Cooperative Open Access Journal Project

Planning Group Report, April 30, 2010

Increasing the coverage of e-serial titles in the CONSER database has been a topic of many CONSER meetings through the years and was a recommended outcome of the 2004 CONSER Summit. In April 2010, the CONSER Coordinator established the CONSER Open Access Planning Group to develop a rationale and plan for the cataloging of titles listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

BACKGROUND

Historically, the scope of the CONSER database has consisted of the collective collection development decisions of the individual libraries contributing to the database. It is a tenet of membership that each library has particular collection strengths that contribute to the overall goal of universal serial bibliography. CONSER's approach to the coverage of e-serials has followed that same principle (i.e., there has been no overall effort to coordinate coverage of any particular package or service because one assumes that at least one CONSER library will subscribe to every title in a particular package).

With increasingly constrained budgets, many academic libraries are undergoing serious journal review and cancellation projects. Universities are increasingly providing campus-based open-access publishing funds and other support for open-access initiatives.[i] In this environment, open access journals take on an increasing importance. However, open access journals are 'under the radar' of most library processes (as they typically aren't selected/ordered in the same way as commercially published journals) and as such are often not represented (or represented in an ad hoc fashion) in library catalogs. CONSER must start planning now for an environment where academic libraries rely on an increasing amount of open access content. If the CONSER database is going to remain a viable and useful product, it must include important open access journals.

PROJECT SCOPE AND RELATED ISSUES

The first service to be covered by this project will be the Directory of Open Access Journals <http://www.doaj.org>. DOAJ is a good candidate for several reasons:

Selection criteria – To be listed in DOAJ, a journal must meet the following criteria:
- It is a scientific or scholarly periodical that publishes full-text research or review papers
- The journal's target audience is primarily researchers
- Quality control on submitted papers is exercised through an editor, editorial board and/or a peer-review system
- The journal must have an ISSN

- All content is open access without delay (i.e., no embargo period)

Collection size and scope – DOAJ is a reasonable size and scope for CONSER to consider for cooperative cataloging:
- The collection is multidisciplinary so every CONSER library will have a vested interest in contributing to the cataloging
- Currently the collection consists of 4,926 titles. Of these, 3,841 (78%) already have CONSER-authenticated records for either online or print format.
- Collection growth is reasonable. In 2009, 780 titles were added to the collection. This is just under 3% of the total of new CONSER authentications for FY 2009 so the amount of ongoing work is manageable if the distribution of the work among CONSER libraries is well organized and libraries commit to the project.

Collection use – DOAJ has a reputation as a quality collection and two CONSER members report extensive use. The University of Washington reports that in the first quarter of 2010, their link resolver provided 5,346 links to DOAJ content and 2,304 of those links were clicked through by users. Indiana University reports similar usage. Comprehensive inclusion of DOAJ titles in library catalogs would only increase usage.

Cataloging-related issues – As previously mentioned, nearly 80% of the collection already has CONSER records and collection growth is manageable. In addition:
- New title identification is straightforward. Serials Solutions receives title metadata from DOAJ but uses CONSER records as their primary source for full-level records. Serials Solutions has already made a commitment to provide CONSER with lists of titles lacking CONSER records.
- ISSN assignments – Because of the ISSN requirement, all U.S. published DOAJ titles will already have a CONSER record. In addition, those libraries with a subscription to the ISSN Portal will find ISSN records for foreign titles that can assist in the cataloging process.
- Much of the remaining 20% already has OCLC member copy. Due to machine loads from a few OCLC member libraries, many of the outstanding titles will only require copy (not original) cataloging.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

- Enables CONSER to systematically provide access to a specific group of e-serial titles, identified as high priority and important to all. Subscribers to the CONSER MDS-file include companies that distribute records to hundreds of libraries (including many CONSER libraries). ERAMS will have a better product to distribute and subscribing libraries provide more and better data to their users.
- In following a cooperative model, CONSER decreases duplicative cataloging efforts. This will allow libraries with certain language or subject expertise to focus on the cataloging of those materials for which they have the most expertise.
- Ensures that accurate ISSN data is distributed in CONSER records (particularly important for services and libraries that rely on the presence of accurate ISSN for

record matching and distribution). This also has the potential to make our catalogs more consistently accessible to federated search, web browsers, and link resolvers.

- Provides our users with more open access content and supports the movement in scholarship and universities towards open access content.
- Provides a consistent set of titles and metadata across different user information environments (e.g., library catalog, link resolver, WorldCat, WorldCat Local).

PROJECT PROCEDURES

The procedures outlined below represent one possible approach to the project, based on preliminary discussion within the Planning Group.

One or more individuals will be appointed to coordinate the project. Initial planning and testing of procedures will take place in May and June, with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2010.

Participation in the project

We hope that most CONSER libraries will participate in the project, and its success will depend to a large extent on the level of participation we can achieve. However, we recognize that some member libraries may not be able to commit to cataloging open-access titles out of scope for their institution.

