



## **A guide to getting the best out of your EPIC e-resources**

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## Introduction

This paper offers you some suggestions about how you can increase e-resources usage, and ensure that you are reaping the full benefits of your EPIC commitment.

Because so many different types of libraries and information services are members of EPIC, not all of these suggestions are going to be relevant to you. If you have other suggestions or ideas then feel free to share them – just email [epic@epic.org.nz](mailto:epic@epic.org.nz).



## Staff are the key success factor

The most effective way to get the best out of e-resources is for them to become part of your library's every day business. In essence the EPIC resources are an extension of your print collection - they enhance your access to information. Of course e-resources alone are not always going to be the best source of information – but they can be used in conjunction with print, and other web resources.

Just like your print collection, e-resources need to be managed. Staff need to be aware of the collection and familiar with how, why, when and when not to use them. The best way to increase usage is for your staff to use and know the databases. Once your staff know their value they will be more likely to promote them to your users.

Some strategies for increasing staff knowledge:

- Check out the training resources at <http://epic.org.nz/nl/training.html>
- Include a section on 'interesting things about databases' in your staff newsletter. Or send out a regular database themed email newsletter to your staff. You could cover information about new content, or an interesting feature of the database. Perhaps provide a short pathfinders on a reference query or have a member of staff tell a story about when the databases have been useful in reference queries.
- If you have a staff intranet you could have a staff database information page. Have a "latest database news" section, database tips, and for easy access, include links directly to the databases.
- Make sure that new staff are introduced and trained on how to use the databases in any induction training. Invite current staff to attend for refresher training.
- Encourage staff to use the e-resources for their own study and professional development.
- Provide one-on-one training by visiting staff when they are on the reference desk. Between customers you can talk about databases relevant to the different queries that are coming up.
- Have regular 'share sessions' in staff meetings where staff can share their subject expertise and talk about how they have used the print and online collections to answer queries.
- Take advantage of any Vendor training sessions.
- EPIC is about collaboration so talk to other libraries in your area – share your experiences, what worked, what doesn't and learn from each other.



## Promotional Material

Once staff have increased knowledge and confidence about e-resources you can take full advantage of promotional materials.

The key to external promotion is identifying your target audiences and working out what is of value to them.



Users can either be current or potential. For your current users you can use traditional methods such as brochures, posters, bookmarks and magnets. Potential users are out there but might be unaware of what the library, and the library's e-resources, could do for them.

### Current users:

EPIC has developed a range of materials that you can use and adapt. Feel free to use the ideas and develop your own. Perhaps you could share any new ideas with EPIC and other libraries?

- EPIC brochure <http://epic.org.nz/xtra/Brochure.doc> – explains what EPIC is, what the e-resources are and when and why you should use e-resources. This document is in word format so feel free to adapt and format it as you wish.
- EPIC posters – <http://epic.org.nz/xtra/CustomisablePoster.pdf> this is an EPIC branded poster that you can print out in A4. You can type your own message in the white space on the bottom of the page, such as 'Ask at the reference desk' or 'Want to know more? Visit: [www.library.org.nz/eresources](http://www.library.org.nz/eresources)'. You can then print it out. Note – you can't save your message unless you have Adobe Professional.
- EPIC has a small colour supply of posters available: email [poster@epic.org.nz](mailto:poster@epic.org.nz) for copies. Alternatively, you could take the file to your local copy shop and get a small laser copy run for small cost.
- EPIC Desktop Wallpaper <http://www.epic.org.nz/nl/wallpaper.html> - download it and put it on your library floor computers.
- EPIC PowerPoint template <http://www.epic.org.nz/xtra/EPICPowerPointtemplate.pot> - use this for any EPIC presentations you do.
- Utilise your existing communications mechanisms. Make sure your library's web URL is prominent on all of the promotional material you send out to your users, and try to mention the e-resources where you can. Also make sure that e-resources are listed on the 'Library Services' section of your Website.
- Do you have staff in your organisation that don't work in the library? Food and drink are always popular! Invite groups of non-library staff from your organisation for an e-resource themed morning or afternoon tea.
- Send out email greetings to users you know will be interested. Include a link to the Library's e-resource page and clear instructions about how to access.
- Use mock books to represent the databases<sup>1</sup>. You could put these in the areas of your collection. For example a mock book for Literature Resource Centre could appear in the Dewey "400's" or the LoC "PN..." section.

