Intermediaries and their services

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Things to cover...

- Traditional Role of the Intermediary
- Specialist suppliers
- Electronic journals
- Aggregators
- Intermediary book suppliers
- Authentication
- Knowledge Bases
- Jisc Collections
- The future
- Summary
Traditional Role of the Intermediary

Subscription Agent - The original intermediaries

• Admin services for publishers and libraries
• Consolidated orders, invoicing, payments
• Business model based on commission from publishers and (sometimes offering) discounts to libraries relating to volume/value.
• Administration for both parties built out of economies of scale
Fewer companies in this space

There are a limited number of companies in this space

General Suppliers: Swets, EBSCO, Prenax, LM Information

- Low margin business
- Managing the long tail of journal subscriptions from 1000s of smaller publishers
- High overheads (mainly publisher and customer relations). Not helped by low interest rates on cash
- Many publishers would like to deal with institutions direct
- Gradual decline in market size

There are some specialists suppliers offering a focussed service
Specialists

Some subject areas have specialist suppliers

• Most common in Law, Accountancy and Business
• These often offer a full service
  • Books, Loose leafs, law reports and Journal subscriptions
  • Notification services of new editions of books
  • Central London 2 hour delivery service
  • Often provide a service to libraries and others (in Law they might also offer a direct service to barristers)
• There is still a lot of paper resources out there!
Electronic journals

- New services had to be developed when Electronic Journals first arrived to provide
  - online purchasing or e-procurement
  - online access to subscribed-to journal content through a single interface
- Some Agents failed to deliver these new services and either were sold or merged
- At the same time a whole new breed of intermediaries was born..
With Electronic Journals bigger publishers tended to build their own platform, but many looked to place their electronic journals in a shared platform

• Highwire
• Ingenta

These provided some advantages to the librarian – one place to go/interface to learn and one admin tool. There were/are also some dis-advantages...
Aggregators

- ProQuest, EBSCO, Cengage / Gale
- Subject specialists like Ovid

What do they do - Transform published e-content from various sources to create a new product / dataset available via a single platform

What are the attractions of using aggregators?
- Simplifies purchasing and access admin
- Provides added value
- A more affordable alternative to e-journals (but often with an embargo)
- Subject focussed
- Broadens the market
Intermediary book suppliers

» Book suppliers (Dawsons, Coutts etc.)
  › Offer online order systems
  › Book servicing
  › Marc records
  › Out of print books
  › E-book platforms
It all started out with giving out user names and passwords and then IP Access. Then various other options – all provided by intermediaries..

- Eduserv Athens
- Federated Access Management – local implementation and outsourced
- OCLC’s Ezproxy
Other intermediary services

- Discovery
  - Summon, EDS, Primo etc..
- Analytical tools and services
- Usage statistics
- Link resolvers
- Negotiation and licensing
- Marketing and promotional services for publishers
Hang on....!

- Aren’t intermediaries meant to make it easier!
- So many different places to go, resources to manage, links to be maintained, statistics to gather, access rights, how to access, costs, subscription dates
- Wouldn’t it be great to keep this all in one place (like a big digital filing cabinet)
• Our friendly intermediaries thought so too – so they invented the Knowledge Base

• There are many versions of the Knowledge base, including the Jisc Collections version, KB+

• KB+ is more then just an online service. The data that is collected is made available to other vendors and librarians to populate their own systems

• Working in association with GOKb to provide a freely available knowledge base of data that describes electronic journals and books offered by academic publishers.
Is Jisc Collections an intermediary?

- Analytical tools and services (usage data etc..)
  - JUSP
  - KB+
- Negotiation and licensing
- Online order
- Subscription management
- APC management
- Platforms for Historic Texts, Journals and Media
What is the future?

- Many of the services are low margin = less companies doing more things
  - Swets went into administration in September 2014
  - ProQuest and EBSCO have both been very active in the acquisition of other companies (Netlibrary, EBL, ebrary, Dialog, Cinahl etc.)
- Just last year a major intermediary filed for Bankruptcy protection in the US.
- Likely to see new innovations – APC’s have been developing this year but the next innovation is analytics
Summing Up!

- If you are working in a library you may well be working with at least one of these intermediaries, if not several.
- They do provide a variety of useful services, and some of the services duplicate free services from organisations like Jisc.
- It can be quite a big job to change intermediary – especially if they provide a lot of services – approach with caution.
- Remember – they are there to work for you – that is what you pay them for...
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