E-Reserves Linking:

Improving Access and Support Through a Custom Permalink System

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Timeline / Scenario

It’s 2020

Beginning stages of implementing an electronic textbook program

Customer Impact

Better understand usage, improve relationship with faculty, use this as a catalyst for other services
COVID

- End users go remote
- Increased resource usage
- Remote – authentication must work, have backup solution
- How will this impact our support?
Out of the box solutions?

Factors: Cost, Institutional barriers, Limited library staff
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ExLibris Leganto</th>
<th>Cost, Implementation Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated with Alma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requires D2L Integration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing Training with Instructors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Springshare E-Reserves Module

Affordable
Public Facing, Searchable
Limited Functionality vs Leganto
Limited Course and Item Import/Export
Purchased and Implemented on our website
Addressing our limitations

**How can we determine usage?**

System and vendor usage reports take time.

**Need to see usage as it occurs?**

Find issues as they occur.

**System downtime (ALMA, Primo, OpenAthens, Proxy)**
## Course Level Linking

### Understand the user environment:

- D2L / Content creation
- Limited reporting and/or assistance by campus IT (Safari Example)
- Course content often gets reused/copied for future semesters
- Faculty have varying technology skills, keep things SIMPLE

### How does that affect the Library?

- We need permalinks that are truly permanent
- Links should be short and readable
- Ongoing communication with faculty
Existing Permalinks in Primo

• Primo Permalink: https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INS T/1ccjgob/cdi_ askewsholts_vle books_9781316409756

• Can we guarantee this link or CDI record will always be available?
• Is this readable?
Link Resolver Permalinks


- Step in the right direction
- More permanent
- Still a long URL
The Solution

- Develop our own internal permalink system
- Required a web server
- Script developed using PHP
- Took a week or so to develop
Permalink Example (Custom Solution)

https://libs.etsu.edu/ereserves/PHIL-2640/9781107692367

URL BASE + COURSE CODE + ISBN
(or other Identifier)
End-User Workflow

- User Clicks Permalink
- System Locates the Identifier (ISBN)
- System routes user to resource
End-User Workflow + Internal

User Clicks Permalink → System Locates the Identifier (ISBN) → System routes user to resource

SYSTEM AUTH SETTINGS
CSV FILE “Database”
USAGE LOGGING
System Level Authentication Setting

- Defines a system level default authentication method

// CURRENT DEFAULT STATUS ("oa" or "proxy")
$default_status = 'oa';

// PROXY PREFIX - DEFINE HERE
$oa_prefix = 'https://go.openathens.net/redirector/etsu.edu?url=';
Locating the Resource

Looks at a CSV File to match the identifier (ISBN)

If no match, uses identifier and forwards user to the primo link resolver.
CSV File “Database”

"Identifier","Title","Auth State","OA Link","OA Prefix","Proxy","Proxy Prefix"

9781107692367
Creating Scientific Controversies

“default” (system default)
“oa”/ “proxy” (title level override)

https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/creating-scientific-controversies/","1"

https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/creating-scientific-controversies/","1"

0 = No URL Prefix
1 = Include URL Prefix
Usage Logging

When user clicks a permalink, the following is recorded into a log file:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>IP Address</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Identifier (ISBN)</th>
<th>Referrer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In addition, we have integrated notifications into a custom Slack channel.
Usage Logging

- Log file is helpful for long term data analysis
- Slack notifications allow us to see real time usage and identify potential linking issues
Implementation

• Started using in 2020
• As of 2023, currently over 290 courses listed on our eReserves page.
• Over 51,000 permalink clicks
• Highest Usage: General Ed Courses & Upper-Level Courses (4000+)
• Seen dramatic increases in our annual COUNTER statistics
Impressions

• Surveyed Faculty and Students
• Overall Positive Impact
• Many instructors find the link easy to utilize in D2L, email, or web
• Established ongoing “check-ins” with instructors each semester
• Frequent requests for additional electronic materials
• Helps drive our open and affordable course material initiative
Ongoing Support & Maintenance

A few OpenAthens outages over the years – easy to change config setting and move all permalinks over to our backup proxy.

Over time, we modified existing permalinks to a newer eTextbook edition. No edits were required from the instructor.

Having usage logs have helped us understand use patterns on a course level. It has allowed us to license 3-user textbooks with confidence.

Also helpful for troubleshooting access related issues.
We plan to continue using the custom permalink script with the Springshare eReserves Module.

Implemented a similar script for our A-Z Database links
Conclusion

Hands-on Demo
Questions?

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