Link resolvers create pathways

Simplifying the user experience

Dale Askey
Jamene Brooks-Kieffer
KLA-CULS Fall Conference
October 18, 2007
Before the Link Resolver

A sad day in the life of a K-State student
(and a K-State librarian)
In the Beginning was the Button
And the Button was

Strange

Ugly

Confusing
And K-State said

The Button shall be Purple
The Powercat shall be upon it

And it shall be called...
A happy day in the life of a K-State student (and a K-State librarian)
Definitions

• Users – anyone with library privileges
• Get It = SFX = Link Resolver
• OpenURL – communications standard
• Knowledgebase contains:
  – full-text providers
    • aggregators
    • direct subscriptions
    • free content
  – journal titles
  – holdings
• Parser – magic little scripts
How Get It Works

DATABASE
- PsycInfo
- MLA
- Web of Science
- ...

RESOLVER
- DOAJ
- SAGE
- ELSEVIER
- CAMBRIDGE
- OXFORD
- JSTOR
- Gale
- PROQUEST

CATALOG
- ILL
- RefWorks
- Google Scholar
- Web of Science
- ...

JOY!!
Prologue to Get It

• LinkFinderPlus (2003-2006)
  – K-State’s previous link resolver
  – Flawed Knowledgebase
  – Only implemented in a handful of databases
  – Users didn’t notice it
  – Thankfully, caused no expectations or preconceptions about link resolvers

• SerialsSolutions A-Z List (2002-2006)
  – Ceased because SFX e-journals list made it superfluous
  – Why coordinate two services when one will do the job?
Get It’s first act: Novelty

• Implementation - 2006
  – July: training and installation
  – July-August: 3 people worked on KB and interface but didn’t drop everything
  – Fall semester: launched with start of classes
  – September: Resource Linking Librarian arrives

• Under-the-radar Marketing
  – The Get It button
  – Get It magnets
  – Blog articles
  – Class demos
  – Database label:

powered by \[\text{GET IT}\]
Wildly Inappropriate Passion

• Spontaneous feedback from users:
  – “Get It totally rocks!!!”
  – “I ♥ Get It!”
  – “This is so awesome!!”
  – “Thank you! You guys rock!!!”
  – “I love you!”
Get It’s second act: Essential

- No beta or “try this” period
- Users received little explanation
- No staff resistance and very little staff training necessary
- Practically no learning curve
- Within 30 days, an outage was catastrophic to many users
A Fork in the Road

• Libraries have a choice
  – “Set it and forget it”:
    Turn it on, see it work, and leave it alone. After a year, it stops working well and users hate it.
  
  OR

  – “It’s never good enough”:
    Constantly add new content, services, enhancements, and staff tools. Keep people loving it.
Get It is never good enough

- We chose the second fork. K-State has a full-time position dedicated to the link resolver.
- Ongoing improvements include:
  - Automating staff-side maintenance
  - Customizing interfaces: more K-State, less vendor
  - Adding obscure content
  - Incorporating into Google Scholar, Google Books, RefWorks, etc.
Get It, Get It everywhere!
Get It’s third act: Fundamental

- Users don’t send us love letters anymore. They use Get It and tell us when it breaks.

- Continuous improvements include:
  - Enhanced user interfaces
  - Simplified off-campus access
  - Focus on library staff as users:
    - How can Get It impact library workflows?
    - Get It’s place in data-driven decision making
Gravity: Hard to do without

- In 3 years, few K-State students will remember finding articles without Get It
- We are training users to expect and demand this service
- When they use another library, they’ll expect a link resolver to be there
Get It’s sequel: What’s next?

- Greater integration with library catalog
- Tap into institutional repositories and pre-publication collections
- Usability testing and interface improvements
- Integrate Get It’s usage data with other library data
Conclusions: Users

- Take advantage of services working in harmony
  - E-journals list, catalog, databases, ILL
  - 79 A&I databases linked to 88 full-text resources
  - 22,000 journal titles (estimate)
- No more pointless work due to fragmented vendor database infrastructure
- Time to process and digest intellectual content. Focus on topic, not procedure.
Conclusions: Librarians

• Link resolvers will influence collection decisions
  – Resources that don’t play with the resolver will be marginalized
  – Presence of a link resolver influences usage data
  – Erases the difference between a full-text and a non-full-text database
• Link resolvers provide better usage data by creating a context for comparison
Questions?

Jamene Brooks-Kieffer
(785) 532-6732
jamenebk@ksu.edu

Dale Askey
(785) 532-7672
daskey@ksu.edu

www.lib.ksu.edu