

Welcome to the second SUNCAT newsletter. The newsletter appears twice yearly, to provide a progress report on the SUNCAT Project.

Move to New Server

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At the beginning of April 2006, the current pilot service was transferred onto a new server providing much faster access and processing times, while also heralding some new libraries and functionality for SUNCAT.

New Libraries on SUNCAT

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One of the main aims for Phase Two of SUNCAT is to extend the geographic coverage of SUNCAT and to increase the number of unique titles on the catalogue. In addition to the original 22 Phase One libraries the catalogue now contains records from 24 Phase Two libraries; 46 libraries in total. These libraries include further large Higher Education institutions selected on the basis of the size of their serial collections and also a range of special libraries identified as having strong subject collections.

Another 30-40 libraries should be added by the end of 2006. For more information please see the list of Contributing Libraries at <http://www.suncat.ac.uk/about/contributing2.html>

MARC Display and Save/Email

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With the move to the new server MARC display and Save/Email facilities are once again available on SUNCAT. These facilities had been temporarily removed from the service due to concerns with the IPR of ISSN records. Following negotiations with the International ISSN Centre and subsequent restrictions to ISSN records on SUNCAT, it has been possible to reinstate the MARC display and Save/Email functionality.

The MARC display is of particular importance as it plays an integral role in SUNCAT's aim to improve the quality of serials' bibliographic information in the UK. Only Contributing Libraries will be able to download MARC records but cataloguers from all libraries will benefit by being able to view the records in MARC format.

The MARC display is viewable from the Full Record display on SUNCAT.

The Save/Email facility is useful for both librarians and end-users who want to retain information on titles found on SUN-

CAT. It is possible to save records to a local disk or to email them in either a brief or full record format. The facility is available from within a full record display or a number of records can be saved/emailed from a results display.

Librarians' Interface

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The Librarians' Interface will be made available to Contributing Libraries later in 2006. The facility will provide

- | Authenticated access to SUNCAT for Contributing Libraries allowing them to download SUNCAT records to their local catalogues
- | Customisable notification reports to Contributing Libraries about any changes to preferred records on SUNCAT [this functionality will not be available until 2007]
- | A facility to verify which records supplied by each Contributing Library are unique.

In the case where a Contributing Library has supplied unique records they will be asked to review and upgrade any low quality records so that eventually SUNCAT should contain one good quality bibliographic record for every title on the catalogue. These records will then be available for downloading by the Contributing Libraries thus improving the quality of serials information on a local and national level.

SUNCAT ID

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One of the many attractions of the SUNCAT database is the deduplicated union view, whereby there can be many records for one title, from different contributing libraries, but only one record displayed, with all the appropriate holdings underneath. In order to attain this deduplication, SUNCAT uses a complex matching algorithm, originally developed for use in MELVYL, the union catalogue for the California Digital Library. SUNCAT has made some refinements to this, to account for the range of variations in UK data. The matching algorithm has been discussed elsewhere, and a technical paper can be found on our website, for contributing libraries only.

One of the major developments that EDINA and Ex Libris have been working on in the last year is the SUNCAT-ID (or, SUNCAT identifier). This identifier matches existing sets in SUNCAT, and assigns an appropriate identifier to each record as it is loaded in. Essentially, the SUNCAT-ID represents one title per "work", each set, theoretically, representing a distinct journal title, regardless of format. It will be stored in the MARC field 049 in all records from SUNCAT. When a record is downloaded from SUNCAT, it is envisaged

About the SUNCAT pilot service



basic search screen



that the SUNCAT-ID will not be deleted. Then, when the record is sent back to SUNCAT in the form of an update, the SUNCAT-ID for the set will already be in place, and matching is simply done on the SUNCAT-ID.

Development of the SUNCAT-ID entails a major change in the basic concept of the Union Catalogue, which, until now, was based entirely on automatic and dynamic procedures. The SUNCAT-ID creates a more “fixed” union catalogue.

All matching now starts with the SC-ID, so, if both records that are being matched have a SC-ID, the match is on the SC-ID only, and not through the standard matching algorithm. If there is a match, the records are considered the same; if the IDs differ, they are not. If both or either record does not have a SUNCAT-ID, the regular matching algorithm is used, and a new SUNCAT-ID is assigned, if the record being loaded in does not match in.

