ERMS: To Buy or not to Buy?

by

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Conference Program Abstract: Managing electronic resources is complex and challenging. This program will assist librarians in meeting this challenge. Michael Hooper will discuss his experience in implementing and using an ERMS from Serials Solutions at Austin Peay State University. Melvin Davis will talk about the in-house ERMS used at Middle Tennessee State University.

As you can see, the title of my presentation includes a question. By the end of this presentation, I hope you will be able to answer this question as it relates to your library or institution.

During this presentation, I will briefly discuss the management of electronic resources at Felix G. Woodward Library before the purchase of an electronic resource management system (ERMS) and provide the reasons library faculty members at APSU decided to purchase an ERMS system. The bulk of my presentation will focus on the current features of the ERMS product from Serials Solutions. Screen shots will be provided for a number of existing features. Finally, I will mention some negative observations I have discovered concerning this system. Since I am very pleased with this product overall, I add these observations for balance so my presentation does not appear to be an advertisement for Serials Solutions. My intention is to provide my experience with using an ERMS product, not recommend one system as the best management solution for all institutions.

Electronic resources at Felix G. Woodward before the purchase of an ERMS consisted of about 120 databases, several types of electronic journals including open access titles, several types of electronic books including NetLibrary titles, and a federated search system called Central Search. At the time of purchase, Austin Peay State University had a full-time equivalent enrollment of 7,335.

Before the ERMS purchase, the above mentioned resources were managed by a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing cost and renewal information; a separate Excel worksheet containing technical information; and a Microsoft Word document containing information such as administrative notes, the number of simultaneous users, and various changes that have occurred throughout the life of the subscription. These resources were accessed by the Library Director, the Electronic Resources Librarian, and various library employees from other departments.

Some of the general reasons faculty and staff at Woodward Library desired an electronic resource management system were to consolidate all types of ERM information into a single retrieval point and provide the ability for multiple employees to edit data simultaneously. Library faculty also wanted the ability to display messages and database terms of use to the public, a better method for gathering usage statistics, a cost management feature with cost per use analysis, and the ability to set up renewal alerts before the expiration date of a license agreement.

The more specific reasons faculty members at Woodward Library decided to purchase Serials Solutions ERMS were because it was designed using the guidelines of the Digital Library Federation's electronic resource management initiative and created based on feedback from more than two dozen libraries. Since APSU subscribes to the Serials Solutions products Article Linker, Full MARC Records, Central Search, and E-Journal Portal, one of the leading justifications for purchase was the fact that Serials Solutions ERMS seamlessly coordinated with our existing products. In addition, ERMS from Serials Solutions provided the ability to compare APSU usage statistics gathered from Article Linker with those from peer institutions also subscribing to Serials Solutions products. Finally, a twenty percent discount was available for this product through SOLINET and a multi-product discount was available from Serials Solutions.

Many libraries may already subscribe to the Serials Solutions Open URL resolver Article Linker or the electronic journal management solution E-Journal Portal. If so, your institution has already been provided access to Serials Solutions A.M.S. (Access and Management Suite).

In comparison, the ERMS product contains all the capabilities of the AMS product in addition to many other features shown in this graph provided by Serials Solutions (Figure 1). The additional features provided by ERMS will now be discussed in detail with screenshots

taken from the actual ERMS product purchased by Austin Peay State University.

Figure 1.

