

Contact Protocol for Institutions

If you are emailing an institution, this document will serve as your primary guide on how to do so. To start off, ensure that you have access to the following resources:

- The email address research@alexandracddavis.com
- The university contact sheet: *Collated University Contact Data*
- The Gov/NGO contact sheet: *Collated Gov/NGO Contact Sheet*

Before you send any emails, look through the existing emails that have already been sent to get a handle on some common exchanges/questions/patterns that cases have displayed thus far. Also, look through the various stock emails (at the bottom of this document) to familiarize yourself with how we can respond to different cases.

The Contact Process

For the purposes of this example, we'll refer to the process of contacting a single institution as a *case*. There are four main steps in the contact process:

1. Initial Contact
 2. Ongoing Liasing
 3. Data Acquisition
 4. Case Conclusion
-

1. Initial Contact

- In either of the contact sheets, find the case you need to contact. All cases with **Status = 1** need to be actioned. For example, McGill University - identify the case in the contact sheet, and find the contact info:

Collated University Contact Data

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Last edit was seconds ago

100% \$ % .0 .00 123 Verdana 8 B I A

A	B	C	D	E	F
Category	Institution Name	Name of Contact	Position	Contact Info	Status
I	University of Toronto	General contact	N/A	libraryhelp@utoronto.ca	1
I	The University of British Columbia	General contact	N/A	library.contact@ubc.ca	1
I	McGill University	General contact	N/A	schulich.library@mcmill.ca	1

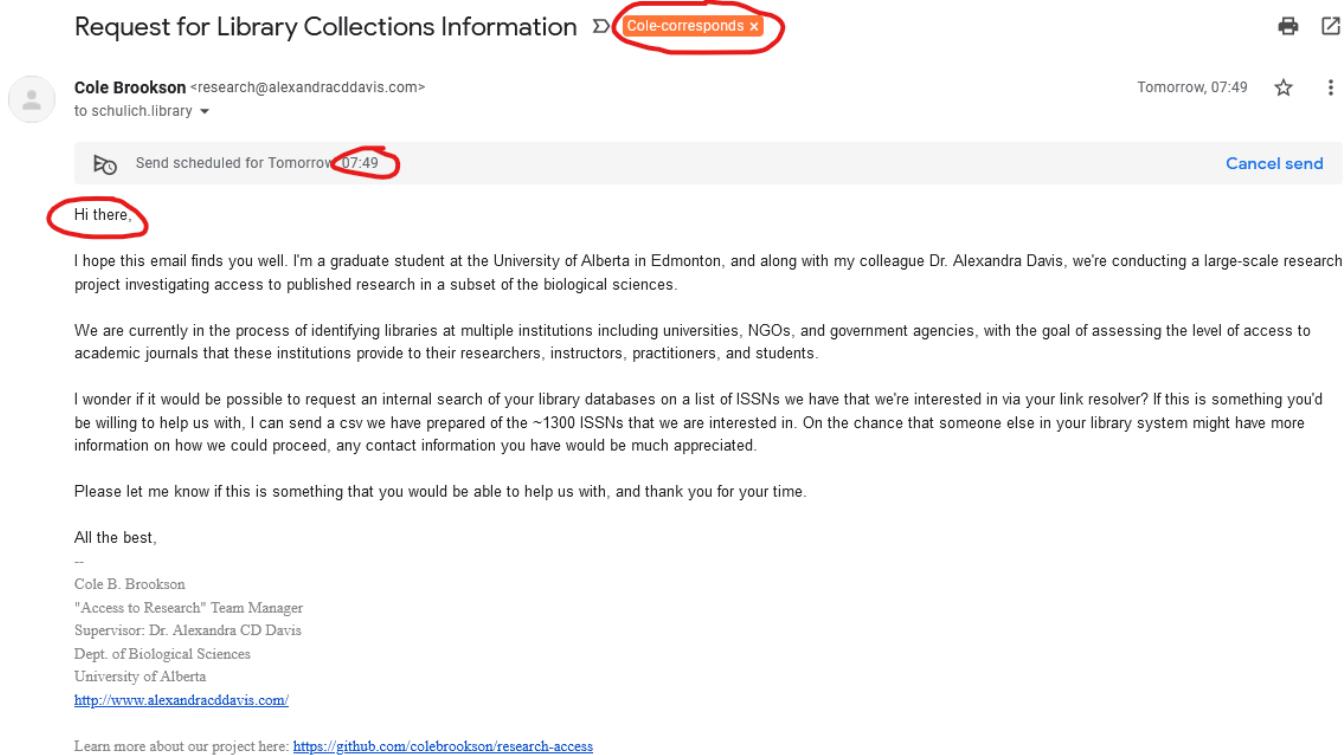
- Once you have found the contact info, navigate to the Gmail account and first check to ensure there hasn't already been any correspondence with this email (mistakes happen!)

