

# Desperately Seeking Website

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**Editor's note:** When Amber and I started talking about some of her frustrations with the online environment, I asked her if she would like to write a column in which she would try to give us examples of what drives publishers crazy. We all know what drives us crazy, right? Anyway, the column below is an evolving process and proves that publishers, vendors, and librarians are all in this together! Please let us hear your input on these important issues. Maybe we can get a productive dialog going? — Yr. Ed.

In this first column, I will introduce some issues facing publishers providing online services to their institutional customers. The **American Society for Bone and Mineral Research** is fairly new to publishing and just as new to forming policy surrounding provision of electronic materials. It is our hope that this discussion stimulates feedback that will help publishers in serving the needs of institutional customers and in evaluating approaches to electronic publishing and licensing so that we do not hinder the progress we seek. If any of you want to vent about a particular issue, please let me know!

## Online Access

Our library customers tell us consistently that the process of initiating online access can be too slow and laborious. The criticism is valid and we are eager to eliminate the problem. I will outline some of the publisher's challenges in promptly executing site licenses for our customers. Perhaps sharing these obstacles with you will shed some light on the issue of delayed access.

## Subscription Agencies and Customer Numbers

Dealing with site licenses must be burdensome for many of you; however, culling necessary information from a submitted site license

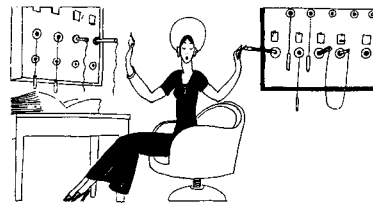
agreement can be just as taxing for the staff attempting to complete the registration process. For example, I may have to correspond with both the subscription agency requesting access on behalf of its customer as well as with an institution's acquisitions department before finally activating the online subscription. If I cannot locate the individual subscriber with the information provided by the agency, I must contact the agent for more information or search through databases to find the customer record. Sometimes, even this is to no avail.

You may choose to circumvent the subscription agency and to contact the publisher directly. When this happens, the publication staff may have trouble locating record of the subscription without an identifying subscriber number or reference number (usually provided by the subscription agent). Without one or the other number, you can encounter problems trying to register for online access.

Using internal reference numbers to represent customers worked fine for the purposes of mailing print journals. However, because we now service separate sites via an IP connection, the information flow between an agency and publisher must be more cohesive. The communication between the librarian and the agent must be of one accord as well, so that it is clear to the publisher who is managing the registration for online access.

## IP Addresses

If your desired result is extensive access for an institutional network, the IP addresses must be accurate. Delays occur when it is incorrectly formatted or an incomplete list of IP addresses are provided unknowingly by the customer. The confusion can usually be worked out with some additional attention; still, this means delay for a service for which you have already paid or to which you are entitled (if online access is bundled with the print subscription).



To avoid this delay, the IP address submitted should conform to the IP formats used by the publisher. For instance, the JBMR Website has a sample list of IP addresses in its Help section. The rules provided with the list of examples spell out how IP addresses must be arranged in order to have meaning within our database. Also, the more consolidated the information you include on the site license, the easier it will become to facilitate the process. All of us, libraries, subscription agents and publishers, must recognize a change in practice as necessary to reap the full benefits of digital information.

## Websites

A Website is only as good as the information it delivers. We'd appreciate your comments regarding ways in which we as publishers should maintain and update our Websites to make them most useful to you. See the questions below for your invited response.

1. What sends you to a journal's Website?
2. Where do you look to find subscription information?
3. Do you use FAQ's when available?
4. What is the first thing that comes to your mind that is missing from many Websites, that you would like to see?
5. Can you send me a Website you really love and one you really don't like?

## Your feedback

The goal of access for all with agreed upon limits is possible. We want to make the online market available for those who need access. Feel free to send your comments directly to me at <amber@jbmr.org>. I look forward to receiving and responding to your feedback in the next issues! 🐾