Feature	Description	AMS	ERMS
E-Journal Portal, A-to-Z Title List, Subject Browsing, Title Searching, Journal Linker	Access your e-resources. Browse or search for e-journals through the single comprehensive list of titles. Browse by subject using more than 700 subject headings. Deliver journal-level linking from A&I databases	✔	✔
Data Files	Populate database systems with the most up-to-date e-journal metadata	✔	✔
Search Statistics	Track e-journal searching behavior	✔	✔
Click-through Statistics	Get a count of how often patrons use your journals and databases	✔	✔
Proxy Management	Support off-campus access to e-resources	✔	✔
Custom Metadata	Modify holdings data with local information to ensure accuracy	✔	✔
Custom Notes	Add a custom note to a holding, title or database	✔	✔
Account Management	Ensure only authorized staff can view and edit your data	✔	✔
Manage Non-Journal Resources	Manage and deliver access to non-journal resources, i.e. A&I databases	✔	✔
Contact Manager	Manage local, vendor or consortia contacts		✔
Resource Report Manager	Keep track of acquisition notes, outage reports, license breaches and other notes about a resource		✔
License Manager	Maintain details about resource licenses and terms of use		✔
Menu Manager	Customize the administrative interface to reflect local needs		✔
Terms of Use Display	Display terms of use about a resource within the E-Journal Portal and Article Linker		✔
Resource Status	Keep track of a resource's subscription status		✔
Subscription Metadata	Manage renewal dates and administrative/end-user logins & passwords		✔
Acquisition Workflow	Track the acquisition workflow using custom steps and actions		✔
Usage Stats Benchmarking	Compare local resource use to that of peer institutions		✔
Vendor Stats Manager	Manage access and collection for vendor usage statistics		✔

The Contact Manager feature (Figure 2) allows one to add contact information such as phone, e-mail, and mailing address for various vendor or consortium contacts. Roles can be assigned to each vendor such as billing or technical support and then sorted according to type of contact. The contacts can also be restricted to retrieve all contacts listed for a certain vendor or database.
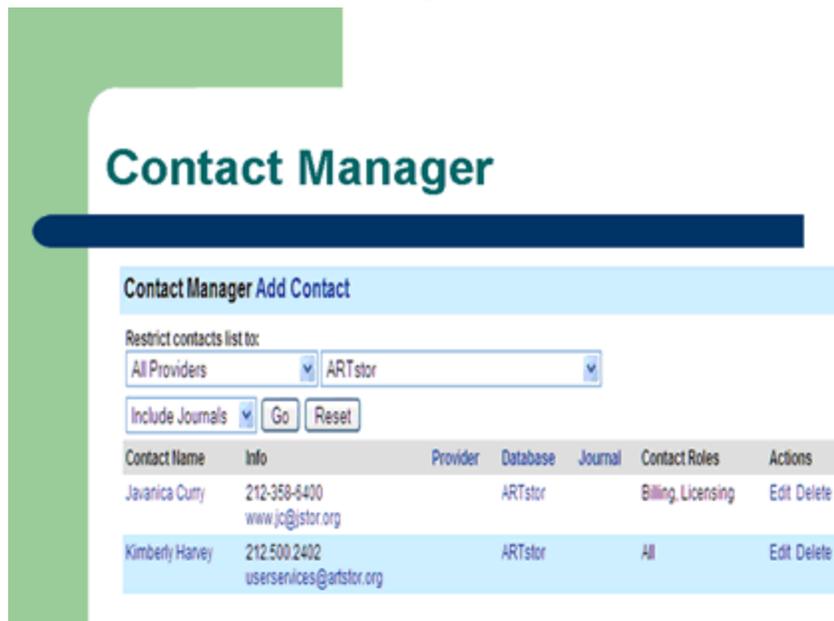
Figure 2.

The Note or Resource Report manager (Figure 3) allows one to attach a note to a specific vendor, database or journal title. A note type can then be assigned to each note so all notes of a certain type can be retrieved together. The list of note types can be customized