- If there is no existing correspondance, begin a new message. Using the stock email for a first contact (found at the bottom of this doc), create a new message to this new contact and send out the email.

Important Notes

- Always address emails to general addresses (i.e. schulich.library@mcgill.ca) as "Hi there,"
- Always address emails to specific people by their last names (i.e. "Dear Dr. Soando,"), and remember to double check spelling!! and even if you have reason to believe they're not a Doctorate, address them as Dr. - it's gender neutral and doesn't assume a position lower than that they might have. They'll correct you if they would prefer; most people will just ask to be called by their first names. If they do, refer to them how they ask to be referred to

Request for Library Collections Information ➔ Cole-corresponds x

A screenshot of an email interface. At the top, it says "Request for Library Collections Information" and "Cole-corresponds x". Below that is the recipient information: "Cole Brookson <research@alexandracddavis.com>" and "to schulich.library". To the right are icons for printing, saving, and more. The main body of the email starts with "Hi there,". The entire email body is circled in red. Below the email body, it says "I hope this email finds you well. I'm a graduate student at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and along with my colleague Dr. Alexandra Davis, we're conducting a large-scale research project investigating access to published research in a subset of the biological sciences." It continues with "We are currently in the process of identifying libraries at multiple institutions including universities, NGOs, and government agencies, with the goal of assessing the level of access to academic journals that these institutions provide to their researchers, instructors, practitioners, and students." Then it asks if an internal search of library databases is possible. It ends with "Please let me know if this is something that you would be able to help us with, and thank you for your time." Below the email body, it says "All the best," followed by a signature: "Cole B. Brookson, 'Access to Research' Team Manager, Supervisor: Dr. Alexandra CD Davis, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta, <http://www.alexandracddavis.com/>". At the bottom, it says "Learn more about our project here: <https://github.com/colebrookson/research-access>".

- Send emails in the MORNING always! If you are working at a different time, use the schedule send function via the "down" arrow beside the "Send" button, to schedule a time - **initial emails should always be sent on weekdays, and should be scheduled to go out at 7:49AM EST**
- Once the email is sent/scheduled, add a label with your name (as the **Cole-corresponds** example here)
- Change the contact sheet information with the relevant information:
 - The **Status** column should now read **6** which codes for "Waiting for Response"
 - Change the **Contacted?**, **Date Contacted** and **Contact Individual** columns to reflect the relevant information (note: contact individual is you)

First step done 😊

2. Ongoing Liasing

This tends to be the longest part of the process. Typically about 50% of institutions will respond promptly (w/in 3-5 business days).

If the given institution *does* respond, they will likely respond in one of three ways:

1. They will agree to provide some type of help and may ask a few follow-up questions
2. They will decline any help, usually citing some capacity shortages
3. They will suggest they have limited capacity to help, and will offer alternatives and/or ask for more details on what we need.

