Elsevier launches SciVerse, integrates ScienceDirect + Scopus + More

Martin Fenner, Gobbledygook

August 29, 2010

Elsevier on Saturday launched SciVerse, the new Elsevier platform that combines ScienceDirect (full-text journal articles) and Scopus (abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature). In 2011 SciTopics (research summaries) will also be integrated and outside developers will be able to build SciVerse applications (Elsevier and 3rd party tools that integrate with ScienceDirect and Scopus). Current users of Scopus and ScienceDirect can continue to use these services or access them from the SciVerse platform.

Both the ScienceDirect and Scopus service are not available this evening, put the new SciVerse functionality should be available in a few hours. As I had no access to SciVerse prior to the launch today, I will need a few days to have a closer look at both the integration of existing products, and the new features. But obviously missing from the announcement is 2collab, Elsevier's social bookmarking service that integrates with Scopus and ScienceDirect.

Reference managers a few years ago started to store the PDFs of fulltext articles associated with a citation. It is no surprise to see the same trend from developers of abstracts databases. The integration of Scopus with ScienceDirect almost looks like Elsevier's answer to PubMed/PubMed Central. The recently launched UK PubMed Central is doing a particularly nice job integrating abstracts and fulltext articles.

The most interesting aspect of SciVerse is the possibility for 3rd party developers to access the service via APIs and to develop both free and commercial applications. We will see whether SciVerse develops into an open platform that works with other publishers, funders and institutions, or whether SciVerse will become a very large data silo. Elsevier's Rafael Sidi writes that Open data and open APIs offer huge opportunities for research and innovation, and earlier this week Mendeley's Jason Hoyt wrote something similar. Data is also at the heart of the business models of many web-based companies – let's hope that these two interests don't collide.