according to the needs of your institution. A status such as "open" or "closed" can also be given to each note and then sorted accordingly. For example, a note concerning a technical issue with a database could be moved to a status of closed when the problem has been resolved.
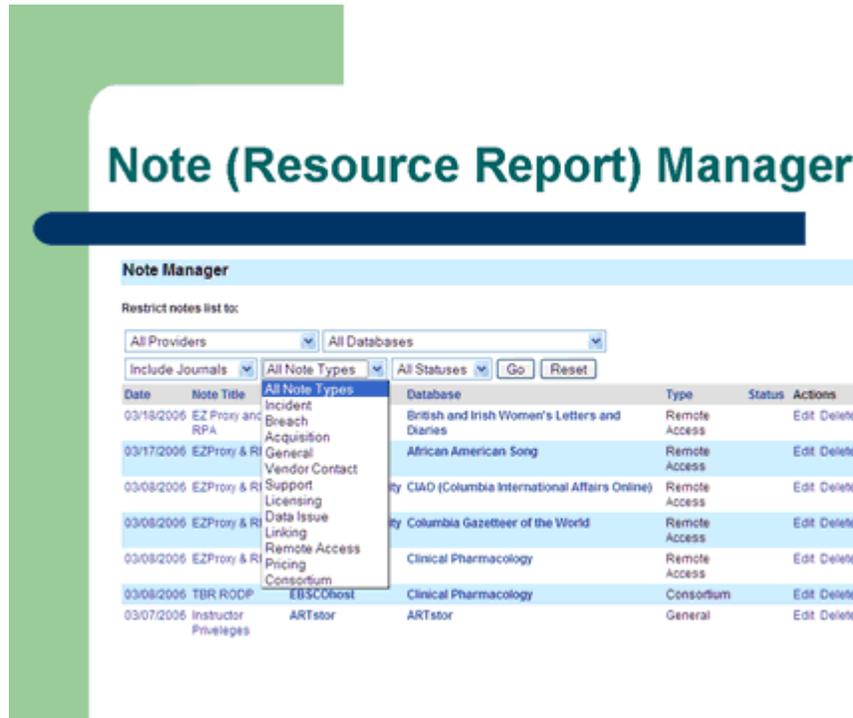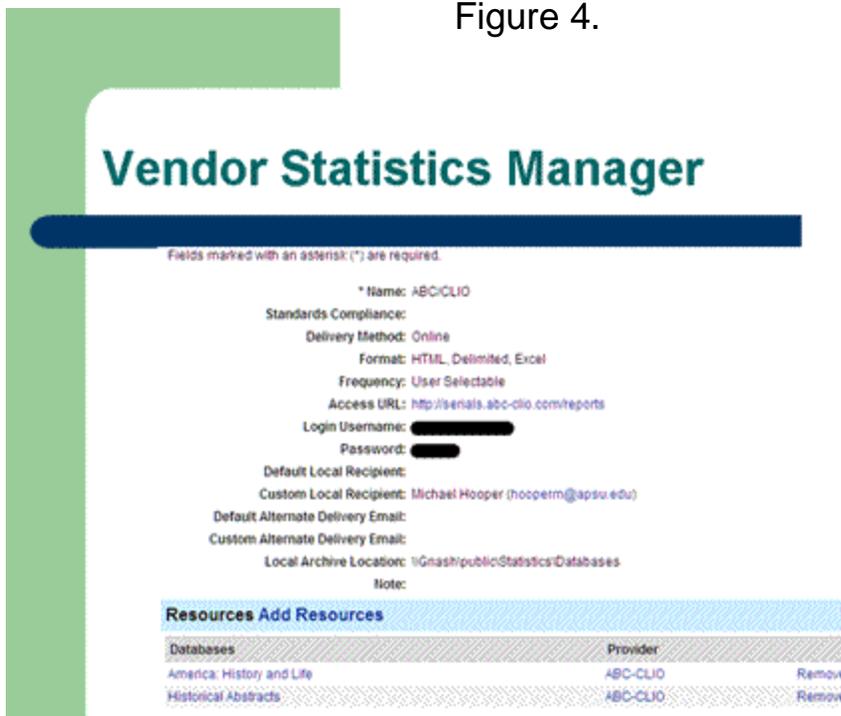
Figure 3

Note (Resource Report) Manager

Date	**Note Title**		**Database**	**Type**	**Status**	**Actions**
03/18/2006	EZ Proxy and RPA		British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries	Remote Access		Edit Delete
03/17/2006	EZProxy & R		African American Song	Remote Access		Edit Delete
03/08/2006	EZProxy & R		CIAO (Columbia International Affairs Online)	Remote Access		Edit Delete
03/08/2006	EZProxy & R		Columbia Gazetteer of the World	Remote Access		Edit Delete
03/08/2006	EZProxy & R		Clinical Pharmacology	Remote Access		Edit Delete
03/08/2006	TBR RODP	EBSCOhost	Clinical Pharmacology	Consortium		Edit Delete
03/07/2006	Instructor Priveleges	ARTstor	ARTstor	General		Edit Delete

Figure 4.

