

EBSCO's LinkSource

EBSCO's LinkSource is a new link resolver product that was officially introduced at ALA Midwinter in January 2003. LinkSource works with the CrossRef registry to provide linking to full-text articles. As a link resolver, LinkSource allows the library to define its own local print holdings as well as its online subscriptions. LinkSource will then direct the user to the locally available article text first, rather than the publisher's preferred link to the article. LinkSource loads CrossRef locally, so LinkSource subscribers do not have to pay a separate CrossRef subscription fee.

System Requirements:

EBSCO is a vendor-hosted link resolver, so there is no hardware or software purchase required of library customers. However, the library does have to subscribe to at least one of EBSCO's online databases to use LinkSource.

Services Provided:

LinkSource can link from an item-level search result in almost any database product (the source) into almost any other database product (the target) that the library subscribes to, regardless of vendor. EBSCO works with a variety of online vendors (including portal and metasearch providers) that will serve as sources and targets. To see a list of these vendors, check EBSCO's LinkSource site at <http://www.linkresolver.com/>. To set up the links to LinkSource from within other vendors' electronic products, EBSCO will provide the subscribing library with the OpenURL syntax (the link to LinkSource), and the library must contact the vendor's support group for assistance in the set-up. The way in which a link to LinkSource is configured will vary by vendor. EBSCO is in the process of creating documentation as provided by the vendor to assist in this process. LinkSource can also link to most Web-based library OPACs to show library holdings information to users. Innovative Interfaces is listed as both a source and target vendor in EBSCO LinkSource literature. I spoke to Stephanie Pearsall at EBSCO, and neither she nor I fully understand what limits the III OPACs may have as sources or targets if the libraries do not purchase WebBridge. LinkSource can also link to A-Z lists of library electronic resource holdings, such as Serials Solutions.

If the text of the article is not available either full text or in the library, libraries can add interlibrary loan links or other document delivery options to the LinkSource menu. These links can go to a number of different providers, which are again listed at EBSCO's LinkSource web site. Optionally, links to related information can be provided, including links to: web search engines, finding other articles by that author, finding articles that cite that author, or finding other articles that cite the current article.

Management of LinkSource is accomplished through EBSCOadmin, EBSCO's administrative application. EBSCO is updating the EBSCOadmin interface to be more graphical and easier to use. Library holdings information can be uploaded to LinkSource through EBSCOadmin from text files and, in the near future, exports from A-Z lists.

Also, in June, EBSCO will support a new feature called Global Local Collections. For over a hundred full text database products, EBSCO will allow customers to simply indicate that they subscribe to the product. A collection that defines the journal content of that product will be maintained by EBSCO. Additions or changes to the product will be updated on a monthly basis, and any customer that has indicated a product subscription will automatically see the content changes. These global collections, or “filter lists,” can be used to control the link display on the LinkSource menu. Through EBSCOadmin, libraries have a great deal of control over the customization of the LinkSource menu. Options include: displaying hints with links, customizing link text and icons, and controlling whether or not certain links display based on various factors. Links can also be configured to display in a priority order determined by the library customer.

EBSCO claims that broken links are avoided by LinkSource because of its configuration. Before links to full-text are shown, LinkSource verifies that the journal is available from one of three sources—EBSCO databases, EBSCO Electronic Journal Service or CrossRef—and then verifies that the article is actually available to the user. For other resources, various rules are used by LinkSource to control the LinkSource menu display and help to avoid broken links. For example, a link to interlibrary loan would not be shown if the full-text is available in another database. Another rule involves whether or not to show a link based on the existence of a certain piece of data in the citation. For example, a link to Amazon would not appear if ISBN data was not a part of a particular citation.

LinkSource provides usage statistics such as “Journal and Service ID Summary,” “Summary by IP or Referring URL,” and “Source Summary.” LinkSource logs information such as the user ID, referring URL, OpenURL Service ID, Journal Title, ISSN, etc. Usage reports (including historical report information, starting in February 2003) will be available in June 2003.

LinkSource is an authenticated service, so only authenticated users of libraries that subscribe to LinkSource will see the link menu. Authentication can be accomplished in various ways, such as browser cookies, IP address, user name and password, or through proxy servers like EZProxy.

Set-up and Technical Support:

Set-up should be fairly easy for libraries already using EBSCOadmin. EBSCO’s support staff will help customers with set-up, such as uploading holdings information, and can advise on the configuration of LinkSource based on library holdings and subscriptions. The support staff can also assist in the actual configuration of the LinkSource menu if the customer wishes. EBSCO is working with other vendors to obtain instructions for their customers on configuring non-EBSCO products to work with LinkSource, but customers must contact their own vendors separately for specific instructions.

If training is needed, this can be arranged with EBSCO support staff. EBSCO does not charge extra for services like training or support. Their technical support staff is fully trained in LinkSource and is available M-F 8am to 9pm CST and Sat-Sun 10am-6pm CST.

Pricing:

In addition to the pricing below, MOBIUS members would be offered an additional 10% discount through the Vendor Direct Program.

15,000 FTE and above- \$15,000 maximum, \$7,000 minimum per year

10,000-14,999 FTE- \$13,200 maximum, \$6,000 minimum per year

5000-9900 FTE-\$11,600 max to \$6,000 minimum per year

2000-4999 FTE-\$10,200 max. to \$6,000 minimum per year

2000 and below-\$9,700 max. \$6,000 minimum per year

Sites can reach the minimum price level by discounts if they also subscribe to the following databases:

BasicBiosis or Biological Abstracts \$1,000 discount

CINAHL \$1,000 discount

INSPEC \$1,000 discount

MLA Bibliography \$1,000 discount

PsycINFO \$1,000 discount

PsycArticles \$1,000 discount

Each H.W. Wilson database \$500 discount

ATLA/ATLAS as a package \$500 discount

Again, in order for sites to purchase LinkSource, they must subscribe to at least one product on the EBSCOhost interface. They do not need to be from the list above.

Data Sources:

<http://www.linkresolver.com/>

Emails from Stephanie Pearsall and Deborah LaPierre of EBSCO

LinkSource online demo, Jan 31, 2003