

## History of the TYDS@TUKS Project

Electronic journals are an everyday part of every university library. In fact recent research shows that it is regarded by researchers as the most important contribution of libraries to their research with indications that the abundance of networked journal articles has had a profound influence on the way research is being done. All this happened in less than fifteen years.

In 1997 a group of staff members of the University of Pretoria's Library Service (then known as the Academic Information Service) started experimenting with online journals and journal articles that were freely available. At the time we already subscribed to a number of databases, some of them with full text. Elsevier's Science Direct appeared on the scene and immediately captured our imaginations. A favourable trial license was negotiated with Elsevier and concluded during the 1998 IATUL Conference in Pretoria. Shortly thereafter our first subscription to a single journal followed: the online version of Journal of Biological Chemistry was ordered while a paper copy was kept for the Medical Library just in case... The potential of these developments for the future of scholarly communication was exciting

This was the start of an ambitious project, on par with or even exceeding what was available in the US and Europe at the time. We planned to migrate to e-journals as quickly as possible with a full blown gateway for access to all available e-journals, rights management and user support. The brand name TYDS@TUKS was chosen and a web site created – Eleta Grimbeek helped to create a presentable product and created bookmarks and posters. Unfortunately the original web site was not archived but a couple of pages that were used for a presentation at the LIASA Conference in Bellville in 1999 give an idea of the look and feel.

Definitely one of the most distinguishing features was the inclusion of journals which formed part of the general and subject databases which were bought from vendors such as Ebsco and Proquest. These packages were painstakingly unbundled in the following way: the title list in Excel format, which fortunately contained all the relevant fields, was screened to remove all but the full text journals. The different packages' lists were then colour coded and the lists, including title lists of e-journal products such as Science Direct, combined in one spread sheet to form the basis of the title list. The list was converted to HTML by adding columns with "linking phrases" which then miraculously could be turned into readable text for the web. For much of this work my sons, Johan and Frederik, had to help with the endless proof reading. Fortunately they were already used to their mother's schemes which involved them as the unpaid HR necessary for success.

To the list was added logos of the different platforms which afforded one to choose your favourite in case it appeared in more than one. Start/end dates were included and all titles were directly linked to the relevant package. Subsets were also created and presented as "Subject collections". The first three of these were for Agriculture (with the help of Anneline van der Grijp), Veterinary Science (with the help of Erica van der Westhuizen) and Dentistry (with the help of Susan Marsh). These processes were largely done manually and the lists had to be compared once a year with the vendors' new lists.

Requests to the database owners for their title lists were met with apprehension as few of them thought that it was a feasible prospect. In particular mr. Wim Luijendijk the managing director of Ebsco expressed his misgivings. But he must have changed his mind because a couple of years later Ebsco launched their A-Z platform including the same functionality albeit with much more sophistication and automation of course!

From the start we had to pay attention to rights management since the database licenses came with access specifications and passwords – that was before IP recognition. On the web site was a page where one could apply for passwords for the different products. These

were processed daily by Alet Grobler with the help of Gerda Beukes and sent to users. The web site also included extensive user help and information about e-publishing.

An energetic marketing campaign which included posters, bookmarks and one-on-one sessions with researchers was launched. In particular I remember the year when we had the “Online journals poster” and Julene Vermeulen and I put washing lines with journal covers all over campus.



The project was successful right from the start. At the end of 1999 our list 2000 titles included journals from Elsevier, Swets, the Gale Group, Ebsco, Wiley, Academic Press, Emerald, Ovid, Highwire and other Open Access journals. The following were up for consideration: Springer LINK, Lexis-Nexis, WestLaw, Blackwell's Navigator, JSTOR, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, American Mathematical Society, IEEE, ANBAR Management Intelligence, Project Muse, Haworth Press, African Virtual Library, Electric Library, SIRS Researcher. Also in 1999 the first GAELIC consortium licenses were negotiated for Journals@Ovid, MCB Emerald, General Business File and Academic Press IDEAL.

In 1998 70 336 articles were downloaded. Up to September 2003 1 157 715 articles were downloaded – about as much as is downloaded per year now. By then approximately 75% of our journal collection consisted of e-journals and the concept was fully entrenched in our service packages.

Enthused by these possibilities in August of 1999 Hilda and I, with the help of Coen Meyering, a Dutch student who was doing an internship here created a “virtual library” for a course that was taught by Anne de Boer. We went on a road show to all branch libraries. This started off the first versions of the so called “ClickUP pages”, information packages embedded in online coursework.

At the 1999 LIASA Conference in Bellville I made a presentation called *TYDS@TUKS: a step towards JOUR@ZA?* reporting on our first year's success. It created quite a stir for two reasons: firstly, we were the envy of every university library with Di Man commenting that this was precisely what every South African library needed. Secondly the format of the presentation: at the time Powerpoint was not really a natural choice for a presentation. Many people still used transparencies which were projected on a screen with a so-called overhead projector. I decided to create a presentation in the form of a self-contained web site using the web site itself as the basis and adding web pages with the presentation information. It included a “live” demonstration of the system and was taken to Bellville on a “stiffie” – I

cannot remember if we actually used CDs for transporting information to conferences at the time. However, IT support staff were very important for those who wanted to use a computer for their presentations. When I mentioned to this dear man that I am using a web site with live demonstration he was alarmed because just then the Internet was not in the least reliable. The presentation web site was not updated for later browsers. A simulation was made on Powerpoint and archived in UPspace.

The TYDS@TUKS team was a pleasant group. We met twice a month as can be seen on the 2000 calendar.



Back: Lita Ferguson, Marguerite Nel, Hilda Kriel, Maureen Brassel, Julene Vermeulen, Monica Hammes,  
Sitting: Soekie Swanepoel, Gerda Beukes, Annelene van der Grijp



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Monica Hammes/December 2011