Vendor Statistics Manager

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

* Name: ABC/CLIO
Standards Compliance:
Delivery Method: Online
Format: HTML, Delimited, Excel
Frequency: User Selectable
Access URL: http://serials.abc-clio.com/reports
Login Username: ▮▮▮▮
Password: ▮▮▮▮
Default Local Recipient:
Custom Local Recipient: Michael Hooper (hooperm@apsu.edu)
Default Alternate Delivery Email:
Custom Alternate Delivery Email:
Local Archive Location: \\Gnash\public\Statistics\Databases
Note:

Resources Add Resources

Databases	Provider	
America: History and Life	ABC-CLIO	Remove
Historical Abstracts	ABC-CLIO	Remove

The Vendor Statistics Manager (Figure 4) provides a place to list log-in information such as URL addresses and passwords for gathering statistics from various vendors. Individual databases can easily be added to an existing provider if the procedure for gathering statistics is the same for all databases provided by that vendor. A link

to a local archive location can be provided if recorded statistics are housed on a server at your institution.

The License Manager allows one to record details concerning individual license agreements for each database (Figure 5). Databases from the same vendor can easily be added to an existing license if the terms of use are identical. If a license agreement is similar to an existing agreement, a copy can be made and edited without having to re-enter the identical information.

Figure 5.

The License Manager feature allows you to display the physical location of a license agreement and specify the date a license agreement expires (Figure 6). This date can then be used to set up a renewal alert in the Alert Manager.

License Manager (Slide 1 of 3)

License Manager Edit							
Include Terms of Use Link in:							
☑ E-Journal Portal results							
☑ Article Linker results							

| All Providers | | All Databases | | | | | |
| Include Journals ▾ | All Types ▾ | All Statuses ▾ | Go | Reset | | | |

License Name	Provider/Title	Database	Type	Status	Start Date	End Date	Actions
ABC/CLIO (America History & Life)	ABC-CLIO	America: History and Life	Negotiated	Active	10/02/2005	10/01/2006	Edit Delete Clone
ABC/CLIO (Historical Abstracts)	ABC-CLIO	Historical Abstracts	Negotiated	Active	03/15/2006	03/14/2007	Edit Delete Clone
ACM	ACM Digital Library	ACM Digital Library Core Package	Negotiated	Active	01/01/2006	12/31/2006	Edit Delete Clone

Figure 6.

License Manager (Slide 2 of 3)

Resource License: ABC/CLIO (America History & Life)		
General License Details Edit		
* Name: ABC/CLIO (America History & Life)		
Edit Resource: Database: America: History and Life		
Type: Negotiated		
Vendor License URL:		Use in Public Display: ☐
Local License URL:		Use in Public Display: ☐
Physical Location: Serials Office		
Status: Active		
Reviewer: Deborah Fetch		
Reviewer Notes:		
License Replaced By:		
License Replaces:		
Execution Date:		
Start Date: 10/02/2005		
End Date: 10/01/2006		
Advance Notice Date: 30		
License Duration: 364 days		
License Note: *encumbered on 8/1/05. Prepaid (Check with Order) on 8/1/05.		
*Required signatures TAF/DF and Alex King/ Project #32		

Details within the license agreement, such as the number of simultaneous users, can be noted and one can choose whether or not to display these terms of use to users of the specified database. The options available to select as permitted for each license agreement are numerous and go beyond what is shown on this slide (Figure 7). Many of these details require further research by investigating the physical copy of the license agreement or contacting the vendor for more information.

Figure 7.

License Manager (Slide 3 of 3)

Authorized Users and Terms of Use Edit		
Term	Rights/Notes	Use in Public Display ☐
Authorized Users	☐ Prohibited	☐
	☑ Faculty	
	☑ Students	
	☑ Staff and Onsite Users	
Concurrent Users		
	Unlimited	☐
Fair Use Clause Indicator		
Database Protection Override Clause Indicator		
All Rights Reserved Indicator		
Citation Requirement Detail		
Digitally Copy		
Print Copy		
Scholarly Sharing		

Menu manager (Figure 8) provides one with the ability to modify the existing menu from all the previously mentioned managers to meet the specific needs of your library or institution. For example, within the License Status category of License Manager new status types can be added or deleted as desired.