Here is how to respond to each:

1. Some Type of Help

An ideal form of response in this case looks like this:

Good Afternoon Mr. Brookson,

Thank you for reaching out to the US Geological Survey Library.

We would be happy to participate, depending on the level of information you are seeking and our ability to comply.

I've copied Tami Morse, our Cataloging Librarian, she can help with the technical aspects of mining our catalog.

In this case, our job is easy - simply respond in a timely fashion, clarifying what exactly we're looking for and attaching the list of ISSNs in the **.CSV** file.

Hi Holly & Tami,

Thanks so much for getting back to me! That would be amazing. So essentially all we really need in terms of information is, for each ISSN, a) whether or not you have access, b) ideally the time you have access to the journal from (e.g. 1993-Present) and that's pretty much it. Would that be possible?

I've attached the list of ISSNs we're interested in here. Please let me know if there is any other information I can provide that would be helpful!

Thanks again!

Cole

****Attached file****

2. Decline with no Help

Typically that type of email will look like the following:

Hi Mr. Brookson,

Unfortunately we do not have the staff nor resources to help you at this time.

All the best in your research project.

-Anita

Our goal now is not to make further asks that we are unlikely to be granted, but to find some way to get information from the institution. We want to offer two alternatives and hope they agree on the first but sometimes only will have the second:

1. They agree to send us a batch file of their entire holdings collection OR
2. They have a link (i.e. somewhere on their library website) that we can look through ourselves

So, a typical reply can look like this:

Hi Anita,

Thanks so much for getting back to us. Completely understandable re: resources/staff. I have one quick follow-up question for you.

I know you don't have the resources to help with the actual search, but I'm still wondering if it would be possible for us to get some data from your institution. One thing we've done with other institutions is they have just sent us a data dump of essentially their entire collection holdings information for us to sort through.

With regards to that, all we need is a list of all print/electronic periodical titles you have access to in full-text. We can search through that list programmatically to find the ISSNs we're interested in.

If that's not possible, I wonder if as a last resort, there is somewhere on your library website you could direct me to where we could manually search for each ISSN ourselves?

Thanks so much,
Cole

If they agree to sending us a batch file, that's great! We thank them profusely, and turn that data over to the folks doing data cleaning to be dealt with. If they decline the first option but do give us a link, same process, thank them and turn over the link.

3. Suggest they have limited capacity to help, and will offer alternatives

This is usually the longest type of exchange we can have with institutions. Some have gone as far as giving us temporary log-in information so we can go into their library websites and find the information ourselves. These emails are VERY variable, but they will often propose a solution similar to the one we actually want which is to send us all of their collections information.

Again, we want ideally for them to accept our list of ISSNs, and return data on their access. If that's not possible, then a full list of their holdings is the next best thing. The third option of them just sending us a website link to search through ourselves is the worst option, but better than nothing.

Recall that at every stage of this process, you need to be updating the status code in the Contact sheet

3. Data Acquisition

In the case that they agreed to give us data, either batch data or the ISSN-specific data, we need to deal with that once it comes into the email.

We first go to the **Collected Data** folder in the Google Drive, and enter the **data from institutions** subfolder. Next, go into the **raw** subfolder (all these data need to be cleaned before they can be used).

