

Successful Access to Research pilot leads to extension of service

- From 'Roman Wales' to 'Ebola': local library users able to continue searching over 10 million academic articles, free-of-charge -

The Access to Research initiative, which gives users in public libraries free access to over 10 million academic articles, has been given the green light by publishers and librarians to continue.

The service was originally launched as a pilot by the Universities and Science Minister in 2014, in order to support expanded access to publicly funded research in the UK. Two years on and over 80% of UK local authorities, representing more than 2,600 libraries, have signed up to the initiative from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Since the launch, over 84,000 users have accessed the service and an independent report, commissioned by the Publishers Licensing Society (PLS) and the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), and co-funded by PLS and Arts Council England, has confirmed the value of the Access to Research service to users.

The report found that satisfaction with Access to Research is high, with 90% of those surveyed indicating the information they found through the service was useful. User feedback included: "I was surprised how much material was made available" and "it makes the public library look like a more happening place."

Almost every academic discipline is covered by the journals made available through Access to Research, via the Summon® discovery service. Findings have shown that users are taking full advantage of this to explore a wide variety of topics. Over 230,000 searches (since Jan 2014) have investigated topics from dementia to biomedical engineering; modern religious philosophy to contemporary art; social work to polar records; and Roman Wales to Ebola; amongst many more.

Access to Research has been made possible by a consortium of academic publishers, who collectively publish some of the world's most respected scientific journals. News of the publishing community's decision to extend the service has been warmly welcomed by librarians and users. Librarians participating in the initiative are encouraged to continue promoting the service, to further increase awareness of the wealth of information available from their library terminal.

Sarah Faulder, Chief Executive at the Publishers Licensing Society, said: "I am delighted that the Access to Research initiative has been received so positively by librarians and the general public, and we are pleased to have the support of publishers to continue providing this service. We hope to see usage continuing to increase over the coming months."

Ciara Eastell, SCL President, said: "This news is welcomed by libraries and library customers and we appreciate all of the hard work that has gone into ensuring Access to Research can be prolonged. It is an incredibly valuable information resource for our customers and enhances the Learning and Information Offers in public libraries."

Lesley Sim, West Sussex Libraries Information Services Manager, said: "We are delighted to see how well A2R is being used in West Sussex libraries and it is fantastic that residents can access this resource via all our libraries - including the smallest community libraries. It has been particularly useful for scientific and medical enquiries but just this week we were able to give a researcher access to two key journal articles instantly. It has enhanced the information service we are able to provide."

Notes to Editors

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Background

Access to Research was launched in response to a key recommendation of the Finch Group, a committee convened by the Government to explore how access to publicly funded research could be expanded. The Finch Group recommended that the major journal publishers should grant public libraries a licence to provide free access to their academic articles. Access to Research is the result of a unique collaboration between librarians and publishers, who have made their journal content available for free to UK libraries. The content is searchable through the Summon® discovery service, provided free of charge by ProQuest.

The implementation group, led by the Publishers Licensing Society, gathered quantitative and qualitative data during the two year pilot which was used to assess effectiveness of the service and inform future delivery. Read the executive summary here: <http://bit.ly/1RhwdG8>

- Browse available journals: <http://bit.ly/1jf1fa6>
- Find a participating public library: www.accesstoresearch.org.uk/libraries
- Are you a local authority and want to sign up your libraries? Email accesstoresearch@pls.org.uk
- Are you a publisher and want to join? Email register@pls.org.uk
- Follow @A2R_4libraries Tweet #AccessToResearch

Publishers

Current participating publishers are: [ALPSP](#), [Cambridge University Press](#), [De Gruyter Open](#), [Dove Press](#), [Edinburgh University Press](#), [Elsevier](#), [Emerald](#), [IOP Publishing](#), [Oxford University Press](#), [Portland Press](#), [Royal Society Journals](#), [SAGE Publications](#), [Science Reviews 2000 Ltd.](#), [Society for General Microbiology](#), [Springer Nature](#), [Taylor & Francis](#), [Whiting & Birch Ltd.](#), [Wiley](#), [Wolters Kluwer Health](#).

About the implementation group:

The Publishers Licensing Society

The Publishers Licensing Society (PLS) offers rights management services to the publishing industry. We are not-for-profit, set up by the industry, for the industry; with our primary remit being to oversee collective licensing in the UK for book, journal, magazine and website copying. www.pls.org.uk

Society of Chief Librarians

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) leads and manages public libraries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL is made up of the head of service of every library authority, and advocates for continuous improvement of the public library service on behalf of local people. www.goscl.com

ProQuest

ProQuest connects people with vetted, reliable information. Key to serious research, the company's products are a gateway to the world's knowledge including dissertations, governmental and cultural archives, news, historical collections and ebooks. ProQuest technologies serve users across the critical points in research, helping them discover, access, share, create and manage information. www.proquest.co.uk

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)

ALPSP is the international membership body for not-for-profit organizations that publish scholarly and professional content and those who work with them. ALPSP connects, informs, develops and represents its members and has a membership of 330 companies in 40 countries. Over 10,000 journals are published by ALPSP members as well as numerous books, databases and other products and services. www.alpsp.org

The Publishers Association

The Publishers Association is the leading trade organisation serving book, journal, audio and electronic publishers in the UK. Membership comprises 108 companies from across the trade, academic and education sectors. Its core service is representation and lobbying, around copyright, rights and other matters relevant to members, who represent roughly 80% of the industry by turnover. www.publishers.org.uk

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