Figure 8
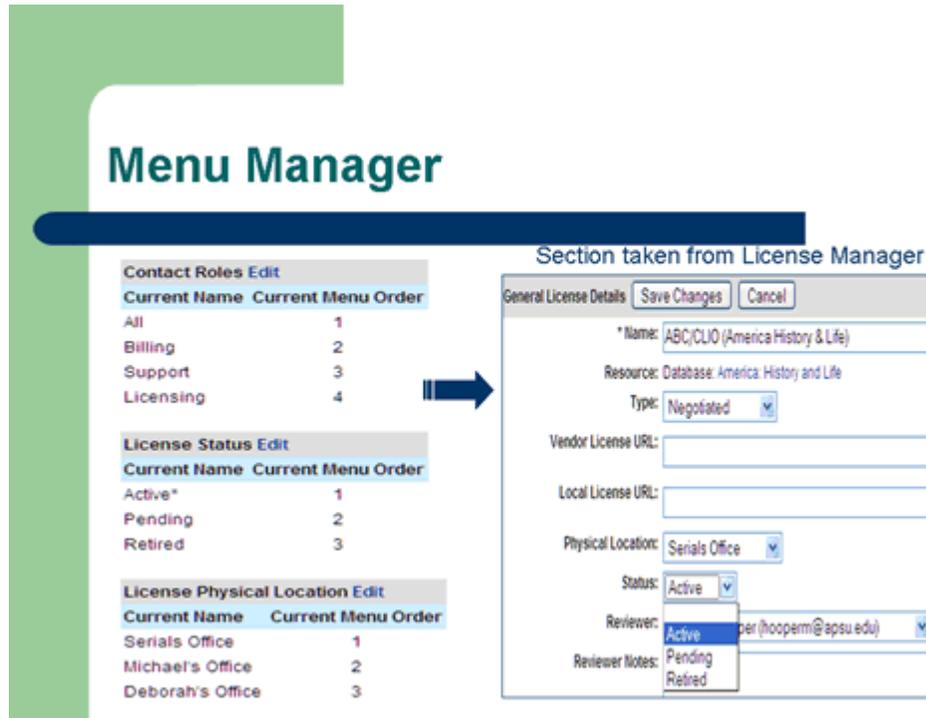
The terms of use indicated with License Manager can be displayed to the public through the Serials Solutions products E-Journal Portal and Article Linker. These products are usually available to students through the website of an institution. The terms of use are displayed when a user searches for a periodical title within the E-Journal Portal and from within individual databases when a user "Searches for Full Text" using Article Linker as the open URL resolver.

When a user searches for a journal within the E-Journal Portal he or she has the option to click on a link titled "Terms of Use" next to the journal title (Figure 9). Clicking on the link opens a new page with the local terms of use displayed from the corresponding vendor license agreement, along with an optional link to the provider's general terms of use which may be available on their website.

Figure 9

Public Display (Terms of Use)-example

Library journal (1976) (0363-0277) View Terms of Use
in Felix Online Catalog
from 01/01/1975 to present in Academic Search Premier

Source: Academic Search Premier
Coverage Dates: from 01/01/1975 to present

General Terms and Conditions from Content Provider

Local Terms of Use:

License Term	Permissions	Note
Authorized Users	Faculty, Staff and Onsite Users, Students	
Concurrent Users		Unlimited
Digitally Copy	Permitted	
Print Copy	Permitted	
Distance Learning	Permitted	
Course Reserve	Permitted	
Electronic Link	Permitted	
Remote Access	Yes	

Alert manager (Figure 10) can be used to set up e-mail notifications for various events such as the expiration of a license agreement. This feature ensures database access does not lapse due to a vendor sending renewal information to the wrong address. Alerts can also be set up to notify those with administrative privileges when a change has been made to the status of a database.

Figure 10.

Alert Manager

View Alert Edit

Alert Name: Renewal Notice
Alert Status: Active
License - Send 90 days before a license's advance notice date.

