

The E-Reserve Project at the University of Auckland:
Electronic Provision of Short Loan/Desk Copy Articles 2003-2004

Background

For some time the University Library had been keen to make course material readings (also known as desk copy/short loan journal articles and book chapters) available electronically, but it was not until the copyright licensing agreement changed in 2003 that it was legally possible. As soon as this happened the University Library applied for a grant from the Vice Chancellor's Development Fund to carry out a pilot project. The project would assess best methods, practices, standards and workflows, and also investigate sustainability, maintenance and management of a permanent Electronic Course Material Collection. This paper describes the pilot project, its issues and resolutions, results and future implications.

Objectives

The key objective was to make course material readings (existing photocopied journal articles and book chapters) held in the University Library Short Loan/Desk Copy Collection electronically available. This would:

- Improve access (available 24 x 7, remotely, many students being able to access the same item at once, no electronic items stolen)
- Enhance service delivery (students can print articles at home, students and lecturers save time accessing items)
- Improve management of collections by:
 - Avoiding duplication of items
 - Saving staff time on retrieval and issuing of hard copy items
 - Lecturers being able to see remotely the full-text of their items placed on short loan so better able to request weeding and additions
 - Lecturers know when their items have been processed and are available
- Ensure that service delivery remains in line with other internationally recognised overseas universities
- Expand the range of library resources that are electronically accessible enabling flexible learning (as recommended in the Student Life Commission Report).

The Pilot Project

The pilot project aimed to make items in the largest short loan collection (Arts, Business and Science) available electronically. There were also 8 other smaller short loan subject collections in other libraries (Law, Medical, Fine Arts, Architecture, Engineering, Music, Maori, Tamaki). Each library had its own way of processing, cataloguing and weeding items in the short loan collections, but all libraries were using the Course Materials Database in the Voyager Endeavor Catalogue to manage and deliver the photocopies. It was decided that this would be continued.

1. Budget and Timeframe

The budget for the pilot project was \$31,000. This covered the appointment of two full-time project assistants in the Digital Services Department for 6 months, purchase of 4 scanners, 2 workstations, and Adobe software.

The project commenced in November 2003, with the majority of the work being completed over the summer break so that minimum inconvenience would be caused to lecturers and students. Most items were available by the start of Semester 1 and the pilot finished in May 2004. Additional funding was obtained to enable processing of new submissions up until the end of 2004.

2. Issues and Resolutions for the Pilot Project

A project team was established and weekly meetings were held to discuss issues. The issues and their resolutions are outlined below. Resolutions were implemented for the pilot and they were evaluated at the end of the pilot project, with some changes then taking place.

➤ Weeding collections

The main collection had not been effectively weeded for several years. Rather than digitise items that may not be required at all, it was decided to thoroughly weed the collection before the project began.

➤ Copyright requirements

The University's Copyright Adviser was consulted to see which types of items we could legally digitise and what disclaimers we would need to provide on the items and database.

➤ PDF's and/or E-Links

Library Managers wanted to be 100% certain that all electronic items would be available all of the time, so for this reason it was agreed that all items would be pdf's and saved on a library storage server with a backup, rather than e-links to commercial databases. If we were able under our database licensing agreements, and a pdf was available we would download it to our server, otherwise we would scan items to create a pdf.

➤ Quality of PDF's

None of the existing photocopies were good enough copies to create acceptable quality pdf's, due to skewed pages, black lines, curved spines etc. It was agreed therefore to source original items, which was very time consuming. Guidelines for what comprised an acceptable quality photocopy and pdf were drawn up after samples were shown to the project team. Items were scanned at 300 dpi resolution, predominantly in black and white.

➤ File Size

After testing it was agreed that no pdf file would exceed 2MB otherwise it would take too long for students working at home on a slow connection to download. Because most of the items were being scanned rather than converted from Word the file sizes were quite large, however most did not exceed 2MB. The only exceptions were book chapters. These were scanned in parts and none exceeded 2 parts. Keeping the files in black and white helped keep the file size down. Colour files not yet required

though may be in the future. Adobe Acrobat 5 was used and an automatic process to distill and compress files was implemented.

