

Library Connect
Partnering with the Library Community

pamphlet # 1

second edition

15 Ways to Promote Effective Use of Online Resources

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 **ScienceDirect**[™]
makes sense.

RESEARCH

We all want to make the most of our investments and resources. In an ongoing effort to improve services and collaborative activities offered to the librarian community, Elsevier regularly commissions research among librarians and end-users. One finding has been that librarians are interested in learning about results of these research efforts. We are, therefore, pleased to share here results of recent research into the promotion and use of online services within organizations.

At the end of 2002, Elsevier commissioned through an independent research agency an extensive international research program among librarians and end-users across Germany, France, the US, the UK, and Asia Pacific nations. The objective was to gain insights from users into factors that help achieve effective use of online services.

This pamphlet summarizes results provided by the independent research agency; these summaries do not necessarily represent the views of Elsevier. All research that Elsevier commissions is conducted under strict market research codes of conduct.

Examining ScienceDirect usage logs for a set of institutions with similar demographic profiles, the research found that institutes using certain approaches or “best practices” saw higher usage. These best practices can be applied to promote effective use of any electronic resource.

In addition to presenting these best practices, this pamphlet provides references to articles, books, and online information addressing in-depth the topic of how to make the best use of digital resources.

We hope this information assists you in getting the most from electronic services within your organization.

FINDINGS

Library Website Positioning

1. Make sure your institute's homepage features obvious links to library pages
2. On the library homepage, offer links to digital resources and subject-specific content
3. Limit the number of clicks a user needs to get to full-text access

Library Website Searching

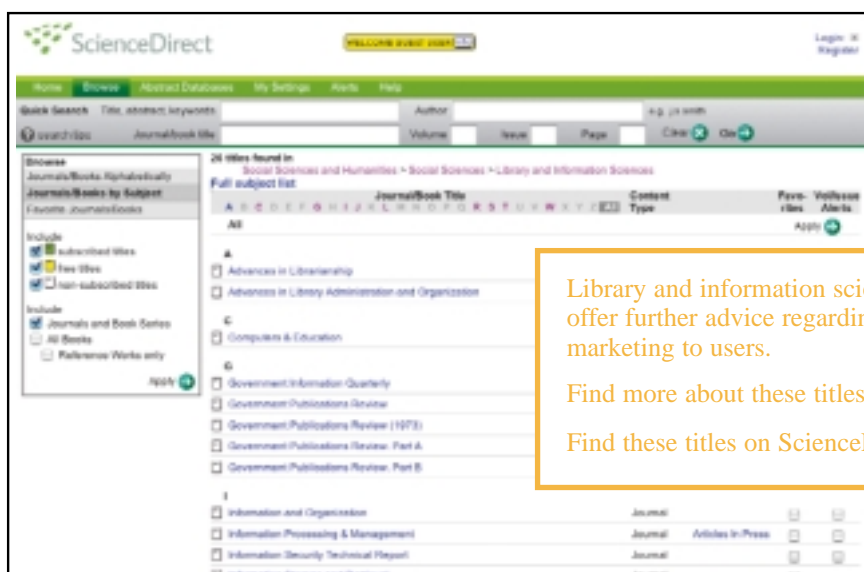
4. Allow searches on metadata or key words associated with online resources
5. Offer options for restricting a search
6. Offer searchable lists of online resources and providers

Library Website Help Features

7. List library staff titles and names with telephone numbers and email addresses
8. Incorporate subject-specific help features within your library website
9. Provide well-structured FAQs as part of your website
10. Provide guides appropriate for all levels of users, beginner to advanced

Marketing to Users

11. Use communication extending beyond library buildings and targeting users in subject-specific ways
12. Avoid generic email alerts to a wide audience in favor of tailored email messages
13. Create training courses focusing on specific subjects or problems
14. Allow users to register online for training courses or sessions
15. Collaborate with your publisher and vendor contacts



Library and information science titles published by Elsevier offer further advice regarding library websites and marketing to users.