### Potential users

Potential users could be students, school staff, local clubs (Debating, Toastmasters, Rotary, Lionesses, Probus, Bookclubs, Friends of the Library...), genealogy groups or council staff. These interest groups will all have different needs and wants that e-resources could meet. Try brainstorming who all your potential users could be and find out how you can contact them.

- If a group meets in your local library you could ask if you could have a short amount of meeting time to talk about the library's services, and/ or offer them a training session.
- You could ask the groups to put a link from their website to the library's e-resource page.

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<sup>1</sup> Paula Wilson, Take It to the Street, Library Journal, netConnect, 7/15/2004:  
[Hhttp://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA428135H](http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA428135H)

- Target the information to their interest. For example; a debating or Toastmasters group might be interested in the Opposing Viewpoints Resource Centre, a book club might be interested in What do I read next?, others might be particularly interested in current affairs, so the ANZ Reference Centre could be of interest.
- Why not talk to your local paper about writing a regular library related column. Here's a great example from Thuringowa Library Service in Townsville, Australia:



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying the URL: [http://www.townsvillebulletin.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,7034,11670159%255E26657,00.html](http://www.townsvillebulletin.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,7034,11670159%255E26657,00.html). The page content includes a navigation menu on the left with categories like Home, Top stories, Breaking news, Sport, National, World, Business, Comment, About Town, Switched On, Entertainment, and Horoscopes. The main article is titled "What-to-read dramas solved" and is dated 13dec04. The article text discusses recreational reading options during summer holidays and mentions an online database called "What Do I Read Next?". The right sidebar contains sections for "SEARCH", "BUY A PHOTO", "CARSGUIDE", and "CareerOne".

Visit: <http://library.thuringowa.qld.gov.au/publications.htm#searchlight> to read more of their articles.

## Customisation

EBSCO and Thomson Gale both allow for some customisation of the e-resource interface. This means you can change the interfaces to suit different audiences or situations. For example, you can alter some of the messages and labels on the screens, adjust the number of citations and pages that appear in results lists, and select how many articles a user can email or print out.

For more information about how to do this see:

- EBSCO: See <http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/Tutorials/adminCustomizedSettings.html> for a short tutorial. See also their user guide [http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/ebs\\_2064.doc](http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/ebs_2064.doc) (Word Doc (2294kb)).
- Thomson Gale: Visit [http://www.gale.com/pdf/customer\\_service/manuals/itconfigguide.doc](http://www.gale.com/pdf/customer_service/manuals/itconfigguide.doc) (Word Doc 2.6 mb) for the Thomson Gale administration user guide, see page 11 – 29.



### Branding your e-resources

Both EBSCO and Gale resources allow you to brand the databases with your logo. By doing this you can make it obvious that the e-resources are provided by the library – you are paying for them so you should get the credit!

- EBSCO: See <http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/Tutorials/adminCustomizedSettings.html> for a short tutorial. See also their user guide [http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/ebs\\_2064.doc](http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/ebs_2064.doc) (Word Doc (2294kb)).
- Thomson Gale: Email [sean.volke@thomson.com](mailto:sean.volke@thomson.com) for assistance.



### Authentication

Your User Licence requires that you ensure that all users are authorised to access the EPIC resources. This means you have to enable an authentication system.

The first choice for libraries is whether they wish to use the vendor authentication options or whether they wish to manage their own system.

Both EBSCO and Gale offer a range of authentication options. These include username and password, referring URL and barcode pattern. The advantage of using these is that you do not need to install the system onto your own network. All the hard work is done at the vendor end. The disadvantage is that your users may have to authenticate more than once if they want to move from e-resource to e-resource.

For more information on the Vendor options visit;

EBSCO:

[http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/EBSCOadmin\\_Authentication.doc](http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/EBSCOadmin_Authentication.doc)

Thomson Gale: [http://www.gale.com/technical\\_support/authentication/index.htm](http://www.gale.com/technical_support/authentication/index.htm)

If you have technical support and expertise available you might like to investigate whether your library system has an authentication module that you can implement. Or you could explore the possibility of “pass through proxy systems” such as Libproxy <http://www.goerwitz.com/software/libproxy/dist/> or EZproxy <http://www.usefulutilities.com/support/overview.html> .



### Access points

Make sure you have an obvious link to e-resources on your home page. But be careful with the librarian-ese! All through this document I’ve talked about e-resources - but this might not mean anything to your users. Some other suggestions I’ve come across are Research Databases, Subject Databases, Magazines & Journals Online, or Online Resources.

