

The Technical Side to E-city

So how do we enable these tools, once selected? First, we need to find out from the vendors how they offer the tools. I hope you don't find this next part too simple: a Beginner's Guide to Authentication.

At their simplest level, databases are offered on **cd-rom**, which gets updated. We have several tools like this at WP – Datex and the TePuna cd-roms are good examples.

Other tools require a **username and password access** – This means that people can use these tools, eg. Knowledge Basket, but it is difficult to remember all the passwords that you have for a large library!

For in-library use by staff, we have turned to a popular method of authentication: **IP authentication**. Every time we use a Wellington City Council computer to access the Internet, sites that we visit record that we have come from a particular Internet Protocol address. Examples of this type of authentication currently are Ebsco, (where our staff link to ebscohost.com) and our new kompass subscription. Beware – we sometimes find we have firewall problems with using IP authentication. Our Internet firewall protects us from getting attacked by viruses and hackers – and therefore controls the communication stream, both outgoing and incoming. The action of being authenticated sometimes triggers an error message: and this is certainly true of Kompass where we have to try several times to get in. Our IP authentication only works on pcs that are within the Council network (including branches)- people using our website can't access these tools.

For website access by customers to tools, there are at least three other ways:

The simplest form of remote access by customers has to be **pattern-matching**. This is where you inform the vendor of what your library card number looks like: for example, our library card number is a seven digit number with a "c" prefix. Some US libraries also use a combination of library card number with zipcode or phone number prefix.

Our most used method of authentication here at WCL is **"Referring URL" authentication**. This is how we provide access to the tools on e-city. The way the system works is that after someone fills in their username & password on e-city, a program sitting on our web server checks their details against the password list we update daily. If their details are verified, then the program sends them onto the particular vendor's website address. The vendor's web server recognises the website address the user has come from and lets them use the tool. We use this authentication, which was developed with Chris Cormack of Katipo Communications, for all our e-city tools as well as the new Grove Art database soon to be added and our Oxford English Dictionary trial. We prefer this method because:

- a) it is much more secure than using a pattern-matching method: anyone could find out what a WCL cardnumber looked like.

- b) we can assign levels of access to users by borrower type: if people use an organisation/corporate/agency card to login to the Ebsco resources, they gain access to abstract level only. We can also block library card holders with large fines from accessing the system.

Another method of authentication that we don't currently exercise is **uploading passwords** and/or library card numbers to a remote vendor's site (they do the authentication). When we developed our relationship with Gale, they were very keen for use to use this method. We were reluctant to do so, as our existing methods seemed to work well. As we update our authentication file of borrower details each day, we'd need to upload these to the remote vendor as well. This would be time-consuming and there is also the security problem of sending this information via an insecure connection.

Complying with Vendor Requirements and Monitoring

Through our use of referring url, In this way we can be assured that we are following the legal requirements of our vendors. With each login, as Deborah mentioned, we ensure that users agree to a statement concerning copyright. This statement reads:

"These databases are protected by international copyright. They are provided by Wellington City Libraries for the private and personal use of individuals who are registered Wellington City Libraries' staff and patrons. In entering this database the patron agrees to these terms and conditions of usage." Your continued use of this database indicates your agreement to abide by these terms and conditions".

Another way that we can ensure that we are conforming to vendors' requirements is that the time and borrower ids of every login are recorded by a logging system. This gives us a good guide to users that are experiencing difficulty (eg. forgotten their password) and picking up when users are potentially logging in multiple terminals with the same borrower details.

We also use our webserver logs to indicate the organisational domains that are connecting to the e-city homepage, for example, we can tell that vuw.ac.nz hits this site as well as general Internet Service Providers such as Paradise.Net.

Other logs can be gained from the tools themselves and these prove very useful for us to track what our borrowers are interested in. In the last few months, EBSCO has tracked the following details:

For August 2001: the top magazine titles who had provoked full-text views were the Roeper Review, the Economist, Harvard Business Review, Management, the Library Journal and the British Medical Journal. New Zealand Business also proves very popular, coming in at No. 8 in the list.

In abstracts viewed, for the same period, the most popular magazine titles were:

Forbes, Money, Public Personnel Management, Wall Street Journal – Eastern Edition, the NZ Listener, the Times Educational Supplement and the New York Times.

Other months we have seen that other more general magazines such as New Statesman & Society have scored highly. In the coming months we hope to more clearly identify to the public which serials are available on EBSCO and hope that this will encourage use of those databases. This does not mean however that we are considering the cessation of some of our magazine subscriptions where they are popular online: we recognise that the market for online journals is different from the segment of our customer database who prefers to utilise print resources.

Other statistics that we can gain from EBSCO also show which branches of our libraries are using which databases. By tracking this usage, we can also discuss with team coaches which sites would benefit from more training.

Staff Training

When a public service organisation like a public library decides to deliver some of its services in a different way, there needs to be an upskilling of staff to support these new directions. We have found our staff keen to adopt new technology – as our community has become Internet-savvy, so have our colleagues.

The purchase of new Internet databases were certainly a new endeavour for the library when EBSCO was first considered by the Collection Development Team selectors in 1998 and the purchase was thought to be 'quite a leap'.

