OpenURL

What all library staff should know
Overview

- The problem: too much stuff!
- The solution: openURL
- Basic terms
- How does this work?
- Link resolvers
- SFX
- Article Linker
- More Information
The Problem

- Libraries often have dozens of A&I databases
- A&I databases, even library catalog not always aware of ejournal subscriptions
- Finding an item is not always straightforward
- Patrons want as few clicks as possible between citation and item
Too much stuff…

…which can leave users frustrated.
The Solution: OpenURL

Sources

- ABI/Inform
- Wilson Web
- OPAC
- many others!

Targets

- Article full text
- Journal web site
- Library catalog
- Google search
- Document delivery service
- Citation management (RefWorks, EndNote)
- Dissertations, ERIC dox, Ebooks, etc. etc…

Link Resolver

20th Annual Computers in Libraries 2005
Basic Terms

- **OpenURL** – A NISO standard (Z39.88), by which web links (URLs) are created containing metadata, allowing the linking directly to articles, journals, books and more.

- **Source** – a citation database where an image or link appears; this link is an openURL that points to a link resolver. There are many fewer sources than targets.

- **Targets** – the items listed in the results window: the full text dbs, Catalog, Ask-a-Librarian, Google.

- **Link Resolver** – software that interprets an OpenURL and creates links to targets.

- **Base URL** – the URL of a link resolver server.

- **Knowledgebase** – the database containing all the library’s holdings, initially established by the library but usually maintained by the vendor of the link resolver.
How does this work?

- **Step One**: the openURL is interpreted by link resolver:
  
Breaking down an OpenURL

- BaseURL: http://ry6af4uu9w.search.serialssolutions.com
- Article Title: Technology Trends for Intranet Librarians
- (Journal) Title: Online
- ISSN: 0146-5422
- Date: 11-01-2004
- Vol. 28, Issue 6
- Starting page 45
- Author: Darlene Fichter
How Does this Work?

- **Step two:** Link resolver checks the library’s knowledgebase.
The Knowledgebase

- Created (entered) by the library, sometimes updated by the link server vendor (SFX, Article Linker)
- Contains holdings of individual electronic journal titles, collections of journals (e.g., JSTOR), and aggregated database content (e.g., InfoTrac, WilsonWeb, LexisNexis Academic)
How does this work?

- **Step three**: the link resolver determines if the data in the OpenURL meets the target’s minimum requirements for creating an item-level link.
Targets’ Minimum Requirements

Journal: E-doc (Global ed.)
ISSN: 1544-3647
Article: Let’s Get together
Volume: 17 Issue: 2 Page: 32
Date: 2003

Article is available here:
Coverage dates
05/01/2003 - present
2003 - 2004
09/01/2003 - present

1. Links to content
   - Article
   - Journal

2. Database:
   - Business Source Premier
   - ABI/INFORM (Selected Full Text)
   - Wilson Select Plus

3. Data Needed to Create Article Link for Wilson Select Plus
   - Journal Title
   - ISSN
   - Article Title
   - Date - YYYY

4. Data Needed to Create Article Link for ABI/INFORM
   - Journal Title
   - ISSN
   - Article Title
   - Issue
   - Volume
   - Author
   - Date - YYYY.MM.DD

5. Minimum Requirements Met
   - CREATE ARTICLE LINK

6. Minimum Requirements NOT Met
   - DO NOT CREATE ARTICLE LINK

Thanks to Julia Makous, Serials Solutions
How Does this Work?

- **Step four**: Link resolver creates links to targets and presents them to the user in menu form.
SFX

- Sample menu
- Basic services
- Advanced services

Demo:  http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/sfx_it.htm
Article linker

- Sample results screen
- Full text links
- Custom links

Demo:  http://www.serialssolutions.com/alsamples.asp
Link Resolvers

- Many choices . . .
- SFX was first
- Many major ILS vendors sell a link resolver (Sirsi, III, Endeavor)
- See http://library.ucf.edu/Presentations/2004/OpenURLChoices/ for a good comparison
More Information

- The standard:
  http://library.caltech.edu/openurl/

- These slides:
  http://athena.libraries.claremont.edu/~cindi/

- Random bits about openURL:
  http://openurl.blogspot.com
Thank you!

- Slides:
  http://athena.libraries.claremont.edu/~cindi

Cindi Trainor
Director, Library / Information Technology
The Libraries of The Claremont (CA) Colleges
AIM or Yahoo: cinditrainor