Find more about these titles at www.elsevier.com/libraryscience

Find these titles on ScienceDirect at www.sciencedirect.com

LIBRARY WEBSITE POSITIONING

1. Make sure your institute's homepage features obvious links to library pages.

Some university homepages do not prominently display links to the institutes' libraries. Keeping the library close to the surface on an organization's website can help connect users, especially newcomers, with library resources. A library link on an institute's homepage can also help maintain awareness of the vital role of the library within a university or community.

To see this best practice in action, visit the Ohio State University homepage at www.osu.edu

**Explore More**

Welch, J. M. (2005). The electronic welcome mat: The academic library Web site as a marketing and public relations tool. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 31(3), 225–228.
DOI: 10.1016/j.acalib.2004.01.014
Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

A direct and easy-to-find link from an institute's main homepage to the institute's library pages can play an important role in library visibility

2. On the library homepage, offer links to digital resources and subject-specific content.

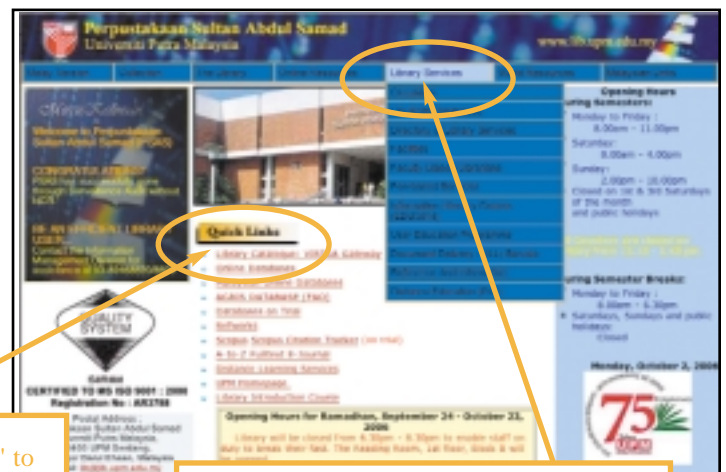
A library homepage clearly providing relevant information for researchers is more likely to be used effectively. A site that shows what the library offers to make life easier for users, a site meeting users' needs, can also contribute to greater satisfaction among patrons and fewer requests for help.

To see this best practice in action, visit Universiti Putra Malaysia's library website at www.lib.upm.edu.my

Explore More

Brower, S. M. (2004). Academic health sciences library website navigation: An analysis of forty-one websites and their navigation tools. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 92(4), 412–420.

Harpel-Burke, P. (2005). Library homepage design at medium-sized universities: A comparison to commercial homepages via Nielsen and Tahir. *OCLC Systems & Services*, 21(3), 193–208.
DOI: 10.1108/10650750510612399

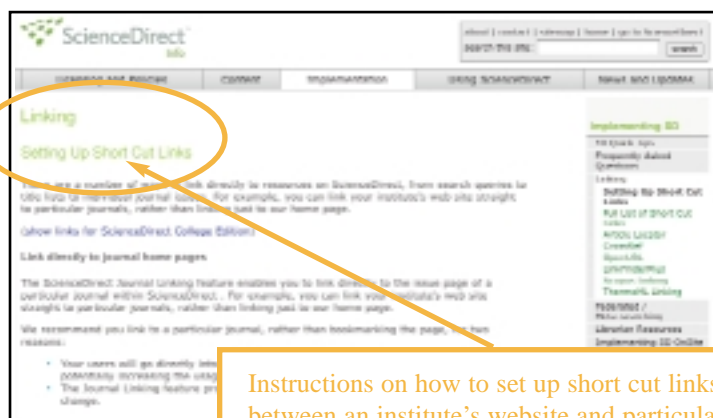


Immediately noticeable "quick links" to online journals and other e-resources help speed users on their way

A very clear website, such as this one with drop-down menus, allows users to connect right away with needed digital resources and encourages browsing

3. Limit the number of clicks a user needs to get to full-text access.

While dependent on an organization's size and library structure, the ideal is only three or four clicks between an institute's homepage and full-text access to electronic resources offered by the institute's library. By offering on your library website links or short cuts to particular resources, you can get researchers directly into their preferred titles with the minimum number of clicks.



