

OpenURL Resolver Profile: Article Linker, from Serials Solutions

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Article Linker is an OpenURL resolver, presently in beta release, offered by Serials Solutions. This company, founded by a librarian for librarians, was founded in 2000; their primary service, until now, has been provision of ejournal management services to subscribing libraries. Building on the same profiles whereby those libraries manage their ejournals and have A-to-Z lists produced for them, Article Linker will provide links directly to the article level (when supported by the content provider), as well as links to online catalogs, ILL, and other extended services. Full release is scheduled for March 24, 2003 for version 0.8; version 1.0 is to be released in August, 2003.

System requirements and functionality

Article Linker is hosted on the servers at Serials Solutions in Seattle, WA; a local server is not an option. Maintenance of the library's profile is done via web browser access to the Serials Solutions Client Center; there is no hardware or software client to install locally. Once a library's profile is built, Article Linker will provide links to take library users directly from an abstract, index, or citation to the full-text of the article, wherever possible, or to the best URL possible if the content provider does not provide article-level links. This is a stand-alone product, not associated with any integrated library system vendor.

Services Provided

The primary Article Linker service is provision of context-sensitive links from abstracting and indexing databases to full-text content. Article Linker will work with any provider that can facilitate OpenURL linking. 28 citation database providers are on the current list of source databases. Serials Solutions tracks over 400 databases; Article Linker will provide links at the article level to over 184 publishers and over 170 aggregator databases. Article Linker will work with CrossRef's implementation of DOI; whether the library must maintain a subscription with CrossRef is currently being reviewed by CrossRef. CrossRef is considering allowing libraries to make use of DOI via OpenURL resolvers such as Article Linker without being a CrossRef member.

Article Linker will also provide links to extended services, such as online catalogs, interlibrary loan and other document delivery services, etc., that the library wants to include to assist their patrons in finding content. Article Linker should be able to work with any proxy server, just as their existing A-to-Z ejournal lists do.

Article Linker works with Innovative Interfaces catalogs in particular as a target, linking via ISSN. It will work with Innovative catalogs as a source only if the catalog has been made truly OpenURL-compliant, which probably means the library will have to have purchased WebBridge. Without that functionality, ISSN would again be probably the only piece of data to link to/from between the catalog and Article Linker.

Since this is an initial release of a new product, at this time the results page that is presented to the user is not customizable by the subscribing library; that enhancement will come with a future release. Branding the results page with the library's logo will be available with version 1.0 in August, 2003. An enhancement that would allow libraries to weight or rank the order in which results are presented to the user is scheduled to be part of version 2.0, to be released before the end of 2003.

Management reports on the library's profile are not available. Usage statistics are also not available, though the company is investigating this topic for a possible future enhancement.

Set up and Technical Support

For existing customers of Serials Solutions' ejournal management services, set up is primarily a matter of configuring the administrative modules of the library's database subscriptions to link to the OpenURL resolver at Serials Solutions. This is done by library staff, not by Serials Solutions; therefore how quickly the service is set up is entirely in the library's hands. 'Turning on' the service at Serials Solutions is a matter of changing a software setting once the library has notified them that the databases have been configured.

For libraries who do not already subscribe to Serials Solutions ejournal management services, set up would take considerably longer, as a profile must be built identifying the full-text content to which the library has subscribed. For some databases, this is a matter of simply 'turning on' that database in the Serials Solutions database list; however, for ejournal vendors for which the library does not subscribe to all offered titles, the process of identifying those titles can be time-consuming and labor-intensive. This would however probably be the case with any OpenURL resolver and/or ejournal management service.

No training sessions are offered by Serials Solutions for setting up a library profile or configuring database administrative modules to link to the Article Linker service. Full instructions are given in the Serials Solutions Client Center website, and technical support is available via phone or email Monday - Friday, 8 am to 6 pm PST.

Pricing/Cost

Serials Solutions costs are based on the number of ejournals which they track for a subscribing library. The service is priced on an annual basis. Subscription to Article Linker includes A-to-Z lists, updated every other month (6 times during the year).

Under 10,000 ejournals	\$5,400
10,001 – 15,000	\$7,200
15,001 – 20,000	\$9,000
20,001 – 25,000	\$10,800
Over 25,000 ejournals	\$12,600

The above list prices do not include a 10% discount offered to all MOBIUS members; 10% discount for subscriptions of 2 or more years; and a 25% discount if an Article Linker subscription is placed prior to July 31, 2003. Serials Solutions also offers MARC records for the ejournals they track for a subscribing library; however, this is priced separately from the core A-to-Z list service and Article Linker, and is not include here.

Summary

As a completely hosted service, the primary advantage of Article Linker may be the ease of establishing and maintaining the service. The main disadvantage at this point is that this is a brand-new product; it does not have all the bells and whistles of other OpenURL resolvers in terms of customization of interface and other features.

Data sources:

<http://www.serialssolutions.com/articlelinker.asp>

Phone call with Vicky Robl, Senior Account Executive, 2/13/03, and subsequent emailed information