing' of funding council budgets was a feature of Phase 1 of the National Pilot Site Licence Initiative (NPSLI 1). There will be no 'top-slicing' in NESLI. Indeed the aim of the project is to operate on standard commercial principles, with libraries purchasing electronic journals as a large consortium via the Managing Agent for this project.

The key function in the project will be this Managing Agent, who will be appointed by JISC. The Agent will act as an electronic intermediary, and provide services for both publishers and librarians for the life of the project. This role is currently the subject of an EU tendering process, and it is intended that the Agent should be appointed by the end of March 1998.

The role of the Managing Agent

Many of the value-adding services provided by the Managing Agent will produce benefits to all parties, including savings in administrative time.

The Agent will provide the following services to publishers, the UK HEI Consortium, and JISC:

- a single access point for libraries and end users to electronic journals in the scheme;
- a single agency for negotiating and administering publishers' licences;
- negotiation of discount and usage terms for a large consortium;
- collection of revenue for publishers ;
- management of VAT, price increases, cancellations and additions to the scheme;
- possible liaison with archiving service/s;
- monitoring and management of access and security;
- reliable usage data for UK libraries, and for JISC evaluation of the scheme;
- flexible handling of access to publishers' electronic journals - see diagram;

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- promotion of NESLI to both HEIs and publishers throughout the life of the scheme.

Model from point of view of end user

The benefits to the academic end user of this arrangement include:

- a single interface and single access point for electronic journal provision;
- a single set of technical standards for the project;
- a rich pot of electronic journals from a range of publishers, i.e. close to critical mass in many subject areas;
- electronic journals organised by broad subject category;
- journals searchable by subject, keywords;
- linkage where practicable to Abstracting and Indexing services e.g. ISI;
- libraries can customise interface according to their own institution's requirements.

Model from point of view of UK HE libraries

The consortium potentially consists of approximately 180 UK higher education libraries. In addition, RESCOLINC, the consortium of research-council funded libraries - e.g. Medical Research Council, IGER etc. - has expressed an interest in joining the national consortium.

Benefits to libraries include:

- The Managing Agent's provision of a single access point, single interface, single set of technical standards to publishers' electronic journals.
- The Agent will provide a single solution to multi-publisher deals, licences, access and security.
- Licensing terms will be standardised as far as possible.
- The Agent will negotiate discount and usage terms on behalf of the large UK Consortium.
- The Agent will provide regular usage statistics for effective management of electronic subscriptions.
- Electronic access could mean reduced paper holdings releasing square footage, if the electronic archiving problem is solved on a national scale.

- The initiative could mean reduced inter-library loan and document delivery costs, to be counter-balanced by the possibility of increased article transaction costs.
- There will be national promotion to end users by the Agent, together with local promotion by the library.

Model from publishers' point of view:

Benefits to publishers include:

- A single solution to dealing with many HEIs; this could mean savings in administrative and legal costs.
- The whole of the UK higher education market will be dealt with in a single deal.
- Publishers will nevertheless continue to maintain contact with, and usage data for individual university libraries.
- There will be a single UK access point for electronic journal provision via the Managing Agent.
- Although the service will be searchable by subject, topic etc., there will still be scope for publisher branding.
- There will be further benefits of critical mass if the model is popular: two participants in Phase 1 reported increased usage of non-core and non-subscription titles when these became available electronically via NPSLI 1.
- Publishers will benefit from national promotion from NESLI, assisting them in maximising their investment in electronic development
- Publishers will get HEIs and end users further accustomed to electronic delivery over the three-year life of the licence, with a possible objective of weaning the market off print.
- If journals hosted are hosted on the Agent's server, usage data will be provided by the Agent.
- Publishers with their own servers will continue to control their own usage data according to commercial requirements.
- The single electronic version gradually replaces multiple printed versions, which should produce future savings to publishers.

The resulting wider access at no extra cost is a benefit for authors, journal editors, and learned societies where relevant.

Diagram

The diagram shows the model in outline at this stage in the project.

Libraries (HEI 1 etc.) access the 'front end' of the Agent's service, organised by subject and linked to Abstracting and Indexing services where possible.

Individual publishers will make their electronic journals available to licensed HEIs, and their terms for access to their electronic output may differ, for example depending on whether institutions currently subscribe to the print version or not. Those of you who are familiar with NPSLI 1 will remember that there are two broad access models for publishers' electronic journals in that service, hosted by BIDS: the approach adopted by Academic Press; and the approach adopted by Blackwell Science and Blackwell Publishers. There may well be other models which will emerge in the course of the project.

These access models will be made clear once the Managing Agent begins proper discussions with publishers in April this year. Accordingly, arrows have not yet been drawn in showing the different

possible relationships between HEIs in the consortium and individual publishers' output.

The Agent's service is shown as central to the project. HEIs access journal header information. Two possibilities for access to full text of articles are illustrated. In the case of 'Publisher A', the service provides a gateway to the publisher's proprietary server for full text delivery. 'Publisher B' has opted to have their full text service hosted by the Agent on the Agent's server.

Next steps

This, then, is the model in outline at this stage. Clearly the project will develop rapidly once the Managing Agent is in place. There will be a further announcement with full contact details in *Serials* later this year.

Several UK-based publishers have expressed interest in the project to date. There will be a Publishers' Forum on NESLI on 20 April, at which the Managing Agent will present the scheme in full, and answer publishers' questions about the project. This forum is organised on behalf of JISC by ALPSP and UKSG.

Interested publishers should contact Eileen Storrie on 01865 858799; e-mail alpsp@storrie.demon.co.uk