Instructions on how to set up short cut links between an institute's website and particular titles on ScienceDirect appear at www.info.sciencedirect.com

Elsevier offers short cut URLs enabling users to jump to specific areas in ScienceDirect. You can add to your library homepage or OPAC the short cuts most popular with your staff and patrons. For a list of short cut links to journals and other pages within ScienceDirect, go to

<http://info.sciencedirect.com/implementing/linking/>

Explore More

Maes, A., Geel, A. V., & Cozijn, R. (2006). Signposts on the digital highway: The effect of semantic and pragmatic hyperlink previews.

Interacting with Computers, 18(2), 265–282.

DOI: 10.1016/j.intcom.2005.05.004

Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

LIBRARY WEBSITE SEARCHING

4. Allow searches on metadata or key words associated with online resources.

By expanding search functionality beyond key words in publication titles, you help users get to the content they need faster. In the research reported on in this pamphlet, users rated most highly organizations offering various search options.

Explore More

Coyle, K. (2005). Understanding metadata and its purpose. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 31(2), 160–163.

DOI: 10.1016/j.acalib.2004.12.010

Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Kahl, C. M., & Williams, S. C. (2006). Accessing digital libraries: A study of ARL members' digital projects. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32(4), 364–369.

DOI: 10.1016/j.acalib.2006.03.003

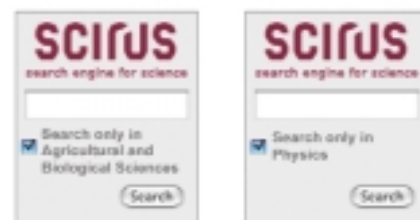
Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

5. Offer options for restricting a search.

A subject-specific search box on your library site can assist researchers in locating appropriate resources. Elsevier offers free, downloadable subject-specific search boxes for Scirus, the Web search engine for scientific information, at www.scirus.com

"As one of the few nonscientists in an organization dominated by Ph.D.s, Mary Ellen Murphy sometimes feels out of place. 'I'm your French major working in this crazy environment,' said Murphy, the communications coordinator at the Florida Institute of Phosphate Research in Bartow. 'Science is out of my bailiwick.' So when she has to write about a particularly technical issue, she frequently turns to scirus.com for help."

—*The Ledger*, August 22, 2002



Downloadable subject-specific search boxes for Scirus are freely available at www.scirus.com

6. Offer searchable lists of online resources and providers.

The optimum is to offer an A–Z list and subject list, both searchable by publication title as well as by vendor or publisher. The research revealed that users preferred library sites offering evident and effective search options, simple and quick. To view effective use of various search options, see the King’s College London Information Services & Systems page at www.kcl.ac.uk/iss/ir/eresources



Explore More

Detlor, B., & Lewis, V. (2006). Academic library Web sites: Current practice and future directions. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32(3), 251–258.
DOI: 10.1016/j.acalib.2006.02.007
Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Withers, R., Casson, R., & Shrimplin, A. (2002). Creating Web-based listings of electronic journals without creating extra work. *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services*, 26(2), 107–112.
DOI: 10.1016/S1464-9055(02)00227-0
Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Offering e-resources in A-Z lists can contribute to more effective use of a library site by users

LIBRARY WEBSITE HELP FEATURES

7. List library staff titles and names with telephone numbers and email addresses.

Just as with search options, much variation exists among organizations in terms of how they present help options. The research found that best practice sites welcome emails to library faculty and staff. Note that providing email addresses means a library needs to guarantee responses.

Explore More

De Rosa, C., Cantrell, J., Hawk, J., & Wilson, A. (2006). *College students' perceptions of libraries and information resources: A report to the OCLC membership*. Dublin, OH: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.
Retrieved from www.oclc.org/reports/perceptionscollege.htm

8. Incorporate subject-specific help features within your library website.

To engage users, help features need to be appropriate to users' needs and issues.

