Minimizing disruption during journal transitions

An update on the TRANSFER Code

James Phillpotts (Oxford University Press)
UKSG Conference, March 2012
Session overview

• A bit of context
• About TRANSFER
• Does it work?
• Putting it into practice
• Looking ahead to the future

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Bright hopes & unintended consequences

- A large number of journals transition to new publishers each year
- Why does this happen?
  - Often following a decision by a society to switch from one publishing partner to another or cease in-house publication
  - Specialist publishing expertise
  - Improved electronic publication
  - Wider content reach
  - Strategic goals
  - Journal development

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Bright hopes & unintended consequences

- Unpleasant surprises

Where’s the journal I paid for?

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Bright hopes & unintended consequences

Disappearing backfiles
Delayed access
Interrupted access
Wrangling over entitlements
Extra admin
Changed procedures

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The ‘vulnerability’ of access to e-resources

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Feedback from customers...

Anecdotally librarians have drawn attention to the difficulties and frustrations they face with journal transitions

... sometimes very publicly on the listservs!

An ICOLC/TRANSFER survey in May 2011 sought to analyze these concerns further
Feedback from customers...

May 2011 ICOLC/TRANSFER survey of librarians*

*164 respondents:
65% North America, 14% Europe, 14.5% Asia-Pacific

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May 2011 ICOLC/TRANSFER survey of librarians*

**SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION**

39.7% have often experienced problems

**MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM AREAS**

- Access to current content
- Time spent on amending records

*164 respondents:

65% North America, 14% Europe, 14.5% Asia-Pacific

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...and from providers too

Publishers have also reported problems with the transition process

(Quite apart from the attendant risks of disgruntled customers, bad press, and the possibility of cancellation!)

A TRANSFER survey in June 2011 revealed a number of issues
...and from providers too

June 2011 TRANSFER survey of publishers*

TRANSFERRING SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

- 71% have often experienced problems

RECEIVING SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

- 80% have often experienced problems

*In both ‘transferring’ and ‘receiving’ roles. 151 respondents: 34 commercial, 16 society, 8 non-profit, 7 university press

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...and from providers too

June 2011 TRANSFER survey of publishers*

60% had no central coordinator

many unsure of communications to key third-parties

*In both ‘transferring’ and ‘receiving’ roles. 151 respondents: 34 commercial, 16 society, 8 non-profit, 7 university press
...and from providers too

June 2011 TRANSFER survey of publishers*

55% grace access for 1 month or more

45% do not or were unsure

*In both ‘transferring’ and ‘receiving’ roles. 151 respondents:
34 commercial, 16 society, 8 non-profit, 7 university press
What is TRANSFER?

- Established 2006
- Voluntary ‘best practice’ Code
- Alerting service – over 400 registered recipients
- Programme of presentation to different constituencies
- Championed by a working group (8 publishers, 5 librarians, and 6 others)

www.uksg.org/transfer

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Publishers endorsing TRANSFER

36 publishers

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Publishers endorsing TRANSFER

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The Transfer Code of Practice

- Currently in Version 2.0 (September 2008)
- Six main areas:
  - Access to the transferred title
  - Provisions around digital content files
  - Subscription lists
  - Journal homepages
  - DOI name ownership
  - Communication

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Does it work?

• Endorsing publishers agree to abide by the terms of the TRANSFER Code of Practice where commercially possible

Remember: endorsement is entirely voluntary

• Librarians and societies are requesting compliance

• Other initiatives have cited and recommended

• A useful framework for internal procedures and encouraging ‘self regulation’ by publishers

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Does it work?

**BUT** we have to avoid anticompetitive practices ...

... and an informal poll alerted us to several issues
(some involving TRANSFER-compliant publishers)
Putting it all together

• Practical uses for TRANSFER
  » What can librarians do with TRANSFER?

  – Encourage publishers to endorse TRANSFER (if they don’t already)
  – Subscribe to the TRANSFER notification list (Details at www.uksg.org/transfer)
  – Use TRANSFER notifications in your e-resource work
Alerting service

- Basic, but effective
- Key information on transitioning titles from publishers
- Named contacts, wherever possible
- Email alerts generated and sent to subscribing recipients
- Does not solve problems ...

... but gives a good ‘heads-up’!

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Alerting service

- Alerts intended for use by librarians
- Email alerts give effective transfer dates
- They can easily be saved and flagged
- Information to update holdings and catalog links
- Contacts provided for further information
Current developments

Our work here is not done!