A few examples of links from overseas library homepages:

**New York Public Library:**

“Trying to find subject information or articles? [ACCESS THE DATABASES](#)”

**Toronto Public Library:**

“Search Magazines, Newspapers & More...”



You should also provide a brief description of each databases so that your users know why each might be useful<sup>2</sup>– for example:

**Health and Wellness Resource Centre** - Magazines, journals, newspapers, definitions, directories, and information on health and health issues.<sup>3</sup>

### Access points on your Web page

As librarians we know that our users seek information for different reasons and in different ways. Therefore, it is a good idea to provide multiple access points to your e-resources. A good example of this is the Phoenix Public Library e-resource page;

The screenshot shows the Phoenix Public Library website interface. It features a navigation menu with categories like 'Alphabetical Listing', 'Arizona Images', 'eBooks', 'Magazines & Newspapers', and 'Multimedia'. A 'Quick Search' box is at the top left. A 'Browse by Subject' sidebar is on the left, with a callout box pointing to it that says 'Browse Database by Subject'. The main content area is titled 'databases & websites' and includes sections for 'Magazines and Newspapers', 'Top 10 Databases', and 'Featured Library Databases'. The 'Top 10 Databases' list includes: 1. Business Directory - Reference USA, 2. Rosetta Stone, 3. EBSCO MasterFILE Premier, 4. Residential Phone Directory - Reference USA, 5. WorldCat - OCLC FirstSearch, 6. Biography Resource Center, 7. Business and Company Resource Center, 8. Arizona Republic - Newsbank, 9. LearningExpressLibrary, 10. NetLibrary. A callout box points to this list with the text 'Top 10 most popular – calculated from usage statistics'. Below this is a 'Select a Database by Name' section with a dropdown menu and a 'Go' button. A callout box points to the dropdown with the text 'Select by Name'. The 'Featured Library Databases' section highlights the 'Biography Resource Center' with a callout box that says 'Featured Database (changes weekly)'. The browser's address bar shows 'http://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/db.jsp'.

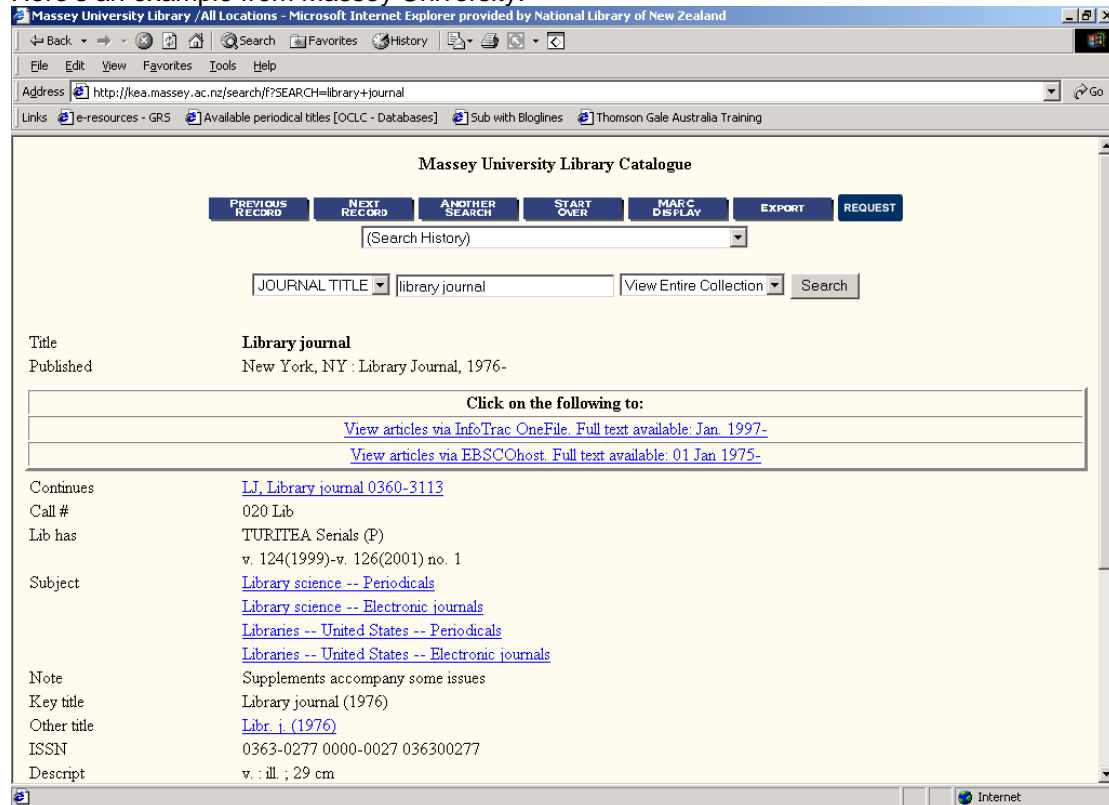
<sup>2</sup> Paula Wilson, Take It to the Street, Library Journal, netConnect, 7/15/2004: <http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA428135H>

