

A pioneering portal to e-journal usage statistics

Angela Conyers and **Jo Lambert** explain how the Journal Usage Statistics Portal allows libraries to analyse the value and impact of their electronic journal subscriptions through accurate and comparable usage statistics, saving academic libraries time and duplicated effort.



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WITH library budgets increasingly under pressure, demonstrating the return-on-investment for costly e-resources is paramount. Avoiding the need to visit multiple publisher websites to gather statistics, the Journal Usage Statistics Portal (Jusp) enables libraries to quickly and easily compare usage across a range of publishers and years. Accurate and comparable usage statistics support analysis and evaluation of e-resources and help to demonstrate their value and impact. Jusp is an important tool that aims to support libraries in this context. The service offers libraries a single point of access to Counter-compliant (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources, see: bit.ly/RWl-Z9W) journal usage reports from multiple publishers.

As well as being able to view and download standard usage reports, libraries can access a range of added-value reports to help them analyse usage and establish value for money to help in purchasing and renewal decisions. Libraries can generate a variety of reports to analyse usage trends over time, evaluate use of their subscriptions and make informed decisions about management of their e-journal collections.

Jusp is funded by Jisc to deliver a service that is free at the point of use for academic libraries in the UK. Currently used by 170 libraries (May 2014), the service provides access to usage data from 65+ publishers and intermediaries, although this number is rising. Jusp is also being used in other sectors such as government libraries, and also outside the UK.

Developing the prototype

Jusp has evolved over a number of years. In 2008, a prototype usage statistics portal was established following a funding call from Jisc. This service established Jusp's feasibility using a pilot group of five libraries, and data from three publishers and one intermediary. Development of a usage statistics service started in April 2010 and the service has continued to grow and evolve ever since. Key to its development has been a continual assessment of user requirements in order to deliver effective solutions within a changing landscape.

The service utilises the skills and expertise of Mimas, Jisc Collections, Cranfield University and Evidence Base at Birmingham City University – the partners who make up the Consortium responsible for managing and developing Jusp.

Collecting data

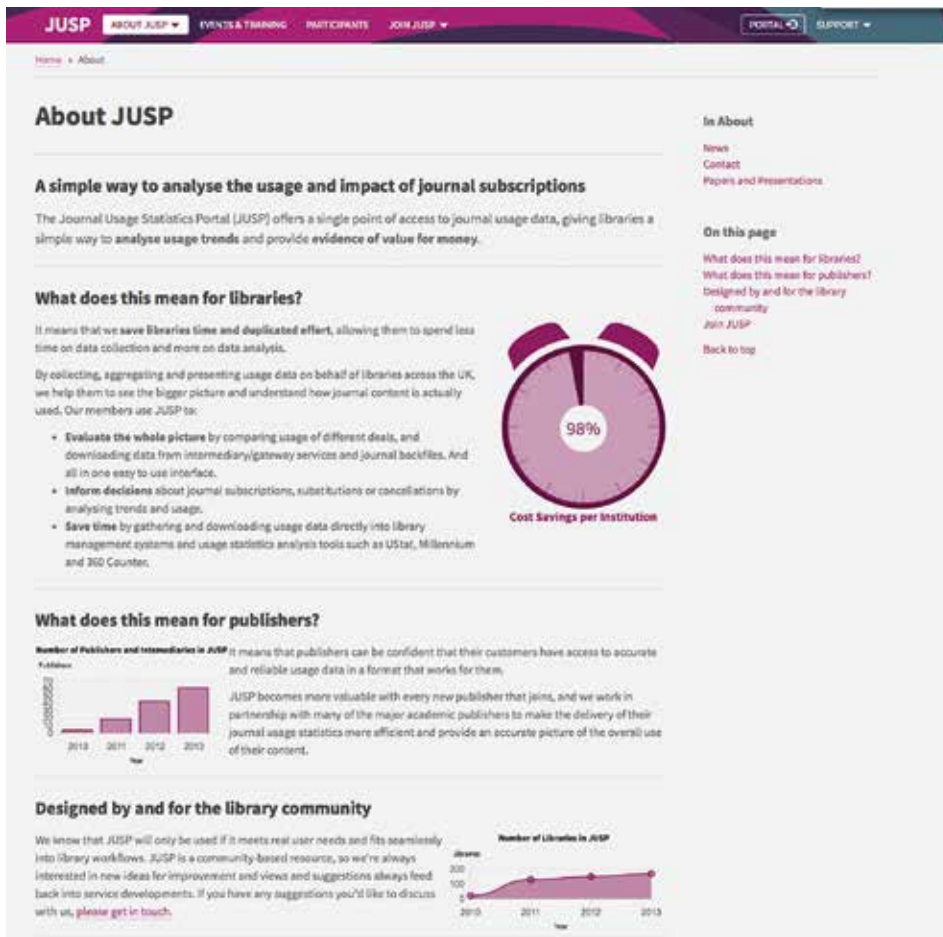
Usage data are collected from publishers on behalf of libraries, using the Standardised Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (Sushi) protocol. Jusp is reliant on Sushi to deliver a cost-effective and efficient service. The protocol is a machine-to-machine way of gathering usage statistics, thereby replacing the user mediated process of data collection. Libraries benefit through access to automated monthly updates, avoiding the need to access individual publisher websites to obtain data, saving them both time and effort.