Participating libraries will be asked to estimate the number of DOAJ titles they will be able to catalog during the first twelve months of the project. Preliminary analysis suggests that if most CONSER libraries participate, and if they catalog on average a number of DOAJ titles corresponding to 3% of their total FY2009 new CONSER authentications, we would be cataloging DOAJ titles at about the same rate that new titles without CONSER records are being added to the database. If participants catalog on average a number corresponding to 5% of their total FY2009 new CONSER authentications, the existing backlog would be fully cataloged in a year (not including any new additions during that year). Many CONSER libraries have already been cataloging DOAJ titles, so for them this would not necessarily be additional work.

All participating libraries will be asked to identify the languages they can catalog as part of this project. They can respond generally (all European and East Asian languages) or with a list of specific languages.

Specialized libraries participating in the project will be asked to identify the general subject areas to which they wish to limit their cataloging (e.g. medicine, law, theology, agriculture/natural resources). We hope that general libraries participating in the project will be willing to catalog DOAJ titles in all subject areas.

Distribution of titles

The initial distribution of titles for cataloging will be based on a list obtained from Serials Solutions that will include all titles that did not have identified corresponding electronic, print or microform CONSER records as of a specific date before the start of the project (as of Apr. 14, 2010, the total number was 1085). Participants will be assigned a number of titles from this list corresponding approximately to their estimated twelve-month production. Titles will be distributed in Excel spreadsheets copied from the complete list.

The coordinators will use the uncontrolled subject keywords provided to Serials Solutions by DOAJ to produce lists of titles that can be assigned to specialized libraries participating in the project. Titles on these subjects in languages that these libraries cannot work with will be excluded from these lists.

The coordinators will divide the remaining titles by language, and non-English titles will be distributed to participants based on the participating libraries' language expertise.

If a significant number of titles on the initial list remain unassigned after all participants have been given a number of titles corresponding approximately to their estimated twelve-month production, the coordinators will ask participants to consider raising their target numbers and will attempt to recruit additional participants.

Project management

Since the list from Serials Solutions will not indicate whether non-CONSER copy exists in OCLC for the titles included, each participant will find that its list of titles to catalog includes both original cataloging and copy cataloging. Each library can decide how to prioritize cataloging within its own list of titles.

Participants may also encounter titles where CONSER copy exists but has not yet been identified by Serials Solutions, or was authenticated after the date the list was produced. Existing CONSER electronic records may be referred to the project coordinators, who will notify Serials Solutions. If existing CONSER print or microform records are found, they may also be referred to the coordinators; participants are not expected to authenticate a separate CONSER electronic record, although they may do so if they wish and then refer that record to the coordinators instead.

Individual titles that participants find they cannot catalog for any reason (such as unexpected language or subject difficulties) can be referred to the coordinators for reassignment. Titles assigned to libraries that volunteer but later find they are not able to participate will be reassigned.

Participants will send monthly reports to the coordinators indicating which titles from their list they have cataloged. These reports will include the Serials Solutions ID number, title and ISSN of the resource as given in the original list, and the LCCN and OCLC number of the newly created record. The coordinators will forward this information to Serials Solutions to ensure that newly created CONSER records are not missed.

The coordinators will keep statistics on the progress of the project and report to CONSER after three and six months. Based on these statistics they will assess the sustainability of the project and the prospects of completing the cataloging of all titles on the initial list within one or two years. They will also consider when it would be appropriate to request an updated list from Serials Solutions (excluding newly cataloged titles, and including titles without CONSER records added to DOAJ since the beginning of the project) and redistribute all titles that still need CONSER cataloging.

APPENDICES

These appendices are included to record for future reference the details of possible procedures discussed by the Planning Group as they prepared this report.

APPENDIX A: Division of titles by language

The list received from Serials Solutions will have one or more languages listed for each title. The coordinators will use this information to group titles by language.

Titles for which English is not the first language listed will be grouped by the first language listed. Multi-language titles for which English is the first language listed will be grouped according to the second language listed.

Groups of titles in languages or language groups other than English will be assigned to participants based on their language expertise. Titles in some more common languages may be need to be divided by initial letter of the alphabet and assigned to more than one participant.

The remaining English-only titles (expected to be about half of the total list) will be divided by initial letter of the alphabet, and distributed to participants at random.

APPENDIX B: Spreadsheet management

Initial setup:

1. Add columns for OCLC #, LCCN, Library.
2. Identify subject specific titles by filtering for keywords and make those assignments (filling in Library column)

3. Sort by Library and Language and Title (to get already assigned titles to the bottom of the list and grouping the remaining titles by language and alphabetically by title)
4. Make remaining assignments and fill in Library column. Keep a copy of this file as the original master list.
5. Sort by Library and create separate spreadsheet for each library.
6. Distribute these to library.

Monthly:

1. Concatenate all the monthly returns.
2. Send this file to Serials Solutions.
3. Merge this file with a copy of the master list (so that at any particular time we can see what work has been done; this basically will reflect current status of the project). We can kept separate files for each month if we want to identify progress.

As needed:

Adjust spreadsheets based on feedback from libraries.

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i http://www.arl.org/sparc/openaccess/funds/index.shtml