

Using the ISSN Portal to Check the Status of Your Journal Collections Regarding Digital Preservation

Dr. Gaelle Bequet

Presenter

Michelle Polchow

Presenter

Shannon Keller

Recorder

Abstract

The Keepers Registry (Keepers) (<https://keepers.issn.org>), managed by the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) International Centre since 2019, is the only service monitoring preservation arrangements for digital and digitized serials, including scholarly journals. Keepers Registry aggregates data supplied by sixteen partner archiving agencies—located in Asia, Europe, North America, South America—with its own data. It gives an overview of the preservation status of about 70,000 titles as of November 2022. The ISSN International Centre is currently developing a new service that will allow librarians to upload journal metadata (i.e. ISSNs, titles) via a tabular list and retrieve information about the extent of preservation for these titles. Returned data will contain names of preserving agencies, and for each agency, years covered by preservation compared with years of publication, an assessment of archived content completeness per agency, and related serial publishers. The presentation will

include a demonstration of the service as well as a case study based on University of California, Davis collections, with preliminary title level data revealing only 40 percent of the collection has Keepers. Librarians were invited to give their feedback on the service and reflect upon its functionalities.

Keywords: digital preservation, archival status, The Keepers Registry, International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) International Centre, post-cancellation access, e-journal entitlements

Introduction of International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) List Submission Service

The ISSN International Centre, located in Paris, France, is an intergovernmental agency which coordinates assigning and managing ISSN registration for serials and continuing resources across the globe. The Centre is responsible for coordinating the activities of the ninety-three-member country national centers, assigning ISSNs to international publications and publications issued in countries that do not have an ISSN national center, maintaining the ISSN portal and Keepers Registry (Keepers).¹ This presentation detailed the launch of a new fee-for-service feature of the ISSN International Centre, the List Submission Service, now called, "Submit. Retrieve. Reuse.," which will allow users to upload a list of titles to evaluate in bulk the archival status on a collection level.²

A brief introduction of the ISSN Portal and its free and fee-based services was provided by Dr. Gaelle Bequet. For free, users can search on a title-by-title basis for ISSN, ISSN-L, Key Title, Title Proper, Other variant titles, Country, Medium, and Uniform Resource Locators (URLs). In addition, the ISSN International Centre provides access to ISSN records for Open Access titles in the Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources (ROAD) for free. It is also free to search for the archival status of an e-journal on a title-by-title basis.

The ISSN International Centre also provides some services for a fee. This includes full ISSN profile data, the ability to save searches, records, and download metadata in various formats (for example, MACHine-Readable Cataloging [MARC], JavaScript object notation [JSON], Resource Description Framework [RDF]/Extensible Markup Language [XML]), and the ability to request modifications and create user profiles.

The ISSN International Centre maintains the Keepers Registry, a tool to monitor the archival or digital preservation status of e-journals as maintained by archival agencies (the Keepers) across the globe. The Keepers Registry was originally created and maintained by Jisc and EDINA at the University of Edinburgh, and when funding ceased in 2019, the ISSN International Centre assumed stewardship of the registry. Currently, the Registry tracks sixteen Keepers and over 80,000 individual titles, including just over 17,000 which are deemed safe (archived by three or more Keepers). For free, users can check the archival status of an e-journal on a title-by-title basis by searching by ISSN, title, or keyword. A search will return title information including country and medium of publication, as well as archival status and coverage by which Keepers. Users can also see the volume-level coverage of a title. The presenter provided current statistics on the number of titles archived by each Keeper and the percentage of titles archived in each member country.

The new service will allow users to upload a list of ISSNs to validate the metadata for data maintenance projects and check the archival status of a batch of titles instead of searching title-by-title. Dr. Bequet provided several use cases for this service, including evaluating the digital preservation status of an e-journal to determine whether to weed print volumes from a collection or to check the availability of post-cancellation access if an organization were to stop subscribing to an e-journal. Fundamentally, checking the archival status of a title will allow a library or other institution to have confidence they will have access to the digital content in their collection should access from the publisher cease. Additionally, it may be useful to check the archival

status of open access e-journals to better understand the reliability of access to published content. Librarians can use the list service to check the archival status of titles published by their institution to support or create a digital preservation plan for these titles.

A demonstration of how to use the list service and its fee structure followed the use case examples. A user can upload a list of ISSNs to the ISSN Portal to receive a report that details journal information, including its archival status. The service indicates if an ISSN is not found or is invalid and identifies duplicates. The resulting report provides detailed title level metadata and archival status, including the Keepers through which the title is archived, the dates in years of that archival coverage, the publisher by year, and title indexing information. The fee model is based on the number of ISSNs submitted, with the ability to resubmit a corrected file of the same ISSNs at no additional fee.

