Licence management for electronic resources

Judith Gust

Kia ora tatou.

For those who don't know me, my name is Judith Gust and I'm part of the Collections Team.

Following the Library Transformation Project, the only real change that happened for me was that my job title changed from 'Resources Librarian' to 'Resources & Licensing Librarian'. This is a subtle but important change, as it acknowledges one of the main functions of my role, which is what I want to talk about today. It's a piece of work which may not sound the most exciting, but it's a very necessary task and ties in with other work that we do around copyright compliance and making sure that we're working with our resources in the right way. Much of the work I do is 'invisible' in the sense that it sits in the background and often doesn't come to light until something goes wrong. In this case, you could say that it's 'hiding in plain sight'; the license information is available, but most people aren't aware it's there, or how to access it.

For many of the electronic databases and e-journal packages that AUT Library subscribes to, we are required to sign a formal license agreement, which confirms the conditions on which our staff, faculty and students can access and use the resource. My role is to administer the signing of these licenses and to record the details in our library management system, Sierra.

This happens in the ERM or Electronic Resources Module of Sierra.

The main records I create and use in the Sierra ERM are:

- ***Resource records***

- ***License records***

The resource records contain a description of the database, e-journal package or other type of resource, plus a number of other fields which we can use for our own internal purposes.

A Resource record, like a bibliographic record, is a 'parent' record to which other types of records are attached or related. *License records* are directly attached to the Resource record. A License record cannot exist independently.

Order records are 'soft linked' to the Resource record. This is useful so that I can see all the information about a resource (subscription expiry dates, payment status, invoice details etc.), from one place.

Most Resource Records are displayed in the online Catalogue along with the associated License details.

So, how do you find the resource and license information in the Catalogue?

Click on the Catalogue tab on the library website homepage and enter a search term, e.g. ScienceDirect. You can refine by format from the results screen. 'Resource' is listed as one of the available formats to choose from.

If you click on 'Resource' (underneath the resource name), you should get taken to the resource URL, in this case, the ScienceDirect homepage.

If you click on the Resource name, you get taken to the public view of the Sierra resource record and any associated license. License details are on the bottom part of the screen.

Based on research done by Iris Zhu and Sally Pewhairangi, looking at how other Universities displayed this information, we made the decision to display certain fields from the license record, and made some changes to the standard license record display in Sierra. The fields chosen were the ones we felt were most relevant to AUT's users, and the sorts of things they may want to be able to do with our e-resources.

For each of the fields I've entered either 'Permitted', 'Prohibited' or 'To be confirmed' based on my reading of the full license agreement. Over the last 3 or so years I've read quite a lot of these documents so am getting used to the sort of wording they use, but, given that I'm not a lawyer, I don't pretend to have the definitive answer all the time around interpreting the different usage rights. So, where you see Permitted or Prohibited the license is pretty clear and unambiguous about this usage right. Where you see 'To be confirmed', either the license is silent (doesn't mention this at all), or the wording is unclear and I am not confident to make a definite call. In these cases, if someone wants to be able to do a particular thing with this resource, we would need to go back to the vendor and clarify the situation.

Thank you for listening, and I hope this has been of some interest and use. You are always free to contact me with any queries.