Jusp is based on three Counter reports: the JR1 report (number of successful full-text article requests by month and journal); the separate JR1a (number of successful full-text article requests from an archive by month and journal); and the JR1 GOA (number of successful Gold Open Access full-text article requests by month and journal). This latter report has only recently been made available as part of Counter release 4.

Saving staff time

In a recent community survey, respondents indicate that Jusp adds value to their service in a number of ways, with the major advantage being time saving. The majority of respondents quoted savings of between half a day and two working days per month. In a presentation to the 2013 UKSG conference, Alison Brock of the Open University showed how Jusp was saving around two weeks of staff time a year (see video at: bit.ly/1mMZsXF).

The ability to view and download JR1 and other Counter reports for a significant and growing number of journal publishers from one single location is the primary value of Jusp. E-resource librarians no longer need to go to publisher websites using separate passwords to gather together all the information they need to analyse e-journal usage.



When we report to Sconul, we have to collate data from Counter reports that cut and paste data from two separate calendar years into a master spreadsheet based on Academic Year. We do this for each publisher, one at a time. With Jusp, we just click a button and download Sconul data for a number of publishers in one go.
 – a survey respondent

Another example of the way that Jusp is saving staff time is the Sconul returns report. This is one of the most popular reports among the higher education libraries. Being able to take the figure for total number of downloads in an academic year from the Sconul return report for such a large number of publishers has saved libraries a vast amount of work each year.

Providing reliable data and avoiding duplication of effort

Jusp is not only saving staff time by providing this ‘one-stop shop’ approach to usage statistics. It is also saving libraries from individually having to amend their data when publishers announce that usage data have to be changed and re-loaded. On such occasions, data can be changed in Jusp for all participating libraries.

Allied to this is the fact that Jusp data are checked for accuracy before loading. Libraries can therefore be sure that they are getting access to reliable data. Where discrepancies are noted, libraries are encouraged to contact the Jusp help desk where any queries are promptly dealt with and explanations sought.

As a single place to obtain multiple sets of data, it saves us from having to go to individual publisher websites to get our usage figures. It also allows us to get figures from smaller, individual publishers, whereas without Jusp, we just wouldn't have the time to get that data.
 – a survey respondent

In addition to the Counter JR1 report which shows all full-text article requests, Jusp also gathers, where available, the JR1a report, which shows requests for titles in archive or backfile collections, and also the new JR1 GOA (Gold Open Access) report included among standard reports for Counter release 4. It also collects JR1 reports from intermediary and gateway services such as Swets, EbscoEJS and Publishing Technology and allocates usage figures from these reports to titles from publishers included in Jusp. Jusp reports on backfile usage, gold open access and intermediary usage enable e-resource librarians to see the number of requests for titles broken down in several different ways, showing clearly how much these different routes are being used, and ensuring that all usage is recorded.