The results have been very good to date, and the matching has been noticeably improved by the addition of the SUNCAT-ID, especially in the area of duplicated sets.

Updates

Updating has been progressing, albeit at a slower level than anticipated, due to the addition of new libraries, and the fruition of developments with Ex Libris. However, we are now concentrating our efforts on loading in as many updates as possible, alongside our other loading and testing commitments. Because we have had delays in loading updates, we are currently loading in libraries that have been sending them to us regularly, with the British Library being loaded first. Each library will then be loaded in turn, to make SUNCAT as current as possible. However, please do not worry if you have not been sending us updates – if you have not received an updating questionnaire from the Bibliographic team, we are not yet ready to accept delivery of your updates. We shall be in contact when we are.

Automating Ingest of Metadata on Serials Subscriptions (AIMSS)

The JISC funded 8 months AIMSS project has just been completed. AIMSS involved the use of the ONIX for Serials (Serials Online Holdings) format for the transmission of holdings information about electronic serials. Serials Solutions of Seattle, Washington State, a provider of services and systems related to e-sericals management, sent real data for two SUNCAT Contributing Libraries and this data was extracted and used to update the MARC21 records for the libraries

held in SUNCAT. The project demonstrated that the format was adequate for the carrying of holdings data and that the data could successfully be extracted to update records. It was also found that developing technical capacity to create ONIX for Serials messages and to receive and process the messages was relatively straightforward and within the capabilities of organisations with some access to XML expertise.

In addition to a final report, the deliverables will include a Case Study prepared by Serials Solution staff, a mapping between ONIX for Serials (Serials Online holdings to MARC21 field 856) and a report on the process involved in updating MARC21 records in the SUNCAT context. In line with JISC policy these deliverables will be made readily available when approved by the funding body.

User Satisfaction Survey

EDINA carried out a user satisfaction survey on SUNCAT in January-March 2006. The main aims of the survey were to discover who was using SUNCAT and for what purpose; were users finding what they wanted and what improvements could be made to the service. The results of the survey were very encouraging with:

- | 91% of respondents stating that their search(es) had been successful
- | 96% of respondents stating that they would use SUNCAT again

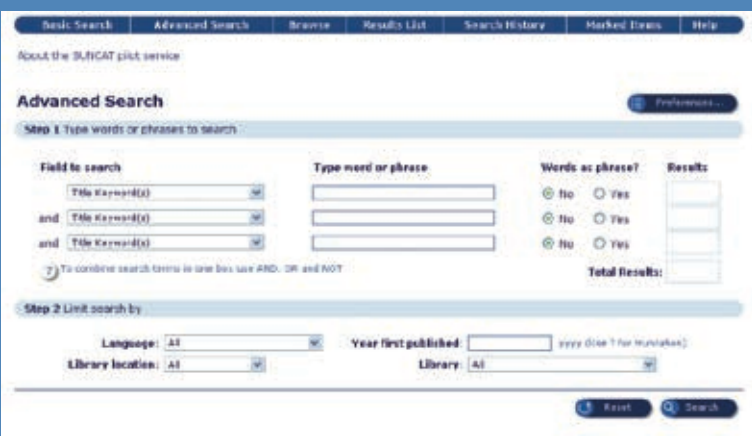
The majority of respondents were library staff with only a few researchers, so promoting SUNCAT to this latter group is an area that the Team are eager to address.

The main purposes for using SUNCAT emerged as:

- | Locating serials
- | Inter-Library Loan
- | Collection management
- | Cataloguing

Suggestions for improvements to SUNCAT included a number of developments which were either underway or are planned for implementation later in Phase Two. For example, several respondents commented that a MARC display would be useful and this has since been reinstated. There were requests for more contributing libraries – since the survey another 18 libraries have been added, with more to follow.

Other suggestions included links to local catalogues, improved deduplication of records and improved limiting by library/location, all of which the Team will be working on throughout Phase Two. The Team are looking at all the suggestions and will aim to make improvements where feasible



advanced search screen



within the scope of and technical constraints of SUNCAT.