➤ File Name and Storage

We were not using an image management system (Image Server from Endeavor still lacked the functionality we required, as did EnCompass at that stage). Instead we stored the files onto a newly purchased library storage device. It was important we would be able to manage files easily (additions, deletions, corrections). To enable this we named the pdf's with the bib number of the Voyager record. One of the first checks in the submission system was to look and see if there was an existing or old bib record. If there was there should be a matching pdf with the same number. Also in this way several different courses could link to the same bib/pdf number.

➤ Keeping Hard Copies

There were varying opinions on whether the photocopies should be retained in the collection as well as the electronic copies but, due to a copyright issue in relation to some of the material, it was decided that all the photocopies would be destroyed once they had been digitised. The copyright issue was that if the item was only available electronically in a database, and the University Library did not hold the hard copy, it would not be permissible to print out the copy from the database and supply this as a photocopy. This meant that many of the newer items would not be available in both formats and it was felt that this would be confusing for users, since it would not be immediately apparent why some items were available as hard copy and some were not.

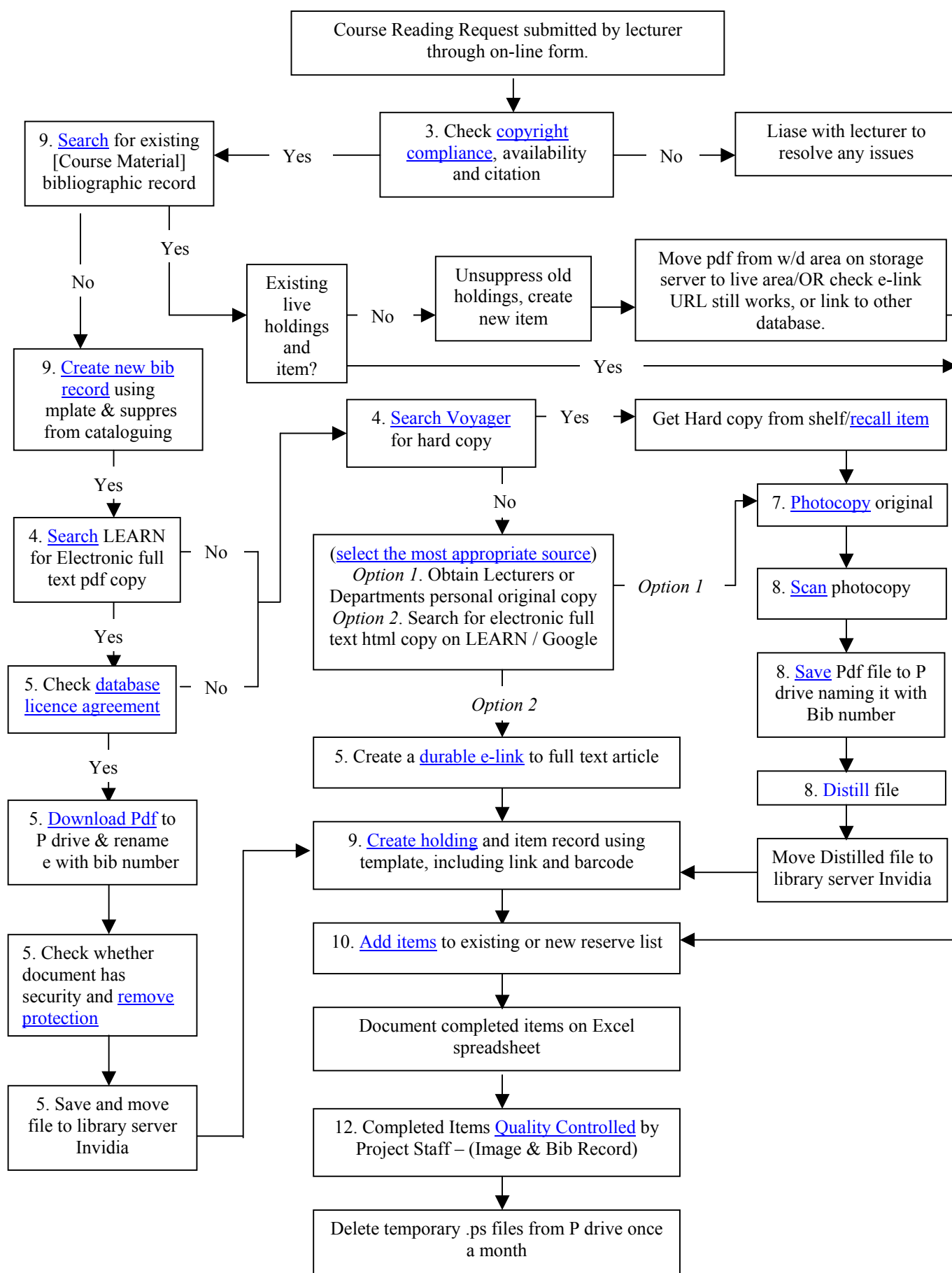
➤ How to handle new submissions for 2004 semesters