Aston University's Library and Information Services offers subject-specific help at www.aston.ac.uk/lis/index.jsp

Explore More

Webster, J., & Rielly, L. (2003). A library instruction case study: Measuring success from multiple perspectives. *Research Strategies*, 19(1), 16–32.
DOI: 10.1016/j.resstr.2003.11.001
Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com



Subject-specific help shows researchers how to use digital resources in the most efficient way

Library Website Help Features

9. Provide well-structured FAQs as part of your website.

Some sites now ask users to read “frequently asked questions” before contacting staff. Keeping updated FAQs readily available on your library site can help users quickly find answers to specific questions.

Queensland University of Technology uses icons to identify help options, including FAQs, on its library’s help page at www.library.qut.edu.au/ask.jsp

Explore More

Jurkowski, O. L. (2005). An analysis of library Web sites at colleges and universities serving distance education students. In E. D. Garten, D. E. Williams & J. M. Nyce (Eds.), *Advances in library administration and organization* (Vol. 22, pp. 23–77). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

DOI: 10.1016/S0732-0671(05)22002-3

Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

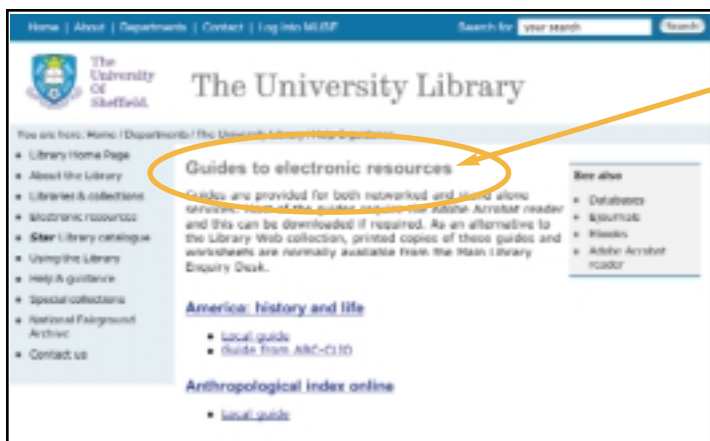
FAQs can help users get answers fast, and complement other help options



10. Provide guides appropriate for all levels of users, beginner to advanced.

Online guides can help users make the most of resources. The University of Sheffield’s library offers a range of e-resource guides at www.shef.ac.uk/library/libdocs/atof.html

Online guides offer additional information to help your users make the best use of your library’s resources



ScienceDirect user guides and tutorials can help your researchers get the most out of the extensive functionality and content available on ScienceDirect. All these guides and tutorials, designed for licensed users and guests, are freely available at www.info.sciencedirect.com



ScienceDirect user guides and tutorials, provided in various languages, are available 24/7 at www.info.sciencedirect.com

MARKETING TO USERS

11. Use communication extending beyond library buildings and targeting users in subject-specific ways.

Clear and precise communication focusing on a subject or digital resource can acquaint your users with the benefits of tapping into your online resources. Faculty newsletters and course notes can announce additions and updates to library offerings. Publishers offer freely available updates, such as *insideScopus* (available from Elsevier), and librarians can sign up for and then cascade the updates to particular faculty or researchers.

12. Avoid generic email alerts to a wide audience in favor of tailored email messages.

You can make the library the first port of call and raise the profile of library staff by selective use of communications, while steering clear of adding to researchers' email fatigue. Librarians can create tailored alerts or use alerts provided by vendors and publishers.

"Publicity tactics should include targeted announcements, such as alerting specific faculty groups about relevant materials, as well as repeated training and update sessions.

"When I was Dean, it was not unusual for me to be talking to faculty who were astonished to learn that particular journals of interest to them were available online — even though this was often well after the fact of licensing online access. And we had in our view a very active publicity campaign! Creating ongoing and multi-faceted marketing communication is my advice."