Many thanks to all who submitted their comments – a winner has been selected at random and sent a memory stick. A full report on the survey is available on the SUNCAT website at <http://www.sunecat.ac.uk/about/news/usersatsurvey.pdf>

Data Extract Questionnaire

Throughout February and March a questionnaire was sent out to SUNCAT contributing libraries on their experience of the data extraction process, documentation and help provided by the SUNCAT team. We were delighted that 60% of the contributing libraries were able to respond with extremely useful information, ideas and details of how they extracted their data. 84% of respondents already found the process either easy, or very easy. We are now focusing on how to make the process easier for the remaining 16% of contributors, and particularly those who had suggestions about how we could help.

With this in mind we are now investigating:

- | Better LMS-specific documentation and support
- | Methods to encourage sharing of experience and enhanced peer support
- | Improvements to the Contributing Libraries section of the SUNCAT website

Notifications Questionnaire

In March and April we asked all subscribers to the SUNCAT mailing list to participate in a survey on proposed reports to notify libraries of changes to a preferred record. Roughly a third of those on the mailing list replied with detailed and informative answers and comments. 79% of respondents wanted notifications reports to be available and the overwhelming majority agreed that they should be provided on a monthly basis. With the comments and specific selections of fields for the report in mind we will now:

- | Consider which fields should be included/excluded
- | Discuss third party records with their suppliers
- | Clarify a more detailed vision of the reports and their role in preparation for further development and consultation with contributing libraries

Sincere thanks go to all those who took the time to respond to these questionnaires: your contribution will help in improving SUNCAT for all.

Union Catalogues: Where Does SUNCAT Fit In

Members of the SUNCAT team recently investigated UK-focused online union catalogues for a report to define how SUNCAT fits into the broader union catalogue environment. The report also considered ways to enhance the functionality and convenience of SUNCAT through building mutually beneficial relationships with other relevant union catalogues and resources.

Approximately forty union catalogues were looked at including one print union catalogue which had previously been identified as an important current resource despite having no electronic presence. In addition several non-UK resources were briefly investigated as and when they were identified.

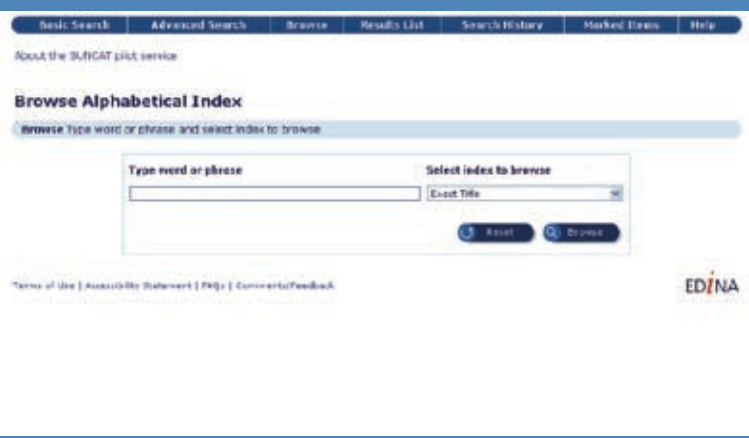
It became apparent that about a quarter of the catalogues examined use federated searching whilst most others are based, like SUNCAT, on a single centrally updated catalogue.

As a result of the report SUNCAT has already approached several potential contributing libraries identified as missing from our own catalogue. We will next be looking at how SUNCAT may be best able to collaborate with, or simply link to, other resources.

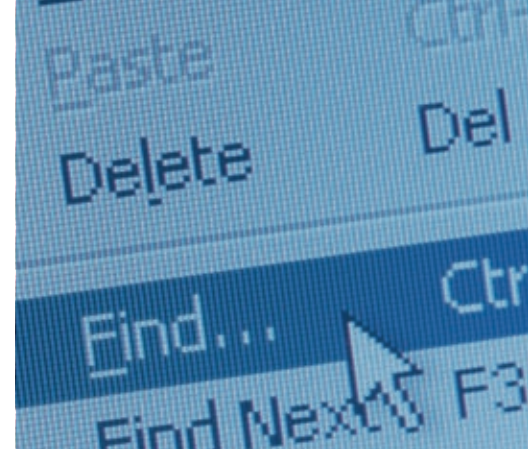
As a continually evolving resource the SUNCAT team continues to look for ways in which all elements can be enhanced and developed. Whilst this report has now been completed we would welcome any feedback or recommendations of exceptionally good resources which the SUNCAT team should investigate.