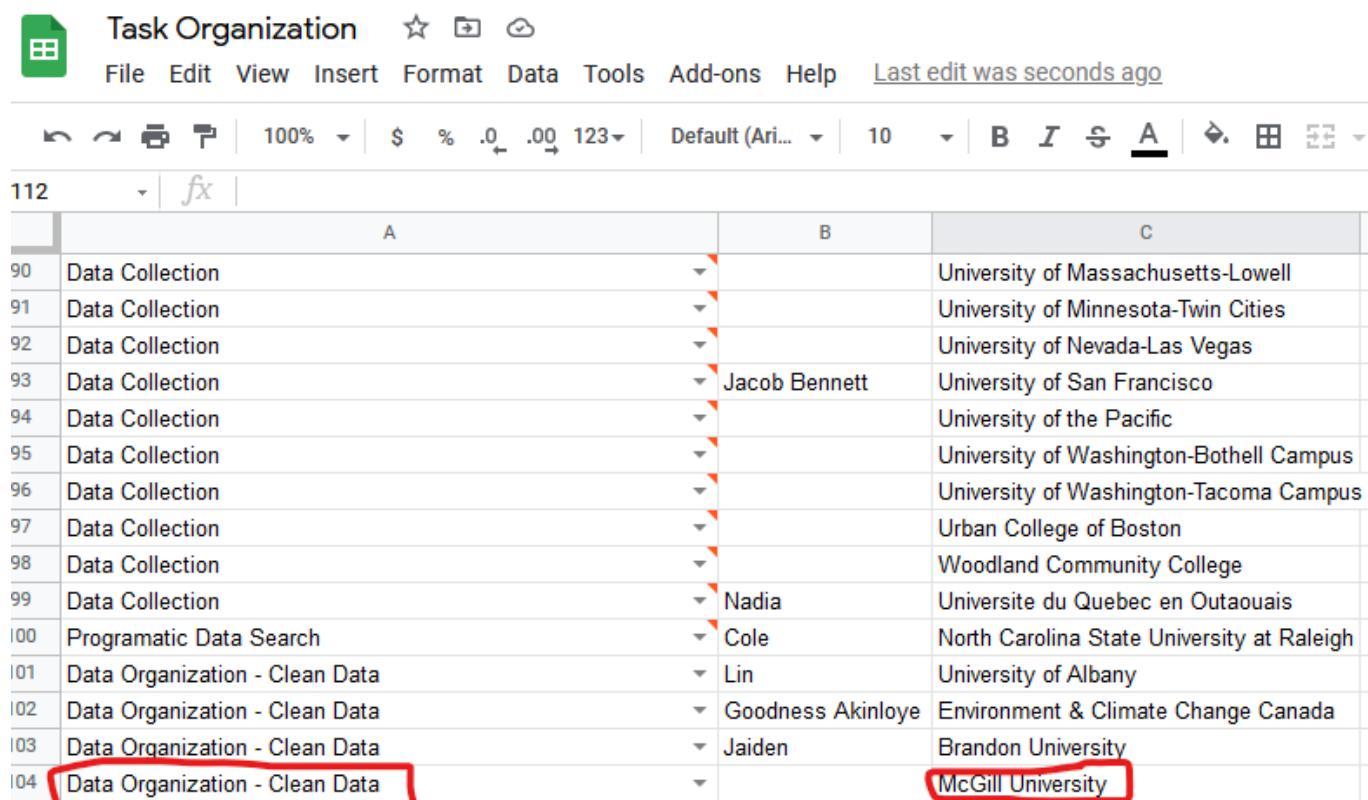
Since many institutions will send us multiple files, we always make a subfolder for the institution at hand. Keeping with our previous example, if we need to make a folder for McGill, we create a new folder called **McGill** (no spaces in any folder names!), and upload the data from Gmail to this folder.

As always, update the institution status at this point

4. Case Conclusion

Now, we've finished all our liaising with the institution, and we've changed the status in the google sheet.

Importantly, we have to make a new task in the **Task Organization** spreadsheet. To do this, simply add to the **Task** column and the **Institution (if applicable)** columns.



