

An update on Knowledge Base+

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In the summer of 2015 it will be three years since Jisc launched Knowledge Base+ (KB+), its shared service that helps libraries to manage their e-resources, to store and manage licences and to record and track subscriptions.

Who's using KB+?

KB+ is funded by Jisc and is free to all UK universities. The service is managed by Jisc's Digital Resources directorate, with an advisory board including representatives of universities throughout the UK as well as representatives of SCONUL, who have been closely involved in the service from the very beginning, and of RLUK (Research Libraries UK). In January 2015, 53 institutions used KB+, and their monthly usage had reached over 1,300 sessions.

KB+ use cases

Between December 2014 and January 2015, Jisc ran a project to prepare KB+ use cases and to identify barriers to the take-up of the service. Ten institutions were interviewed. Some of the findings are:

- Most of the institutions were using parts of KB+ rather than working to embed it fully in their systems, but most identified ways they might use the service in the future.
- The main benefits of using KB+ were identified as efficiency and streamlined processes, trust and access to accurate data, and consolidation of information.
- The main barriers were time constraints and uncertainty about overlap with LMS (library management systems).

More information about the use cases will be available on our website soon.

Link resolvers

KB+ has always made all its data openly available to all stakeholders in the e-resource supply chain, sharing lists of titles and information about licences to help improve accuracy and reduce effort. EBSCO, Ex Libris, OCLC and ProQuest all make use of KB+ data in their knowledge bases, and whilst there are still challenges with some of the processes involved, there is growing recognition that KB+ complements these commercial products and provides improved value to universities.

What next?

We are now planning development for Release 5, which will occur in stages over the next 18 months. In response to consultation with the KB+ Advisory Board, institutions, SCONUL and colleagues in Jisc, we have prioritised the following areas for development:

- e-books – last year we undertook some research in concert with SCONUL to identify whether and where KB+ could help universities manage their e-books. That research led to a range of recommendations, but the two of particular relevance to KB+ involved the tracking of e-books in vendor packages and providing information on e-books, their licences and platforms in order to support decision making.
- financial data – in the autumn of 2014 we ran a number of workshops with institutions to look at the inclusion of financial data in KB+. Based on the outcomes of that work we have identified some specific requirements that will be implemented in 2015.
- integration and interoperability – in order to provide the most efficient service to institutions, to maximise the value of the data in KB+ and to improve the overall quality of the service Jisc can offer to institutions, we want to make sure that we continue to build on the work that has already been done with JUSP and systems vendors to ensure that the



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data is shared as dynamically as possible and with the minimum of user intervention.

- user experience – finally, but perhaps most importantly, we need to continue to improve the user interface and experience of using KB+. This will involve us working with users to improve the flow of data within KB+ and make the service more intuitive. This has always been a priority for us, but the scale of change and improvement in the KB+ system since its launch have meant that it hasn't always been the easiest part to get right. If our ambitions around e-books, financial data and interoperability are to be realised then it will need to be a renewed priority in the months ahead.

Further information

Further information on KB+ is available on the website (<http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/KnowledgeBasePlus/>). Alternatively, you can contact us at knowledgebaseplus@jisc.ac.uk.

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