

Welcome to the first SUNCAT newsletter. The newsletter will appear twice yearly, to provide a progress report to Contributing Libraries of work on the SUNCAT Project.

The SUNCAT Project is

- | Building the UK national serials union catalogue of holdings in leading research libraries
- | Funded by the Joint Information Stems Committee (JISC) for UK universities, colleges and research institutes
- | Led by EDINA, at the University of Edinburgh, in partnership with Ex Libris

Phase 1 of the SUNCAT Project finished in December 2004 and was marked by the successful launch of the pilot service in January 2005, in London. JISC awarded funding for Phase 2 of the Project, which continues until December 2006.

The pilot service contains bibliographic and holdings data from the 22 university and research libraries which participated in Phase 1. It is planned that a further 60 libraries will join the service during Phase 2. The number of university libraries will increase, and coverage will extend to include serials holdings from a number of public and special libraries, in line with the strategic development of the SUNCAT service.

Case studies

Three Phase 1 libraries have compiled Case Studies based on their experience of working with SUNCAT. These have provided invaluable feedback on specific issues and experiences. These will help the Project Team to refine workflows in some areas, and to improve communication at each stage of implementation. The case studies will be published on the SUNCAT website.

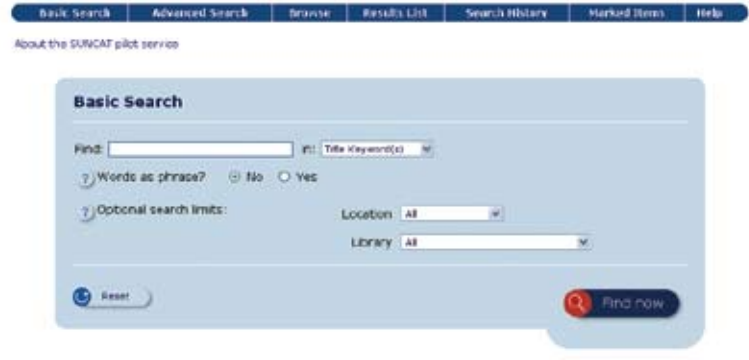
If any other libraries would be interested in contributing to the case studies, or have queries arising from any of the issues raised in the case studies, please contact suncat@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

In addition, we are always pleased to receive feedback on the service, and would encourage you submit your comments to suncat@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

SUNCAT interface

There are some minor changes planned for the SUNCAT interface, in line with recommendations which arose from user testing at the end of Phase 1 of the Project. These changes should not impact on the functionality of the service. The changes will be implemented in the Christmas vacation.

In January 2006 we will be carrying out a user satisfaction survey – details of this will appear on the SUNCAT opac, and will also be circulated to contributing libraries.



basic search screen



Matching

SUNCAT has a deduplicated union view, which is controlled by a complex matching algorithm, developed initially for Melvyl, the union catalogue for the California Digital Library. When a search term is entered into SUNCAT, and a record chosen, the user will see a single record displayed, with holdings from different libraries beneath. The record seen is known as the “preferred” record, and is the most bibliographically complete record in the set. The set, in turn, consists of all the bibliographic records and associated holdings supplied by the Contributing Libraries for this title, which have been matched together. All matching is done on the fly, so, a record might be the preferred in one search, but not in the same search done a few days later, if another record has been uploaded in the meantime, and deemed the more bibliographically complete. This fluidity of matching allows the “best” record to be displayed at any given time.

The matching algorithm matches above format, so that records for print and electronic versions of the same title will display on the same record. SUNCAT has made some alterations and additions to the existing algorithm, to account for the varying qualities of UK data. The matching occurs on identifying fields in the bibliographic record (e.g., title, ISSN); SUNCAT has also included matching in the added entry authors (7XX tags) and the BNB (015).

SUNCAT is currently testing new procedures which will mean that every set of records is assigned a unique SUNCAT identifier (SC-ID). New, incoming records will be matched on this field also, which will help to lower rates of potential mismatches, and help solve deduplication issues.

Updates

Currency of information is very important to any catalogue, especially a serials union catalogue, which is concerned with continuing resources. To avoid SUNCAT being simply a “snap shot” of a library’s catalogue at a particular moment in time, SUNCAT will be asking contributing libraries for updates of serials records which have been altered in any way – whether it is a bibliographic or holdings record, new records, deleted records, or changed records. Some libraries are already contributing updates on a regular basis. SUNCAT has experienced some problems with this procedure, but, with the help of our Project Partners and system suppliers, Ex Libris, we are very nearly in a position to ask all our Contributing Libraries for updates.