- Educate – librarians
- Update – publishers
- Improve – societies

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Spreading the word

- Only effective when known and understood by stakeholders
- Different stakeholders = different concerns
- Working with organizations to promote TRANSFER
- Developing guides for librarians, publishers and societies
Who needs to know what?

Publishers

• Impact on librarians – steps to mitigate
• Central coordination
• Communication
• Endorse TRANSFER

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Who needs to know what?

Societies

- As for publishers
- Consistent contracts
- Support TRANSFER

self-published or not

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Who needs to know what?

Librarians

- Complex data
- Explanation of the process
  - Why are some mid-year?
  - Why is there often little notice?
  - Where do I look for information?
Information for librarians

• **Complex data** needs to be transferred between publishers
  – Also from societies, subscription agents, content aggregators and other third-parties
  – Systems rarely fully compatible
  – Requires data to be extracted, analysed, formatted and reloaded
  – Takes time to get this right and ensure correct data maintained going forward

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Information for librarians

• **Why are some mid-year?**
  - Society decision cycles/timeframes
  - Titles on academic years
  - Inadequate timescales to avoid

• **Why is there often little notice?**
  - Society decision cycles/timeframes
  - Contractual delays
Information for librarians

- Where do I look for information?
  - TRANSFER notifications
  - Database on TRANSFER website
  - Endorsing publisher contact on TRANSFER website

Publishers must communicate effectively!

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Updated alerting service

- Alerting service was basic and not very scalable
- Updated to **Enhanced Transfer Alerting Service** (ETAS)
  - Improved information in alerts
  - Underpinned by a searchable database
  - Hosted by MIMAS as part of the JUSP
  - Continuing review and improvement

**ETAS is now live!**
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ETAS – search results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search for pediatric returned 1 result(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Receiving Publisher
- **Name**: Biomed Central
- **Contact name**: Stefan Busch
- **Contact email**: stefan.busch@biomedcentral.com
- **Transfer compliant**: Yes

### Transferring Publisher
- **Name**: Hindawi
- **Contact name**: Mohamed Hamdy
- **Contact email**: mohamed.hamdy@hindawi.com
- **Transfer compliant**: No

### Journal
- **Title**: International journal of Pediatric Endocrinology
- **Society**: Pediatric Endocrine Society (PES)
- **Print ISSN**: 1687-9856
- **Online ISSN**: -
- **DOI**: -
- **Frequency**: Monthly

### Transfer details
- **URL**: http://www.ijpeonline.com/
- **Transfer date**: 2011-03-10
- **First vol issue date**: -
- **Special circumstances**: -

### Perpetual access
- **Digital preservation agreements**: LOCKSS
- **Perpetual access policies**: The journal’s back content is open access in its entirety and available at http://www.ijpeonline.com/
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ETAS – submission form

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Future improvements

Version 3.0 and beyond...?

**ACCESS**

- Further emphasize importance of perpetual access rights
- Informing aggregators, subscription agents and link resolvers
- Clear subscriber definitions for transfer
Future improvements

Version 3.0 and beyond...?

CONTENT & DATA

• Open Access content
• Content online ahead of print
• Access to usage data statistics
• Manuscript tracking data and pre-acceptance content

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Future improvements

Version 3.0 and beyond...?

**DISCOVERABILITY**

- Continuation in abstracting and indexing services
- Continued discoverability by search engines
- Redirecting social media sites and apps
Future improvements

Version 3.0 and beyond...?

COMMUNICATIONS

• Recipients of e-alerts
• Formalize use of ETAS
Future improvements

Version 3.0 and beyond...?

Can we tighten the wording of the Code?

How might we deal with issues of compliance?

Commercial sensibilities ...

... ‘community altruism’
Summary

• Journal transitions are problematic
  – for *publishers* and *librarians*
  – we have the surveys to prove it...

• **TRANSFER** is here to help
  – Code for *publishers*
  – alerts to keep *librarians* informed

• Work still going on
  – educate *publishers*, societies, *librarians*
  – updated alerting service (ETAS)
  – future improvements...

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Getting involved

Sign-up & contribute!

• Learn more about TRANSFER: www.uksg.org/transfer
• Sign-up for the alerting service
• Get in touch with the TRANSFER team
  – Alison Mitchell (NATURE PUBLISHING GROUP), co-chair
  – Elizabeth Winter (GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY), co-chair
    – speak to me at UKSG or email (james.phillpotts@oup.com)
• And if you represent a publisher not yet signed-up …
  … talk to us about endorsing the TRANSFER Code!

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Thank you for your interest and for helping us to help you!

Questions?

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