Email Settings

E-mail sender: APSU Librarian (librarian@apsu.edu)
E-mail recipients: Michael Hooper (hooperm@apsu.edu)

E-mail content:

"Serials Solutions" is a registered trademark of Serials Solutions.
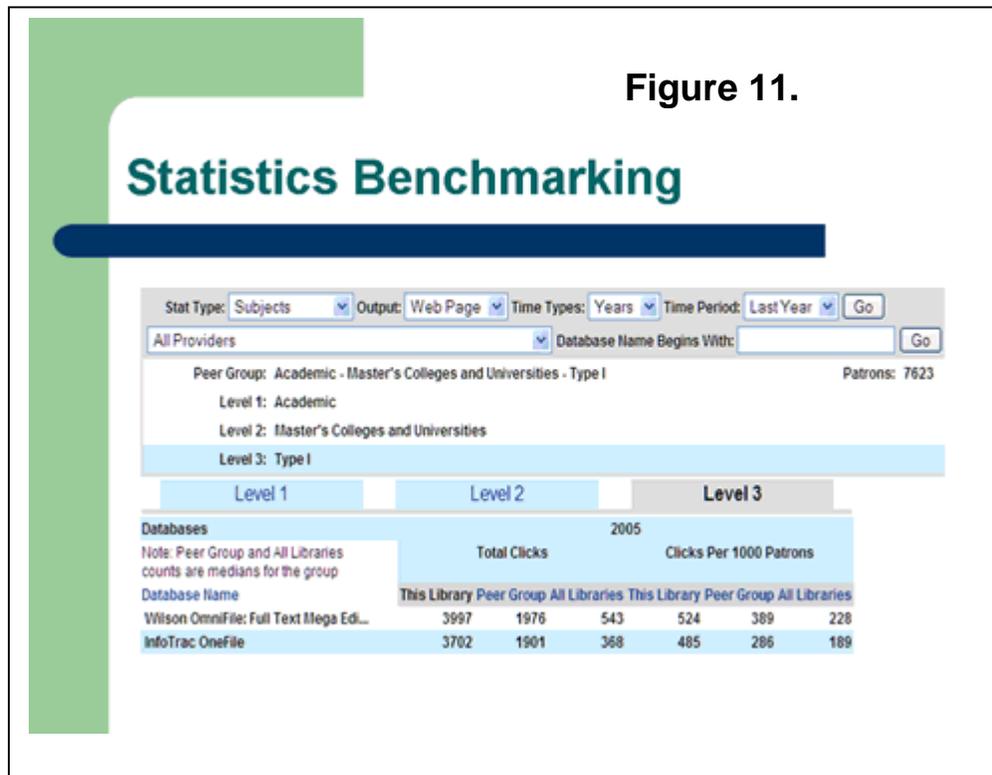© 2000-06 Serials Solutions

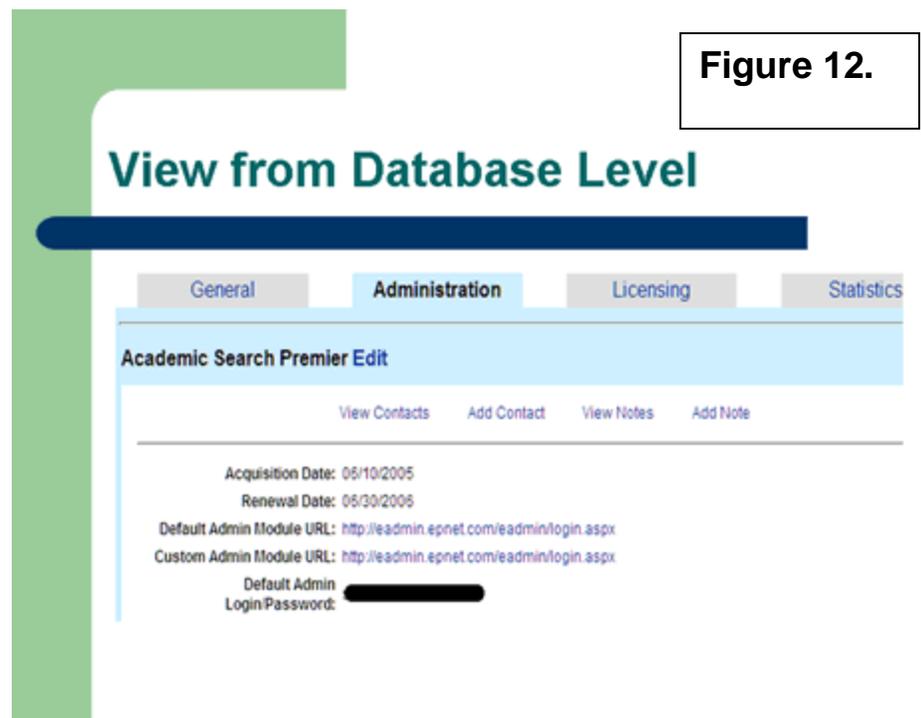APSU Librarian [librarian@apsu.edu]
To: Hooper, Michael