Initial concerns within the library were:

- staff take-up
- lack of time to support the databases
- training implications
- our then current technological skills were more limited to the non-Windows-based interface provided by the BookPlus library management software
- there was no public access to the tools apart from over the reference desk – and sometimes the only internet-based pcs were in the workroom, behind the enquiry desk.

Deborah was instrumental in both convincing the Collection Development Team that this was the way the future looked as well as training all staff in using EBSCO's MasterFILE Premier & World Magazine Bank. This involved not only teaching them an introduction to database searching using Boolean. This tied in well with the considerable training that was already going on in other areas, eg. customer service following the Business Process Re-engineering exercise that had been undertaken by WCL that year. Essentially the early EBSCO training introduced our colleagues into what special librarians had been doing for some time: taking advantage of new technologies.

While our team leaders and coaches have encouraged all staff during this process, it was acknowledged that pc access continued to be a problem. This was caused by some slow computer response times, having to share pcs, and having to adapt to a new interface, quite unlike our traditional BookPlus.

In the last few years, the library world and its tools have changed. Since the purchase of EBSCO, we have also seen the introduction of the new browser-based TePuna interface by National Library, the increased use of search engines to respond to reference enquiries over the counter (eg. To answer crossword puzzle enquiries) and our own purchases of Electric Library Australasia and Gale. ELA has especially assisted in gaining staff acceptance for electronic databases, as our colleagues in the branches no longer had to send customers into Central Library to do research for their hot topics projects. Likewise with the installation of Gale's Biography Resource Center – photos and biographical information for hundreds of thousands of individuals are now available both to the staff in the library as well as the customer at home.

We very much see that staff advocacy is the issue – the more that our staff can gain from using these tools, the more that they can and will promote them to the end-users, our borrowers. Another issue is that the more that we can assist colleagues in taking up existing tools that the library subscribes to, the more that they will accept new tools as they come along. Our concern is always that the libraries should seek to achieve the best informational outcome for our customers, whether that is from traditional or new sources.

Staff support new online tools in other ways than just promoting their use to our customers. There are also the helpdesk implications of providing remote access. These include providing advice where people have problems connecting in and using the tools. Some of these issues have been assisted by the decision to no longer promote e-city to those living outside our City boundaries.

With the increase in tools, we have also gained funding from Wellington City Council to purchase pcs to place in every branch library, which provide free access to good reference websites as well as e-city. These have now been installed and have proved very popular after school! With more pc resources now available, we are encouraging school groups to visit: staff are therefore encouraged to develop their training skills in showing customers what's available both physically and virtually. Currently we have two high schools in our catchment who ensure that every third former visit us to become a member as well as making sure that they get an e-city password. As someone recently said to us "e-city is the best thing that the library has every done".

There are still pockets of resistance to new technology, whereby a few staff always check online databases if absolutely necessary. The implementation of our new Windows-based TLC/CARL library management system, Whekenui ("great octopus") provides us with the ideal opportunity to find out where we all are at in terms of technology skills.

To this end, we're currently collecting responses to a technology survey, which every WCL staff member has to complete. This survey covers: use of our own wcl.govt.nz website resources

- e-city tools,
- general Internet,
- use of search engines,
- TePuna,
- MS Word & Outlook
- reference skills
- Union Catalogue (for good measure).

The survey generally takes each person about one hour to complete. We have even received responses from staff who really enjoyed filling it in and found it fun! It has also ended up as a quasi-team building exercise – in my area of WCL, I saw people helping others with the MS Outlook and MS Word responses.

Survey results are currently being analysed. With the expected arrival next year of our real-time web-based catalogue, CarlWeb and the kid-friendly KidsCat Web, we want to maximize support for, and acceptance of, our online opportunities. Therefore, we'll be using our colleagues who are training staff in the new LMS to up-skill them also in other technology where there's a need identified by the survey results. Since we are shortly to be in a frenzied learning environment, coming to grips with new circulation, serials, cataloguing and other modules, any "catch-up" training will just be part and parcel of the same New World.

The Future Direction of E-city

So what was are we planning for this New World?

We very much see E-city as one of the cornerstones of the growing opportunities for WCL to develop our 'library that never sleeps' ethos. This 'electronic collection' not only includes e-city but also our website resources, the databases we are creating and the opportunities our new LMS, such as direct cataloguing of links to EBSCO serials and web-enabled catalogues.

In terms of e-city itself, we are therefore looking to expand it with GroveArt as well as other resources, and rethink the e-city interface to make it easier to read and use.

We are also hoping to align the design closer to that of our general library website, which we will relaunch with a new look and enhancements in the next few months. We are planning to provide better navigation to new features, as well as adding a "MyLibrary" suite of pages.

This new feature will provide our customers with an opportunity to build a personalised experience, based on the information they give us about the

subjects that interest them. We can then deliver to the desktop notification of new books in that area as well as easily tailoring links to relevant tools.

In relation to our overall policy, Wellington City Libraries is developing an E-strategy to pull all our endeavours together in a strategic document. This has its underpinnings in the first web development policy that was delivered at the time of the launch of our main library website (wcl.govt.nz). This will detail our business direction and provide a policy basis for future enhancements of our electronic collections.

All in all, we're hoping to bring a bright and electronic future to our customers to enhance their library experience.