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A Case Study: Using the ISSN List Submission Service at the University of California, Davis Library

The University of California, Davis (UC Davis) is a campus of approximately 40,000 students with unique research needs including agriculture, forestry, veterinarian medicine, coastal wildlife science, and the wine and food industry. The Library funds and subscribes to serials locally to meet its unique needs and larger packages through the California Digital Library (CDL) consortium. As electronic resources librarian, Michelle Polchow manages discovery for electronic resources, including e-journals. Concerned about a policy wherein a record for an e-journal would be removed from the catalog if the URL would not resolve, Polchow sought a method for better understanding the entitlements and archival coverage of the UC Davis collection.

While serving as the NASIG Digital Preservation Co-Chair, Polchow considered using the Keepers Registry to evaluate the archival coverage of the UC Davis holdings. Through initial discussions with the staff at the ISSN International Centre on how to best query the Keepers

Registry to check the archival coverage of titles, staff suggested individual ISSN searches. With a collection of over 200,000 serial titles, individual title searching is impractical for UC Davis. Consequently, Polchow and Dr. Bequet began corresponding and eventually collaborated on the development of the ISSN List Submission service, using UC Davis's data to beta test the service.

To test the service, Polchow did initial data normalization of ISSN metadata, including indicating whether the ISSN was for a local UC Davis title or a CDL title. Of the initial list of 208,862 ISSNs, there were 192,294 valid ISSNs and 124,593 after deduplication. Of the 124,593 ISSNs evaluated, 50,100 were included in the Keepers Registry. This is roughly 40 percent of the UC Davis collection. Additionally, this analysis is at the title level and does not inform which volumes of a digitally preserved journal have been deposited with at least one third-party keeper. Referencing Keller and Wood's analysis for finding duplication at the serial item-level, Polchow stated, "a title-level analysis is important, but it is only the first step in establishing a true overlap."³ To fully evaluate the extent to which an e-journal is digitally preserved would require evaluating the archival coverage of a title at the volume level.

Polchow recommends the service as a tool for better understanding the coverage, gaps, and areas to prioritize the preservation of e-journals within your library's collection. Librarians that advocate for digital preservation through this type of analysis build bridges between libraries, publishers, and third-party preservation agencies. Additionally, it strengthens partnerships between cultural heritage institutions by emphasizing the importance of maintaining the record of scholarship and public heritage issued in digital formats.

Librarians have other tools available to pursue the preservation of digital content, including standard license language. Polchow participated in a group that improved the digital preservation language within the model license published by the Center for Research Libraries.⁴ The updated language creates a culture of mutual obligation for libraries and publishers to clearly define the depth and coverage of digital preservation for resources. Additionally, the language makes

more explicit the difference between post-cancellation access and long-term digital preservation and access. Polchow acknowledges that it is still difficult for libraries to verify compliance with agreements and ensure publishers are complying with commitments to digital preservation initiatives.

The NASIG Digital Preservation Committee provides resources for information professionals who are interested in learning more about digital preservation, including the NASIGuide “Talking Points and Questions to Ask Publishers About Digital Preservation.”⁵ Polchow invited audience members to consider joining the NASIG Digital Preservation Committee, which offers opportunities to learn more about digital preservation and welcomes new members.

Questions

A general discussion followed the formal presentation. One audience member asked if the ISSN International Centre and Keepers Registry considered flipping the conversation – if they know which titles are not preserved, could the Centre then work directly with the publishers to expand the archival coverage of these titles? Dr. Bequet responded that the objective is to share lists of not preserved titles with Keepers for them to contact publishers and promote active preservation.

Contributor Notes

Dr. Gaelle Bequet is a librarian and Director of the ISSN International Centre.

Michelle Polchow is the Electronic Resources Librarian at the University of California, Davis.

Shannon Keller is the Electronic Resources Librarian at the U.S. Department of State’s Ralph J. Bunche Library.

Notes

- 1 "Who We Are," ISSN International Centre, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.issn.org/the-centre-and-the-network/our-mission/the-international-centre-for-the-registration-of-serial-publications-cieps/>.
- 2 As of November 2023, the new ISSN Service has been branded as "Submit. Retrieve. Reuse." More information is available by contacting sales@issn.org.
- 3 Shannon Keller and Amy Wood, "Using Standard Numbers to Conduct a Serial Item-Level Holdings Analysis of the ReCAP Partners' Collections," IFLA Library, (July 18, 2019), <http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/2467>.
- 4 "LibLicense: Licensing Digital Content," Center for Research Libraries, accessed July 29, 2023, <https://liblicense.crl.edu/resources/digital-preservation/>.
- 5 "NASIGuide: Talking Points and Questions to ask Publishers about Digital Preservation," NASIG, accessed July 29, 2023, <https://nasig.org/Talking-Points-and-Questions-about-Digital-Preservation>.