Strategic Review of JISC Resource Discovery Service

JISC is currently undertaking a review of its resource-discovery services, including SUNCAT, COPAC, Zetoc and the Archives Hub. The review is looking at the potential for convergence and economies of scale in the underlying technologies used to deliver the services and at how the services may be enhanced with new technologies in order to support flexible integration across the services and within the wider resource discovery environment. The review included an online survey of SUNCAT users, which was linked to from the SUNCAT service page. The Review commenced in April and is due to be completed over the summer.



browse alphabetical index screen



Launch of Full Service

SUNCAT will be launched as a full EDINA supported service on the 1st August 2006. We are planning a number of workshops to promote SUNCAT as a full service in early September. More details about these sessions will be made available shortly.

SUNCAT Steering Committee

The SUNCAT Steering Committee, made up of representatives from JISC and Directors of Information and Knowledge Services of some of the largest research institutions in the UK, plans to disband after a final meeting in October. This reflects SUNCAT's move from project phase into full service in August 2006. The Steering Committee have played an influential role in SUNCAT's development, since its inception in early 2003, and have provided invaluable guidance to the SUNCAT Team throughout the past three years. The Team would like to thank the Committee for all its work and continued support.

SUNCAT at UKSG 2006

The SUNCAT Team attended the UK Serials Group (UKSG) Conference at the University of Warwick in early April. The conference provided the Team with an opportunity to meet some of our contributors face-to-face and also to demonstrate SUNCAT to potential new contributors and users of the service.

Natasha and Zena presented a briefing session entitled "SUNCAT – Moving from Project to Service" The session concentrated on how SUNCAT has developed since the launch of the pilot service in 2005. It was emphasised that SUNCAT is very much a collaborative effort with representatives from the JISC, Higher Education and National Libraries all working closely together on the development of SUNCAT.

Phase Two developments which were highlighted included:

- | Increase in the number of contributing libraries
- | Updating records on SUNCAT
- | Linking to equivalent records on Contributing Libraries' websites
- | Linking to equivalent records on Contributing Libraries' catalogues
- | Project AIMSS: looking into using the ONIX for Serials format for transmitting serials information
- | The Librarians' Interface, which should be available later in 2006

The session rounded up with information about plans for the future of SUNCAT. SUNCAT is due to launch as a full EDINA supported service in August 2006. Beyond 2006 the SUNCAT Team will continue to investigate how SUNCAT can serve individual or more specialist communities by providing different views onto the data from both a geographic and subject perspective and also how it can best integrate with the wider information environment. This is likely to include links with electronic table of contents services such as Zetoc and also A&I databases but also forward linkage to document supply services.

The Briefing Sessions were well received and solicited a large number of questions from the audience.

The presentation is available to view at the SUNCAT website, http://www.sunecat.ac.uk/about/news/SUNCAT_UKSG_April2006.ppt

Promotional Activity

- February 2006 Aleph User Group Meeting
- April 2006 UK Serials Group Conference – Stand and Briefing Sessions
- May 2006 Edinburgh Libraries and Information Services Agency Fair – Stand
- September 2006 Cataloguing & Indexing Group Conference – Presentation
- September 2006 Digital Resources in the Humanities & Arts Conference - Stand
- September 2006 SUNCAT Workshops
- October 2006 Aleph User Group Meeting – Hosting at Edinburgh University
- Recent articles – Guy, F. and Burnhill, P. (2006), "SUNCAT as a national serials' facility for researchers and librarians" *SCONUL Focus*. No. 36 (Winter 2005), pp. 36-43.
- Oliver, Alan (2006), "Is SUNCAT still rising? *Ex Librian Newsletter*. Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 2006).