# Ensuring Continuity of Access: Best Practices in Digital Preservation and Content Transfer

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# Ensuring Continuity of Access: Best Practices in Digital Preservation and Content Transfer

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**ABSTRACT**

Accessing and preserving e-journals is critical for the scholarly record. Recording e-journal entitlements and determining e-journal preservation statuses help to maintain access for continued research. Emily Elliott introduced EDINA's Entitlement Registry, a service designed to keep track of the e-journal titles and their holdings to which a library is entitled.

## Wrangling e-journal records: building an entitlement registry

Emily Elliott, project manager at EDINA, an innovation and technology wing of the University of Edinburgh, introduced EDINA's Entitlement Registry service to the audience. Her presentation covered the inception of the service, the beta testing feedback, and a demonstration of the Entitlements Registry.

### *EDINA*

EDINA is an entrepreneurial part of the University of Edinburgh, the sixth-oldest university in the English-speaking world.[1] EDINA has been around for over twenty years, and they specialize in developing and delivering digital products including large-scale online services, mobile apps, and digital tools for education. Their expertise includes geospatial and satellite data, computational learning, text and data mining, e-preservation, and machine learning. Some of their other services include: the Serials Union Catalogue (SUNCAT); the OpenURL Router, a middleware service that enabled libraries to register their link resolvers and configure OpenURL links; and Keepers Registry, which is now hosted by ISSN.

### *Entitlement registry*

Developed in partnership with the Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe (LOCKSS) program at Stanford University, the Entitlement Registry is a single place to manage entitlement data, save evidence, and compare library and publisher records for journals. Elliott highlighted the importance of this resource: before you can determine which titles are being saved by which institutions, you need to know to which titles you have access and for how long. The Entitlement Registry intends to allow librarians to do just that.

When building a new service, EDINA determines first if the user's needs are met by the potential product. They ran a survey in summer 2018 with thirty-five respondents in content acquisition, access, and e-resource management roles across the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada. The twenty-six question survey provided them insight into the state of e-resource management. This data informed the initial development process of the service. The answers to

one question in particular encapsulated the need for an entitlement registry: *how do you find the process of confirming or clarifying journal entitlements?* A simple question to ask with an equally simple answer. Twenty-seven out of thirty-one, or 87% of their respondents, said that the process is difficult or very difficult. No one said it was easy or very easy, which verified EDINA's thinking.

Throughout the course of their research phase, EDINA found a couple of nearly universal challenges regarding entitlements records. No common location exists to record this information. Many times, the records are held in spreadsheets or in disparate emails or even in the memories of key staff, which is obviously not conducive to long term storage. Variable quality to the records is another challenge. This is the case for both libraries and publishers and is particularly prevalent for records circa 2000, prior to the digitization of many records and information.

### The beta service

Seventeen institutions across North America and Europe took part in the beta cohort. EDINA received positive and useful feedback on the level of granularity, ease of use, and straightforward data display and functionality. The Entitlement Registry meets a need, replacing the haphazard folder of spreadsheets with a clear and intuitive interface.

Looking at screenshots of the beta service, the Entitlements Registry provided a high-level view of all the journal records stored for an institution. Along the top you find the list of uploaded e-journals on an institution's main screen. Columns include a title column, a record of the print, the e-ISSNs, the publisher, the start and end dates of the entitlement, source, and flags. "Source" describes who supplied the record. If a library uploads a record the source will say "institution" and if from a publisher, the source will indicate "publisher." Flags on the right explain the data. Flags indicate a single source for the uploaded record, gaps in entitlements, non-matching entitlements, or multiple publishers. A gap could illustrate a deliberate gap; for example, if the library decided not to subscribe to a journal in any particular year, or it may highlight missing information that requires investigation. "Non-matching entitlements" indicates a discrepancy between the institution and publisher records. The "multiple publishers" flag indicates that the title in question has been published by different publishers and may accordingly have terms or entitlements. A publisher card provides an at-a-glance view of the library's records and evidence of holdings with a specific publisher.

Looking more in-depth inside a journal record, you will find the entitlement information split between institutions and publishers. In addition to the start and end dates and publisher, there is a space for volume details and general notes. Each journal entry also includes bibliographic information and a timeline. The timeline is a pictorial representation of the table information just above it, illustrating the institution's expected entitlements in green bar and the publisher's records in a purple bar. Immediately, one can spot a gap or disagreement between the two. This could then be used as a starting point for discussion with the publisher.

Elliott highlighted the transfer functionality. Data on transferred titles is pulled directly from the Transfer Alerting Service Database automatically, saving institutions from manual processing.[2] On a journal record, a transfer appears as a dotted line on the pictorial timeline view, providing additional context on that graphical view.

The Entitlement Uploader assists with uploading files, filling in data based on whether you are uploading the library's or publisher's records. Despite some initial user reservations, receiving the records directly from the publisher worked well for the beta cohort. The Entitlement Registry expects the data to upload with specified columns in order to be able to process the file. Elliott said that EDINA hopes to make this more flexible, as they continue with their development phase. Once a user uploads a file, the file goes into a queue. The system will email the user when the import is complete.

The Entitlement Registry offers more functionality than the brief introduction presented. The Entitlement Registry offers additional functionality including:

- filters that can more efficiently help sort through the library's data;
- a document repository which collects and stores uploaded spreadsheets and evidence files;
- an evidence upload process, where PDFs of invoices are uploaded and linked to the publisher;
- a publisher card view, to see all evidence for a specific publisher at once; ability to export tables as XLSX, CSV, and ODS.

### *Next steps*

EDINA did not stop there. Currently, they are partnering with the Royal Danish Library to create new functions that will enhance the Entitlement Registry for all users. The Royal Danish Library heads up a project to create a LOCKSS-based e-preservation network for the whole of Denmark. EDINA works with them to manage their international records. Integrating the Entitlement Registry with LOCKSS will give the end user the ability to query a journal entitlement directly via an API. This seamless access for the end user is one of the most exciting pieces of the current development. Other projects include: functionality for consortia, including individual libraries part of multiple organizations; the creation of a system log, providing an audit trail for amendments; user tools to allow for more in-depth curation of entitlement records, such as editing and deleting individual records on the platform itself; and KBART file upload capabilities. The current project with the Royal Danish Library is in development now and will launch the service in August 2021, at which time anyone will be able to subscribe to the Entitlement Registry.

### Notes

1. "University of Edinburgh," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Edinburgh (accessed November 8, 2021).
2. The Transfer Alerting Services is a database of journals transfers hosted by the ISSN International Centre. For more information, see: https://journaltransfer.issn.org/ (accessed November 8, 2021).

### Disclosure statement

### Notes on contributors

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