<sup>3</sup> Christchurch City Libraries - <http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Databases/H>

### Integrating links into your catalogue

Another effective way to increase usage<sup>4</sup> is to integrate links to your e-resources into your library catalogue. You can download the MARC records from EBSCO and Thomson Gale<sup>5</sup> resources and incorporate them into your online catalogue records and include the URLs in the 856 field so that users can search in the catalogue and then click through to the full text.

Here's an example from Massey University:



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Massey University Library Catalogue. The search results for 'Library journal' are as follows:

Title	<b>Library journal</b>
Published	New York, NY : Library Journal, 1976-
Click on the following to:	
<a href="#">View articles via InfoTrac OneFile. Full text available: Jan. 1997-</a>	
<a href="#">View articles via EBSCOhost. Full text available: 01 Jan 1975-</a>	
Continues	<a href="#">LJ. Library journal 0360-3113</a>
Call #	020 Lib
Lib has	TURITEA Serials (P) v. 124(1999)-v. 126(2001) no. 1
Subject	<a href="#">Library science -- Periodicals</a> <a href="#">Library science -- Electronic journals</a> <a href="#">Libraries -- United States -- Periodicals</a> <a href="#">Libraries -- United States -- Electronic journals</a>
Note	Supplements accompany some issues
Key title	Library journal (1976)
Other title	<a href="#">Libr. i. (1976)</a>
ISSN	0363-0277 0000-0027 036300277
Descript	v. : ill. ; 29 cm

For more information about Marc Records see;

Thomson Gale:


<http://www.gale.com/servlet/HTMLFileServlet?region=9&imprint=000&fileName=catalog/marc.htm>

EBSCO: <http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/UserDocumentation/MARC21.doc>

<sup>4</sup> Linda Ashcroft, Issues in developing, managing and marketing electronic journals collections, Collection Building Volume 21 Number 4 2002 pp. 147-154

<sup>5</sup> Not all of the Thomson Gale resources in EPIC offer Marc records. For more information email [sean.volke@thomson.com](mailto:sean.volke@thomson.com)



 References and useful links

- **Paula Wilson, Take It to the Street, Library Journal, netConnect, 7/15/2004:**

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA428135>

This is a pithy, succinct article that has been a great help when it came to writing this article. Thanks Paula! I highly recommend you read it. See also

<http://www.dynix.com/institute/seminar/index.asp?sem=20040609> for an online presentation by Paula at one of the regular Dynix Institute sessions. Includes powerpoint slides and the very interesting online lecture. (Requires Windows Media Player ).

- **Jean Evans, Staff First, Library Journal, netConnect, 7/15/2004:**

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=ca428131>

This describes a staff training and promotional programme at Cuyahoga County Public Library in Ohio. The number of searches on their e-resources increased by 14% from 2002-2003 and a further 36% in 2003-2004.

- **Beth Carpenter, Marketing Ideas for Libraries – Electronic Resources:**

<http://www.owls.lib.wi.us/info/desks/bc/imarket/online/online.htm>

A useful, yet concise web resource that includes lots of great examples of promotional strategies. Written by the Web Services Manager at Outagamie Waupaca Library System in Wisconsin.

- **Ohio Library Council, Marketing the Library – A web based module.**

<http://www.olc.org/marketing/T>

This simple, yet comprehensive, self-paced web module helps you plan a library marketing strategy. Modules cover Planning, Product, Promotion, Internet and is rich with examples from real libraries exercises, quizzes, and links to marketing resources. Even though it is aimed at public libraries in Ohio there are many tips and strategies that are valuable to all types of information services in New Zealand. (Other OLC modules include Reference Excellence on the Web, and Library Orientation for New Staff – well worth a look!)