The project team wanted to be able to tell users that the whole of the main collection was available electronically. Retrospective digitisation had been taken into account, and it had been hoped that lecturers would have submitted their new items prior to semester starting when digitisation was taking place. However they didn't, so a large amount of new items were being submitted on manual forms as photocopies. We quickly realised we needed to set a system in place to ensure that new items were automatically made available electronically. To this end web submission forms were designed which fed into an Access Database so that submissions could be tracked and statistics kept. The new submission system was widely communicated to lecturers and library staff. It was slightly confusing since it only applied to some subject areas (those in the pilot project) and was only for the duration of the pilot project and would be evaluated at the end. Ultimately the web submissions carried on all year and were expanded to other subject areas.

➤ Documenting the project, decisions and workflow

The complete project was now a highly complicated process, and time and again decisions and standards were questioned. As work progressed the instruction document for project staff quickly changed from a 2-page document into a 44-page manual which included a detailed flowchart of the existing system. It is too lengthy to document everything in this paper but the flowchart is included below.

3. Flowchart of Process for new electronic course material submissions



4. Results

Because after weeding the main collection it halved in size, and also because the two project assistants were extremely efficient and conscientious workers, the project was finished within budget. This enabled retrospective digitisation at three other locations and selected new submissions to be processed for Semester 1 and 2.

Statistics for 2004 were:

	<u>Number of Items</u>
Retrospective digitisation	1923 (for 4 libraries)
New submissions	1664 (for 4 libraries)
Total available electronically	3587

We monitored the usage of the electronic items. (The University has a current enrolment of 33,000 students, and 2500 academic staff).

	<u>Usage*</u>
Summer School 2004	24,038
Semester 1 2004	137,493
Semester 2 2004	101,204
Total usage	262,735

(* Usage stats obtained from Urchin web stats: Directory Drilldown by Pages).

The feedback from both students and lecturers was extremely positive, and the collection was very well used compared to the previous use of the photocopy collections in the various libraries. We wondered what the future implications would be and how the service could be maintained in the future.

Issues for consideration after implementation of the pilot project

Several issues arose while the pilot was being implemented and after the project had finished and most of them were to do with staffing rather than technical issues. Technically the project went extremely smoothly (due to our previous experience with digitisation projects). Key questions concerning the maintenance and management of electronic course material were being asked by library staff.

It was generally agreed that providing materials electronically was an excellent service, but there were various options for doing this, including centralisation of the service. Towards the end of 2004 another new project was planned which would have a major impact on electronic course material. This was the Course Resource Database Project. Students were now looking in four places on-line to find their course related material:

- Voyager Course Material (electronic and hard copy)
- Course Resource Web Pages (departmental and library)
- ExamBase (exam papers)
- Cecil (University Course Management System)

The new project would build a database with the functionality of the E-Reserve's Access Database and the Voyager Course Material Database, that would provide a single point of access to all course materials and readings whether electronic or hard

copy. The staffing implications would be major, particularly with regard to change of responsibilities and workloads. The issues and options are still being worked through.

Conclusion

The electronic course material collection is a major improvement in service delivery and phenomenally successful with students. Technically the project has been very straightforward. The biggest challenge has been for library staff to adjust to major changes in their workflows and processes, some of which are still uncertain. Lecturers adapted slowly but well to the new on-line submission forms, which replaced the paper system. In such a large University with multiple short loan collections implementing the service system wide is still a challenge and has not yet been completed. Centralisation is definitely a possibility and may be necessary for the next steps of the Course Resources Database Project - providing a single uniform point of access to all course materials, whether electronic or hard copy.

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