Serials Solutions Alert
Alert Name: Renewal Notice
Alert Type: License

This is a reminder that the active license for "PsycARTICLES" will expire on "2006-06-30". The vendor requires 30 days advance notice for action on this license.

Statistics Benchmarking (Figure 11) allows one to compare usage statistics gathered from Article Linker and the E-Journal Portal to peer institutions also subscribing to these Serials Solutions products. Statistics for total clicks and clicks per one thousand patrons are available. Click-through stats are available through the AMS product, but the benchmarking feature is only available through ERMS.

Figure 11.

Statistics Benchmarking

| Stat Type: Subjects | Output: Web Page | Time Types: Years | Time Period: Last Year | Go |

All Providers | Database Name Begins With: | Go

| Peer Group: Academic - Master's Colleges and Universities - Type I | Patrons: 7623 |

Level 1: Academic

Level 2: Master's Colleges and Universities

Level 3: Type I

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |

Databases — 2005

Note: Peer Group and All Libraries counts are medians for the group — Total Clicks — Clicks Per 1000 Patrons

Database Name	This Library	Peer Group	All Libraries	This Library	Peer Group	All Libraries
Wilson OmniFile: Full Text Mega Edi...	3997	1976	543	524	389	228
InfoTrac OneFile	3702	1901	368	485	286	189

Figure 12.

The AMS product only provides you with the General tab when viewing information at the database level (Figure 12). With the addition of ERMS, tabs are provided for Administration, Licensing, and Statistics. Modifications can be made at this level in addition to the various manager

View from Database Level

| General | Administration | Licensing | Statistics |

Academic Search Premier Edit

View Contacts   Add Contact   View Notes   Add Note

Acquisition Date: 05/10/2005
Renewal Date: 05/30/2006
Default Admin Module URL: http://eadmin.epnet.com/eadmin/login.aspx
Custom Admin Module URL: http://eadmin.epnet.com/eadmin/login.aspx
Default Admin Login/Password:

features I have already mentioned. Under the Administration tab, administrative log-in information such as URL address and password can be stored.

Possible future enhancements for the ERMS product may include the ability to track electronic books, tools for managing shared resources, and enhanced integration with Central Search (the Serials Solutions federated search system) which will allow users to add and remove databases. Future enhancements already being planned for release in 2006 include a Cost Manager feature and a new product called COUNTER which will gather statistics and create reports from vendors that are both COUNTER and SUSHI compliant. With the cost management feature and COUNTER, institutions will be able to generate cost per click analysis.

Of course, one negative feature of any purchased ERMS product is the fact that there is a greater cost involved compared to a system created in-house. Also, there is a significant amount of time involved for data entry. The employee responsible for data entry will need to have a basic understanding of license agreement terms and database administration.

A negative feature of Serials Solutions ERMS is that a new or obscure database not included in the Serials Solutions knowledge base can take 48 to 72 hours to add to your system. The fact that this system is not housed on a local server may also be a negative feature for some institutions with an unreliable internet connection. In addition, if there is a problem with Serials Solutions servers you may not be able to access your ERMS product until it has been resolved.

If you have questions about the Serials Solutions ERMS product, please contact the appropriate member of the Serials Solutions team. The cost of the ERMS system is based upon the number of full-text resources to which your institution subscribes.