The reports that calculate JR1 – JR1a + Ebsco EJS/Ingenta etc. are brilliant – they save a lot of manual work.
 – a survey respondent

Jusp journal level reports therefore go much further than simply providing access to the Counter reports. Much of the manipulating of data which previously meant using a variety of different spreadsheets to get at a picture of total usage has been done within Jusp. Users are able to download reports, but also to view reports and sort in a number of different ways.

The best thing about Jusp is that it saves me time and gives me confidence that errors in usage data can be picked up and addressed collaboratively.
 – a survey respondent

Providing better data for decision-making

Jusp journal level reports can be used in a variety of ways within the library’s own system for further analysis of usage, for example by the addition of cost or fund data. Jusp is also able to use the data it has harvested to produce a number of summary reports. Some examples of how Jusp can help with decision-making are given below.

Viewing trends over time

A further advantage of Jusp is that as a new library or publisher joins, usage data are collected wherever possible back to 2009. Seeing trends over a number of years rather than focusing just on one year is a particular advantage when considering renewals. ‘Trends over time’ can also be viewed as a graph, valuable when demonstrating usage in a library management report.

Displaying core titles

Within a number of publisher deals, libraries are required to maintain subscriptions to particular titles. Within Jusp, it is possible to mark up these core or subscribed titles so that they then appear with a star

against them in all reports. A 'titles with the highest use' report shows the top 100 titles for one publisher, or across all participating publishers. This report helps libraries to see at a glance how well core titles are being used, and also whether there are other 'non-core' titles included within the deal that are getting high use. This is useful at renewal time, when there may be opportunity to cancel or substitute core titles.

Reviewing titles and deals

A number of publishers include in their JR1 reports titles which are not part of the actual deal the library may take. This means there is often a misleading number of titles showing nil usage. Jusp keeps a set of title lists for its publishers, and produces a 'View usage of titles and deals' report indicating which titles in the JR1 report are part of the deal the library takes.

In its work on titles and deals, Jusp is working in co-operation with Knowledge Base+ (KB+, see www.kbplus.ac.uk). Title lists used to compare against usage reports are taken from KB+, ensuring that libraries have access to the most accurate and up to date lists available.

Promotion and marketing

By taking care of the routine work involved in usage analysis, Jusp gives more time to consider how usage patterns can be used to promote and market the library's e-journal collection.

A new feature allows libraries to compare their own usage of titles from a particular publisher with an average for all libraries that are part of similar regional groups or categories. In these usage profiling reports, libraries are able to see where their own usage is

higher or lower than the average, to seek reasons for this and where usage appears higher, to use this in library promotion.

Community engagement

The success of Jusp and its widespread adoption throughout the UK academic library sector shows the benefits of Jusp's emphasis on community engagement. Workshops and webinars are offered. There are regular community surveys, and Jusp libraries are asked to select their publisher priorities. Through the Jusp Community Advisory Group and more widely, views on developments are sought. Enquiries to the help desk are dealt with promptly and suggestions are taken up wherever practicable. Support materials to help both beginners and the more experienced user are available at www.jusp.mimas.ac.uk.

JuspConsult

There is interest around the world in the concept of Jusp and we have received numerous enquiries from libraries and consortia interested in a similar service. In response to this we set up a number of pilot trials outside the UK initially and this led to development of JuspConsult (see www.juspconsult.mimas.ac.uk), a service that utilises the expertise of the team to provide a range of consultancy, advice and support

services to help libraries or consortia wishing to develop a usage statistics portal, or get any advice on the analysis and interpretation of usage statistics. Consequently, there are a number of organisations both within and outside the UK that are now exploring the benefits of centralised and automated data collection and access to quality assured data presented as reports via Jusp.

Global solution

Libraries around the world are dealing with the same issues and the task of understanding and analysing e-resource usage is a constant challenge. Jusp is a pioneering service that responds to many of these challenges, offering a national solution to a global problem, through time-saving efficiencies and an evidence base for analysis of subscriptions. The service continues to evolve and support from a committed user community enables the service to embrace the exciting opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Find out more about Jusp at jusp.mimas.ac.uk or contact our helpdesk at jusp@mimas.ac.uk [1]



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