

ERIC USERS GROUP MEETING

ALA Annual Conference in Chicago

Palmer House Hilton

June 27, 2005

CSC Representatives: Nancy Cawley, Mike Weber, Pete Degutis, Jane Atwell

Moderator: Judy Walker, EBSS Chair.

PANEL PRESENTATION

What's new with ERIC?

1. New online submission form for submitting individual papers, etc. is live on ERIC site. Electronic submission of documents is in beta testing.
2. Release of new 2004/05 materials. 2,000 new bibliographic records were released June 26, 2005 for journal articles and documents.
 - a. Majority of journals are peer reviewed and cover all subject categories; 100 peer-reviewed journals and from 16 broad topic areas.
 - b. The documents are from US DOE, state DOEs, major education organizations, other organizations
 - c. About 800 documents are available in full-text.
3. New relationship with publishers. ERIC has established a number of agreements with publishers but some have not submitted data yet.
4. More materials will be online by the start of the autumn school term.
5. New interface/searching features included in release:
 - a. List of journals indexed in ERIC is now browseable and will be searchable in the future. Lists current active journals with an *; includes bibliographic info and level of coverage.
 - b. Nested Boolean search capability is now available in the Advanced search
 - c. An "expert search" will be available soon.
 - d. Descriptor searching is now available in the main part of the search page. It was previously in a separate section in the middle of the search page.
6. Interface features still the works:
 - a. Link to holdings. CSC looking for library partners who have a variety of OpenURL suppliers to participate in developing linking.
 - b. Citation manager. The new search interface will included a "clipboard" where searchers can put citations of interest to them (shopping cart type feature) and then email, print, download them in various formats (for example, EndNote).
 - c. Expert search supporting free form queries with Boolean operators.
7. How you can be involved:
 - a. Usability testing will be held on a quarterly basis.
 - b. Electronic ERIC news update email list is being established. Interested persons can sign up by contacting Nancy Cawley at ncawley@csc.com. Include your name, institution, and email address.
 - c. Attend future ERIC User Group forums such as this one held at ALA.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Questions and answers are not presented in the order they occurred during the session. I have tried to group them by issue/topic when possible. They are also a synthesis of several sets of notes, so apologies in advance if there is repetition.

THE INTERFACE AND ITS FEATURES

Q: *Can you tell us what the new ERIC site looks like?*

A: Home page looks much the same. It has a link at the top to the new online materials submission form. There is a MyERIC feature that allows users to save searches and access the online submission form. The search interface offers an advanced search page. Descriptor searching is integrated with other types of field searches in a drop-down field list.

Q: *Will new features under development be available to 3rd party vendors or just on ERIC site?*

A: Functionality of new features no, content yes.

Q: *Will some features like MyERIC be passed onto vendors?*

A: Vendors offer features similar to MyERIC in their interfaces.

NEW RESOURCES

Q: *Were the 2,000 new materials released yesterday through the official ERIC web site made available to other vendors (EBSCO, CSA, etc.) at the same time?*

A: No. The relationship with other vendors is formal and based on contracts. Vendors must provide usage statistics and agree to reload the database annually. There is no cost to the vendors for the data tapes.

The first release of the new records to vendors is scheduled for July 1. Vendors have to make some software changes to use the new ERIC features. This may take them three to six months. An EBSCO representative in the audience said EBSCO is working closely with ERIC. A full reload to handle the new data structure format is on their development schedule. The entire ERIC database will be in the new data structure format, not just the new records.

Another person emphasized the need for ERIC to work with vendors as some states have statewide contracts with vendors providing access for kindergarten through higher education users. Even their teachers generally use only the vendor interfaces to search the ERIC database, rather than the official ERIC interface that will offer the new features sooner than the vendors.

Q: *When will vendors receive updated content?*

A: ERIC continues to work with vendors. Relationship with vendors is more formal than before. We are waiting for vendors to sign agreement that requires usage data be given at least annually to the department. Release of new content to vendors expected in late July. Other delays on vendors' end may be the result of their needing to make software changes to accommodate new data structures. Beth Close of EBSCO spoke up indicating that getting new content onto database platforms is a priority for the vendors as well.

