

**Report on NOAA's Licensing Electronic Access to Journals,
Databases, and E-books (Phase I)**

Presented by
NOAA Research Council's *Ad Hoc Committee on Libraries*
November 8, 2011

What is the charge to the Ad Hoc Committee?

The Committee will conduct its work in two phases. This report will deal with Phase I. The Committee will issue a report for Phase II separately.

In Phase I of its task, the Committee will develop an Action Plan including descriptions of the following:

- *The current situation with respect to NOAA's purchasing of journal subscriptions, databases, and e-books;*
- *Recommendations for steps that could be taken immediately to eliminate the cost of as many "decentralized" and "redundant" electronic subscriptions as possible and to apply those savings to purchasing centralized electronic subscriptions, with the goal of maintaining, and, to the extent possible, increasing the current level of access to journals across NOAA.*

The Committee will provide a draft Phase I Action Plan to the Research Council by November 1, 2011. Upon the Council's approval, the Council will present the Plan to NOAA Leadership and recommend implementation by NOAA.

Introduction:

NOAA's *Next Generation Strategic Plan* defines NOAA's mission as "to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts; **to share that knowledge and information with others**; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources." NOAA's Office of Program Planning and integration web page on NOAA's mission (<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/mission/>) elaborates on this mission by stating "NOAA's core mission functions require satellite systems, ships, buoys, aircraft, research facilities, high-performance computing, and **information management and distribution systems**. NOAA provides research-to-application capabilities that can recognize and apply significant new understanding to questions, develop research products and methods, and apply emerging science and technology to user needs. NOAA invests in and depends heavily

on the science, management, and engagement capabilities of its partners. Collectively, NOAA's organizational enterprise-wide capabilities — its people, **infrastructure**, research, and partnerships — are essential for NOAA to achieve its vision, mission, and long-term goals." Awareness of and access to current and past published research results are essential to each of NOAA's mission elements and especially to the element to share knowledge and information with others. NOAA's mission to conduct primary research in ocean and atmospheric processes and related issues requires access to the large diverse body of research literature outside of NOAA. Researchers must have timely, comprehensive, and unfettered access to this body of materials in order to carry out their research in the most efficient and effective manner. In short, NOAA needs to define a core set of information resources that provides its researchers and policy makers access to this research literature.

NOAA's research libraries operate in global information and publishing systems that require the acquisition of both online and print resources. NOAA's librarians seek to provide support for world-class research using the following guiding principles:

1. Provide essential information resources and services to support research, analysis, and policy development.
2. Provide equal access for all of NOAA through their collections and services.
3. Provide electronic access whenever possible and cost-effective. Electronic access includes licenses to electronic journals, databases, and e-books.
4. Collect and/or make accessible NOAA's intellectual output in print form and electronic form. An institutional repository is an ideal mechanism for the provision of electronic documents. A pilot institutional repository project with holdings relating to *Deepwater Horizon* is now underway.
5. Obtain sufficient annual funding to accommodate the rising cost of journals, databases and e-books in order to develop and maintain library research collections.
6. Take an active role in the research process by becoming embedded librarians.

NOAA's librarians must also work under a number of constraints, including the following:

1. NOAA librarians serve a large number of professional researchers who are pursuing research on many different topics that require access to a wide subject range of peer reviewed literature and other published materials.
2. Not all current or past research materials are available in an electronic format nor will they be in the foreseeable future.
3. Electronic access to scientific journals is not purchased but licensed. If a license is not renewed, then access to past years of the journal may no longer be available. A vendor

may provide the back files in a machine readable format such as CD-ROMs or limited online access to back files. Therefore, having a single printed copy somewhere in NOAA is critical for some core journals.

4. The cost of library materials or access to them (mainly scientific journals and databases) continues to increase annually at 6% to 8%.
5. Bundling of electronic resources by vendors works against NOAA libraries striving to optimize their electronic journal budgets.

Current Situation:

The current situation is characterized by a number of factors which have adverse effects:

- Funding levels are not consistent year-to-year nor are they increasing to accommodate the rising costs of library materials.
- Annual budgeting priorities among NOAA library user groups vary from a *must pay* attitude to *only if we have money in the 4th quarter that we cannot spend on other things*.
- Funding for library materials is decentralized in NOAA and there is not an organization-wide collection development plan currently in place.
- Decisions regarding the funding of library materials are made at many different levels throughout the line offices at NOAA.
- Many NOAA libraries and their collections have lost librarians who provided services, or the library collections have disappeared altogether.
- The NOAA Central Library's budget provides for the acquisition of a few databases and a few online journal collections that provide equal access to all of NOAA. The NOAA Central Library team has, with assistance from others in NOAA, negotiated several NOAA-wide agreements which provide or could provide equal access at no additional costs to NOAA. Through this effort, some savings from lower prices and less acquisitions processing have and can be realized. However, prioritized **centralized funding** must be established in order to maintain the savings achieved thus far and to make additional progress. This is also necessary to prevent access interruptions.

The NOAA librarians are ready to define core databases, journals, and e-books licenses and vet the selections with library committees, researchers, and other interested staff.

Recommendations:

- Stabilize and confirm the commitment to financially support NOAA libraries to acquire quality research materials and to be interactive about defining their needs and accommodating solutions that have budgetary and other constraints.
- Establish an enterprise-wide central funding source for the purchase of a core list of journals, databases, and e-books that everyone in NOAA can access online.
- Charge the NOAA Central Library with execution of this annual purchase with input and agreement on the selection of core journals, databases, and e-books coming from the other NOAA library organizations.
- Recognize the need to maintain individual library budgets to fund the acquisition of specialized library materials, journals, databases, and e-books required to support local research.
- Charge NOAA Central Library, with assistance from others, to negotiate NOAA-wide agreements for library materials and to make all of NOAA aware of these resources.
- Document the process and the titles selected and produce a NOAA-wide collection development plan for the licensing of electronic journals, databases, and e-books.
- Report annually to NOAA's Research Council and others on the progress toward equal access to library materials across NOAA.

Attachments:

1. Web of Science Quote and Time Coverage
2. Matrix of Library Funding Decisions and Taxes
3. SWETS Journal Order Listing Journal Titles and Costs by NOAA Library Locations
4. EndNotes Order