— **David Kohl**, Editor-in-Chief, *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, and Dean and University Librarian, Emeritus, University of Cincinnati, 2003

13. Create training courses focusing on specific subjects or problems.

Communicate solutions delivered by trainings, by using course or session titles like "How to use our latest chemistry resources" or "How to connect if you live far from the library." By offering classes focused on specific subjects or problems, your library can partner with users to assist proactively in their research careers.

Elsevier provides onsite and online (delivered over the Web) trainings to meet customers' interests and needs. To inquire about training for users affiliated with institutions with licenses to Elsevier e-products, contact your Elsevier account development manager.

It's easy to locate account development managers' phone numbers and email addresses via Elsevier's Contacts Finder at <http://contacts.elsevier.com>

Learning who at Elsevier is the right person to help you regarding specific products is easy when you use the Contacts Finder for Librarians at <http://contacts.elsevier.com>

**CONTACTS
FINDER**

Marketing to Users / Additional Resources

14. Allow users to register online for training courses or sessions.

By embracing technology, libraries support remote users and demonstrate understanding of researchers' needs, tasks, and environments. E-registration can contribute to higher participation in classes your library offers, and can contribute to increased interest in your digital resources.

Explore More

Beile, P. M., & Boote, D. N. (2004). Does the medium matter? A comparison of a Web-based tutorial with face-to-face library instruction on education students' self-efficacy levels and learning outcomes. *Research Strategies*, 20(1–2), 57–68.
DOI: 10.1016/j.resstr.2005.07.002
Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

15. Collaborate with your publisher and vendor contacts.

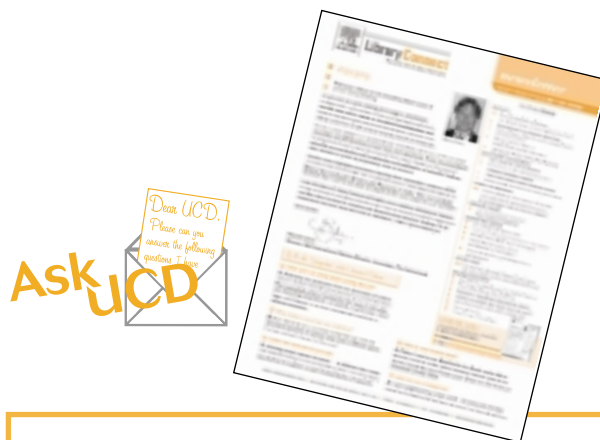
Cooperative marketing programs are available at no charge to libraries and can help your resources go further.

"Be creative — try to think of new ways to promote your services. Be personable — not all marketing of electronic resources has to be done electronically and library employees are always the best advertisement for library services. Be persistent — sometimes it takes numerous reminders/advertisements before a patron decides to check out the website or library. Enjoy it — marketing is one of the fun, creative tasks library staff get to do!"

— **Melissa Kane**, Electronic Services Librarian / Bibliothécaire des services électroniques, ESIC/CIST,
Natural Resources Canada/Ressources naturelles Canada, 2003

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Bell, S. S. (2006). *Librarian's guide to online searching*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Case, D. O. (2002). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs and behavior*. San Diego, CA: Elsevier.
- Gomes, S. L. R. (2004). Virtual library: A new territory for scientific research in Brazil. In T. Carbo (Ed.), *The international information & library review* (Vol. 36, Issue 1, pp. 13–21). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Hsieh-Yee, I. (2006). *Organizing audiovisual and electronic resources for access: A cataloging guide*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Lesk, M. (2004). *Understanding digital libraries* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufmann.
- Stone, D., Jarrett, C., Woodroffe, M., & Minocha, S. (2005). *User interface design and evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufmann.



"Ask UCD," a regular column in the free quarterly *Library Connect Newsletter*, features website design advice offered by members of Elsevier's User Centered Design Group.

To sign up for the newsletter, available in print and electronically, visit www.elsevier.com/libraryconnect

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