Q: *How often will new materials sources be added?*

A: Adding new records will likely occur monthly. It may be possible to add new records more frequently but not sure if vendors will be able to add them that often.

Q: *Will EBSS be notified when the new data is given to vendors to load?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Will the old data be moved into the new format so the whole database will be in one format? Or will CSC distribute data in old format while vendors are updating data profiles? [It appears this question was not answered.]*

THESAURUS

Q: *Who will be responsible for maintaining the ERIC Thesaurus and how can people submit comments and suggestions for new terms?*

A: Pete Degutis stated that the thesaurus is one of his responsibilities. Send comments to him and he will forward them to the Quality Assurance (QA) team. There are two QA teams, one within CSC and one external to it. New terms will also be generated from the materials themselves. We are using software to scan content that will help them identify new hot topics that might become thesaurus terms. Selecting new terms for inclusion will involve the subject and content experts and the steering committee. [An audience member observed that acquisition and thesaurus maintenance are big jobs; a lot for one person.]

Q: *Who can people contact in regard to free text indexing needs?*

A: Automated indexing captures free text terms that occur more than ten times.

Q: *With old content and new content in the database, how will changes in thesaurus terminology be handled? For example: AFRO-AMERICANS is a newer term that hasn't been retroactively assigned to materials indexed with the older term, BLACKS.*

A: Lexicography staff will look at what would be required to reconcile old and new vocabulary. [The moderator mentioned that Library of Congress would be a good model for how to update and maintain changes in vocabulary.]

JOURNAL INDEXING [Dagutis is also responsible for indexing.]

Q: *Will data from publishers who don't submit electronically be included?*

A: If we get publisher feeds, abstract is considered copyrighted. If the publisher does not provide ERIC with an electronic feed, their materials will not be available in ERIC. [The audience indicated that this was problematic and could cause some major problems.]

Q: *Will you be indexing the whole article as well as citation and abstracts?*

A: Yes

Q: *What does "comprehensive" coverage mean? [Two slightly different answers were recorded.]*

A: Every article but not sure what else. Will check.

A: Every article but not letters or editorials

Q: *What criteria will be used to determine which journals will be comprehensively treated and which selectively?*

A: Number of articles related to education that appear in each issue

Q: *How do you decide which journals are to be comprehensively or selective covered?*

A: The decision is based on the percentage of articles in a journal that are education-related.

Q: *Is the percentage based on ISI (citation index) information?*

A: The ERIC curators working under a subcontract with RSI work with others to determine how fully to index a journal.

Q: *Should librarians put pressure on publishers to get their content included? Will there be any mechanism for letting us know which publishers have opted out?*

A: This idea was new to them.

Q: *Does the list of journals indicate whether a title is indexed comprehensively or selectively?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Does the list of journals indicate the time period of coverage in ERIC?*

A: Journals currently indexed – yes. Journals formerly indexed - no.

Q: *How many journals are indexed currently now?*

A: 100 titles in the new update. Additional journals will be added as publishers come on board.

Q: *How can people nominate journals and other sources to be indexed?*

Q: *Can we nominate journals for inclusion?*

A: Send information on suggested materials by email to the ERIC acquisitions staff at ericacq@csc.com.

DATABASE STRUCTURE/SEARCHING

Q: *How will end users benefit from the new data structure format?*

A: The Peer Review field requested by librarians was added for the benefit of the end user. The Educational Level field was created as a separate field. It was formerly assigned as a descriptor. This will benefit end users as well. A person in the audience stated that educational level is very important for searching; people need to be informed about the change from descriptor to separate field.

Q: *Are you abandoning other types of "levels"?*

A: No, they are still in the records.

Q: *Peer review status will be included for all new records, are there any plans for applying it backward to old data?*

A: There are no current plans to add peer-review status to old content. [Audience strongly encouraged CSC to visit this issue again.]

Q: *Is the peer review status of journals searchable now?*

A: No. This field will be searchable but that is still a future goal. It is not yet scheduled for implementation.

