

RCM Midwives Journal: electronic access



Catherine Ebenezer is the RCM information systems manager

Catherine Ebenezer explains the different ways in which it is now possible to access content from the journal using the internet.

For some time, back issues of *RCM Midwives Journal* have been accessible via the website: www.midwives.co.uk. However, now the publishers McMillan-Scott have moved them to a service called Ingenta that can be accessed on: www.ingenta.com. This is significant for a number of reasons.

Surprisingly, given the prevalence of American terminology (library 'patrons', for instance) on its website, Ingenta is a UK company that was established in 1998. It is what librarians and publishers term an aggregator of electronic content, meaning that it provides a common platform and set of tools for accessing the output of a large number of scholarly and professional publishers. It hosts 17 073 554 articles from 28 737 publications, from over 260 publishers. Most of this material is available online.

The bibliographic information (author, journal title, article title) and abstracts from all the journals are available for search and display by anyone, free of charge. The Ingenta database is in itself a useful bibliographical resource to use in addition to the clinical databases available through university libraries or NHS websites. It offers a rudimentary but useful advanced search facility, as well as basic keyword searching. Citation information for articles is displayed as the result of a search. For each article there is then the option to 'mark' it to add to a search set, to display the article summary, or to proceed to the full text. The full text files are in HTML or PDF formats and can be downloaded or emailed to another computer.

It is also possible to browse publications by first letter of the title, subject area, title words, and publisher. Scrolling down the list of publishers, you will see 'Royal College of Midwives'. Clicking on this link takes you directly to the online content of *RCM Midwives Journal*. One has the option of viewing 'current issue' or 'all issues'. 'All issues' displays a list of the available issues, identified

by volume, part number and date, whereas 'current issue' displays citation information for all the articles in the most recent available issue. At present, the back issues only go back as far as 2002. There are plans, however, to provide access to all back issues from 1998.

Content from *RCM Midwives Journal* is available to download free of charge to anyone, although, to preserve the benefits of College membership, there is an embargo on the most recent six months' articles. Generally, however, within Ingenta, the full text can only be displayed free for those titles to which the searcher's institution subscribes. Other material is available only on a pay-per-view basis.

As well as having its own registration facility, Ingenta links with the ATHENS authentication system. It is worth checking with your local NHS Trust or university library to find out whether they provide access via ATHENS and Ingenta to other journals. For a hard-pressed searcher who is prepared to pay for access to material, the attraction of aggregation services such as Ingenta is their 'one-stop' character – the integration of search with access to full text. However, obtaining articles via inter-library loan is normally considerably cheaper than using Ingenta.

Registering one's own username and password with Ingenta provides access to some additional free facilities. Registered users can save searches and set up search alerts or journal table of contents alerts (a maximum of five).

Hosting *RCM Midwives Journal* content on Ingenta will raise the College's profile through the increased accessibility, and hence impact, that it provides. This is achieved not only via Ingenta's own search facilities, but also by means of 'exposure' to the Google search engine. Since May of this year, Google (www.google.com) has indexed all Ingenta content, therefore it is also possible for a Google search on a midwifery-related topic to take the user to an article within *RCM Midwives Journal*.

Ingenta is an aggregator of electronic content and provides a common platform and tools for accessing a large number of publishers.

For a hard-pressed user who is prepared to pay for access to material, the attraction of aggregation services such as Ingenta is their 'one-stop' character.