	A	B	C
90	Data Collection		University of Massachusetts-Lowell
91	Data Collection		University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
92	Data Collection		University of Nevada-Las Vegas
93	Data Collection	Jacob Bennett	University of San Francisco
94	Data Collection		University of the Pacific
95	Data Collection		University of Washington-Bothell Campus
96	Data Collection		University of Washington-Tacoma Campus
97	Data Collection		Urban College of Boston
98	Data Collection		Woodland Community College
99	Data Collection	Nadia	Universite du Quebec en Outaouais
100	Programmatic Data Search	Cole	North Carolina State University at Raleigh
101	Data Organization - Clean Data	Lin	University of Albany
102	Data Organization - Clean Data	Goodness Akinloye	Environment & Climate Change Canada
103	Data Organization - Clean Data	Jaiden	Brandon University
104	Data Organization - Clean Data		McGill University

Done! We've concluded the case! 😊

Troubleshooting

You will 100% encounter a situation where a contact says something or asks a question and you don't know how to respond. **DO NOT PANIC** 😊

Steps to troubleshoot:

1. *Read through previous exchanges.* It's possible someone has already posed that problem and an answer has been given.
2. *Ask in the **library-contact** channel.* No harm in asking! If someone else has fielded and answered a similar question they can chime in. If no one has yet, Cole will provide the information needed to address the issue.

Note it's always better to wait a few days to answer the email after clarifying what the response should be, then to respond quickly and then have to backtrack.

Email Organization

Please check the slack channel "library-contact" for login information for the share email account

In order to keep things organized in the shared email account we will be using specific labels and colours to denote individuals.

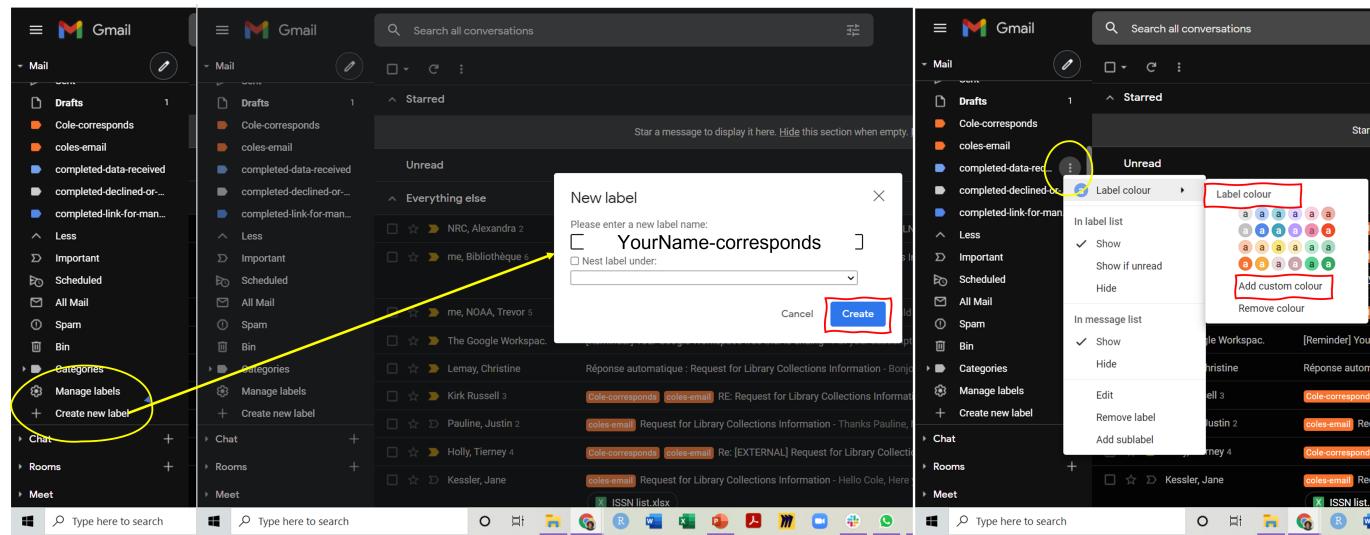
Labels are organized alphabetically on the side panel in the email browser, and also appear in the list of emails.