Q: *Will ERIC provide a summary of what fields are available to update the user community?*

A: The help files on the ERIC web site describe all the fields.

CONTENT

Q: *Is the vision for ERIC to be comprehensive or selective?*

A: The vision is to be inclusive for materials relevant to education, including gray literature and individually submitted materials.

Q: *There is much interest in evidence-based research. Will the studies of the What Works Clearinghouse and other scientific research be included in ERIC?*

A: Yes. The What Works materials are in ERIC now. To find them you can do a phrase search on "what works" in the Institution field. The steering committee has asked for a way to identify evidence-based research, to identify it by levels, and to make it easier to understand what it means.

Q: *What are ERIC's priorities in regard to sources of materials?*

A: US DOE reports were a high priority. There were not many so we decided to add them initially. Other high priority materials include peer reviewed education journals, major publishers of education journals, major education research association publications, and state education agency publications.

Q: *Are criteria for acceptance posted with the on-line submission form?*

A: ERIC selection policy is posted on web site. The primary standard is: is it related to education.

Q: *After someone submits a document, how long does it take before you notify them of acceptance?*

A: We are targeting 30 days between submission and addition to the database. The acquisitions team and the curators screen documents against the selection criteria that are posted on the web site. ERIC provides email replies at the point of receipt, selection, etc. You can track the status of your submission in MyERIC.

Q: *Will you post acceptance rates?*

A: We will look into it

VENDOR/PUBLISHER RELATIONS

Q: *What is the response rate of publishers agreeing to have their publications added to ERIC?*

A: We are keeping track of responses from journal and other providers. Most are glad to participate. The majority of journals will be comprehensively covered and publishers like that. A small number of publishers have declined. This is a lengthy process due to the legal aspects. We still have a number of publisher agreements pending.

A: Some publishers have declined to participate. Majority of journals contacted were previously indexed in ERIC. The emphasis is on comprehensive coverage of a journal. Getting material into the database is taking longer than initially thought because of legal agreements.

Q: *Will data from publishers who don't submit electronically be included?*

A: If we get publisher feeds, abstract is considered copyrighted. If the publisher does not provide ERIC with an electronic feed, their materials will not be available in ERIC. [The audience indicated that this was problematic and could cause some major problems.]

Q: *If a publisher declines to send electronic data feeds will you work with paper copies of materials?*

A: No.

Q: *Is there a way for users to put pressure on publishers to participate? Will there be any mechanism for letting us know which publishers have opted out?*

A: There is no formal mechanism to do that. This was a new idea to them. [Audience indicated that they could provide a very good source of encourage to the publishers.]

USABILITY TESTING

Q: *Were undergraduates included in the usability studies?*

A: Yes, also graduate students. Usability testing has attempted to involve a broad range of users: librarians in higher education and K-12, K-12 teachers; people from non-profits; faculty and students of a local Chicago campus.

Q: *How will the results of the usability studies be used? Will the results be shared with the library community?*

A: The results will be used internally to enhance ERIC. There is no plan to share them outside ERIC.

Q: *Can registered MyERIC users submit suggestions for usability improvements?*

A: No, not through MyERIC, but you can use the email feature through the "Contact Us" link on the ERIC web site to do that. Select the "Other" category.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: *Is there a list of the ERIC experts?*

A: Lists of the content experts and steering committee members are available at the ERIC web site.

Q: *Has ERIC agreed to cooperate with Google Scholar?*

A: Google is crawling the ERIC site. This means that Google might have the content before other vendors.

MODERATOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

On behalf of the ERIC Users Group Steering Committee Judy Walker noted that EBSS represents academic librarians. The committee has a representative of the Special Libraries Association and will attempt to involve the American Association of School Librarians in the future. However, at this point the committee is not well informed about the needs of K-12 practitioners. The committee recommends and encourages that ERIC talk with K-12 people to find out what their needs are in regard to the official ERIC web site.

Judy also suggested that the ERIC Users Committee start blog dedicated to ERIC news page and other sources of related information. The User Group needs to start talking about how to teach the new ERIC. There is a link to the ERIC Users Committee on the EBSS web site. People should feel free to send questions and comments to the committee.