Updates can be in the form of full file updates (an extract of all the serials records in the library’s catalogue, for those libraries who cannot extract sections of the data), or in partial files (for those libraries who can extract the salient data from the data of the last update to the present), and variations in between (for example, one library can supply SUNCAT with new, deleted and changed bibliographic records, but can only supply a complete file of holdings records). As much work has gone into the updates procedures as on the initial data conversion. SUNCAT plans to ask for updates on a monthly basis to begin with.

Downloading of records

A key feature of SUNCAT is to provide the facility for Contributing Libraries to download high quality records to upgrade records in local catalogues, via an authenticated interface. This facility will be provided via the Librarian’s In-



advanced search screen



terface, which is currently being developed by Ex Libris.

Streamlining

It is important to remember that SUNCAT continues to be a Project, and a test bed for workflows and procedures in readiness for the development of a full service. During Phase 1 we worked with 22 libraries, but in Phase 2 it is important to establish workflows that are scalable for Phase 2 and beyond. A priority is not to lose the integrity of the bibliographic data, but the area which has taken most resource has been the manipulation of holdings data. To achieve a scalable workflow it has been agreed to add location information only, and to omit the summary holdings statement.

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Development Work

Serials Solutions and EDINA have received funding for their project proposal to the JISC for the Publisher Metadata and Interoperability Projects II. The collaborative 8-month project, AIMSS (Automating Ingest of Metadata on Serials Subscriptions), will investigate the transfer of metadata about a library's subscriptions to SUNCAT, the UK national serials catalogue.

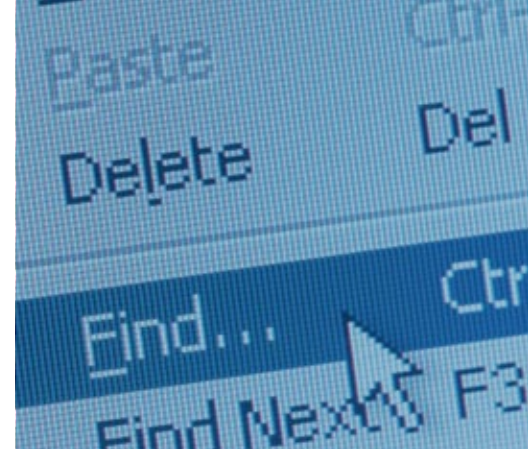
Promotional Activity

---April 2006 UKSG Conference: SUNCAT Briefing Session

---Articles in press: JACKIE - Details to follow



browse
alphabetical
index screen



Contributing Libraries

- Birmingham University
- Bristol University
- British Library
- Cambridge University [Associate Partner]
- Cardiff University
- Durham University
- Edinburgh University [Project Partner]
- Glasgow University [Associate Partner]
- Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
- Leeds University
- London School of Economics and Political Science
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Manchester University
- National Library of Scotland [Associate Partner]
- National Library of Wales
- Newcastle University
- Nottingham University
- Oxford University [Associate Partner]
- Queen's University, Belfast
- Southampton University
- University College London
- Warwick University

Phase 2 Contributing Libraries

...to be added throughout 2006

- Aberdeen University
- British Geological Survey
- British Medical Association
- Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils
- Courtauld Institute of Art
- Cranfield University
- Essex University
- Exeter University
- Hull University
- Institute of Electrical Engineers
- International Institute for Strategic Studies
- Kent University
- King's College London
- Lancaster University
- Liverpool University
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Manchester Public Libraries
- Medical Research Council

- Mitchell Library, Glasgow
- Mitchell Library, Glasgow
- National Art Library
- National Museums and Galleries of Wales
- National Museums of Scotland
- Natural History Museum
- Reading University
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Royal Geographical Society
- Royal Institute of British Architects
- Royal Society
- Royal Society of Medicine
- School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
- Sheffield University
- Society of Antiquaries of London
- Stirling University
- Sussex University
- University of East Anglia
- University of London Research Libraries
- University of Wales, Swansea
- Wiener Library, Institute of Contemporary History
- Wellcome Library for the History and Understanding of Medicine
- Women's Library, London Metropolitan University
- York University
- Zoological Society of London

...more to follow