The screenshot shows a Gmail inbox with the following details:

- Left Sidebar (Labels):** Shows a list of labels: **Inbox**, **Starred**, **Snoozed**, **Sent**, **Drafts** (highlighted with a yellow circle), **Unread**, **Everything else**, and **More** (highlighted with a red box).
- Search Bar:** "Search all conversations".
- Header Buttons:** Active, Help, Settings, More, Google icon.
- Inbox Content:** A message from "NRC, Alexandra" with labels **Cole-corresponds** and **coles-email**. Another message from "me, Bibliothèque" with labels **Cole-corresponds** and **completed-data-received**.
- Message Preview:** "Request for Library Collections Information - Hi Lauren, Thanks so much for all t..."
- Bottom Status Bar:** Type here to search, taskbar icons, and system status (11:16 AM, 8/20/2021).

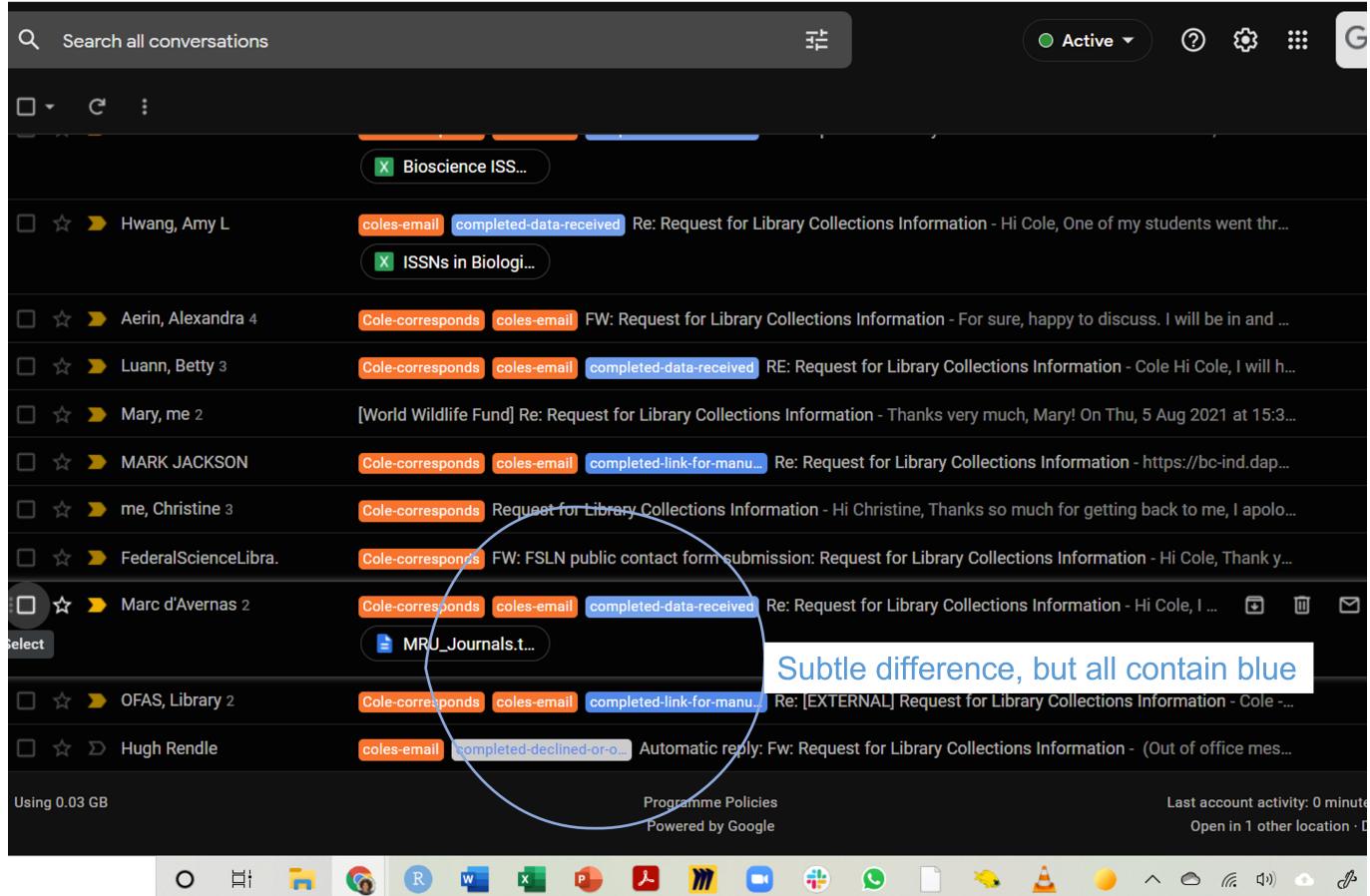
To create a new label:

1. Click the "More" tab
2. Scroll down and click "Create new label"
3. Enter "yourname-corresponds" into the type box and hit create
4. Designate your individual color
 - o Click on the three dots
 - o Hover over "Label Colour"
 - o Pick your colour!



Please try and choose a distinct colour from the ones in use. You can even create your own label colour.

Please note that Cole is associated with the colour orange, and any cases that are completed have some blue in the label



The Stock Emails

Initial Email

- Change name as needed - use "Hi there" for general emails (i.e. no specific person)

Subject: Request for Library Collections Information

Dear Dr. Soandso/Hi there,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm a graduate student at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and along with my colleague Dr. Alexandra Davis, we're conducting a large-scale research project investigating access to published research in a subset of the biological sciences.

We are currently in the process of identifying libraries at multiple institutions including universities, NGOs, and government agencies, with the goal of assessing the level of access to academic journals that these institutions provide to their researchers, instructors, practitioners, and students.

I wonder if it would be possible to request an internal search of your library databases on a list of ISSNs we have that we're interested in via your link resolver? If this is something you'd be willing to help us with, I can send a csv we have prepared of the ~1300 ISSNs that we are interested in. On the chance that

someone else in your library system might have more information on how we could proceed, any contact information you have would be much appreciated.

Please let me know if this is something that you would be able to help us with, and thank you for your time.

All the best,

Response to Clear Offer for Help

Example Helpful Response from case:

Good Afternoon Mr. Brookson,

Thank you for reaching out to the US Geological Survey Library.

We would be happy to participate, depending on the level of information you are seeking and our ability to comply.

I've copied Tami Morse, our Cataloging Librarian, she can help with the technical aspects of mining our catalog.

Thank you again,

Holly

Holly N Nickle

Acting Library Director & Chief, Public Services

U.S. Geological Survey Libraries Program

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive | Reston, VA 20192 USA

hnickle@usgs.gov | Voice: 703.648.6207

Our Response:

Hi Holly & Tami,

Thanks so much for getting back to me! That would be amazing. So essentially all we really need in terms of information is, for each ISSN in our list, a) whether or not you have access, b) ideally the time you have access to the journal from (e.g. 1993-Present) and that's pretty much it. Would that be possible?

I've attached the list of ISSNs we're interested in here. Please let me know if there is any other information I can provide that would be helpful!

Thanks again!

Cole

Attach file of ISSNs

Response to Decline

Example declination:

Hi Mr. Brookson,

Unfortunately we do not have the staff nor resources to help you at this time.

All the best in your research project.

-Anita

Our response:

Hi Anita,

Thanks so much for getting back to us. Completely understandable re: resources/staff. I have one quick follow-up question for you.

I know you don't have the resources to help with the actual search, but I'm still wondering if it would be possible for us to get some data from your institution. One thing we've done with other institutions is they have just sent us a data dump of essentially their entire collection holdings information for us to sort through.

With regards to that, all we need is a list of all print/electronic periodical titles you have access to in full-text. We can search through that list programmatically to find the ISSNs we're interested in.

If that's not possible, I wonder if as a last resort, there is somewhere on your library website you could direct me to where we could manually search for each ISSN ourselves?

Thanks so much,

Cole