

## Perpetual Access Personas

May 2015

In January 2015, a consultation with UK Higher Education institutions was undertaken to understand perpetual access problems encountered by libraries. 19 librarians were interviewed.

The survey identified 9 clear and distinct personas that capture the perspectives of UK HE librarians. Here we make those personas available for public reuse.

**Name:** Wendy  
**Type:** Moving to online only collections  
**Institution:** Large, research heavy, Russell group member.

**Background:** Works in a large, traditionally print focused library. Demands on space and a shift in user expectations have led to an annual review of subscriptions with the aim of switching from print & online to online-only. In some cases electronic back files have been purchased outright -- guaranteeing perpetual access -- to allow for the discard of older print material.

Perpetual access rights are considered when moving to online-only because the assurance of the print version will no longer be available. If perpetual access isn't included the print & online subscription will be retained as the print will continue to act as the archive. Wendy is aware that checking the holdings of archiving agencies such as LOCKSS & Portico to see what is being preserved would be useful to assist in making the decision to move to online-only. However, Wendy finds this process too time consuming especially during the busy renewals period.

**Goals/Tasks:**

- To move to online-only where possible, assessing viability of switching where perpetual access rights are included and the platform is robust.
- To have confidence that any perpetual access clauses will be implemented in order to advise librarians to cancel print.
- To quickly identify outright purchases in order to rationalise print stock.
- To have a clear view of preserved content to assist with relegating print stock.
- To have a quick reference for general perpetual access terms and conditions of a publisher.



**Name:** Susan  
**Type:** Multiple subscription types over many years  
**Institution:** Large, research heavy, Russell Group member.

**Background:** Susan's institution transitioned towards an e-only policy over a number of years that has resulted in a variety of different e-journal access conditions and rights. Until a recent change of management the institution had relatively few NESLi deals, preferring to manage e-journals on a title by title basis. Because of the increased number of big deals coupled with the purchase of back files the reason for institutional entitlement to a journal are not always clear.



Susan finds management of perpetual access issues further complicated when trying to consider content served by aggregators. If online access is only provided through an aggregator, perpetual access assurance is unlikely to be available and print subscriptions of the journal must be retained.

The increased uptake of big deals has increased record keeping especially in relation to core titles. In some cases the library doesn't have a full picture of where they should have access and a suspicion that the publisher will not have a clear idea either.

**Goals/Tasks:**

- To keep track of current access entitlement in relation to both deals with publishers and individual titles.
- To keep track of core titles as part of deals.
- To understand overall access to a title whether that is as part of a current deal, via an individual subscription or as part of a back file.
- To have a clear view of where online access is provided from and whether perpetual access will be included.

**Name:** Diarmid  
**Type:** Record keeper  
**Institution:** Large, research heavy, Russell Group member. Library is part of a very close regional consortium.

**Background:** Diarmid oversees licences and subscriptions within his institution but is also part of a regional consortium where a lead institution, in conjunction with Jisc Collections, negotiates with a single publisher over the deals for all members of the consortium. These negotiations occur every three years. For each publisher a title list and the subscription is provided which should match with the entitlement assertions of the libraries in the consortium.



Diarmid finds that discrepancies occur because of the way in which libraries pay for titles e.g. multiple journals are bundled on one invoice and recorded incorrectly by either the library or the publisher. In some cases the library has access to a title and has evidence of this but the assertion of entitlement is missing from the publisher data.

To ensure that data is recorded accurately at a local level, Diarmid keeps meticulous records. Licences and invoices are stored as both physical and electronic copies and information about deals including title lists are stored on the library management system.

**Goals/Tasks:**

- To collate entitlement information for the publisher from all institutions.
- To receive and distribute publisher assertions.
- To collect evidence related to any discrepancies and negotiate a resolution.
- To provide a single point of contact for both publishers and consortia members.
- To have access to a reliable local record of subscription data used to make decisions without referring to original documents.

**Name:** James  
**Type:** Substitution  
**Institution:** Mid-sized, focussed on teaching.

**Background:** Because of the focus on teaching at James' institution there is often a need to manipulate packages, swapping core titles on a semi-regular basis. James occasionally takes individual subscriptions to titles previously included in packages when relevant to user needs.



Keeping track of the changes made can be laborious, may not be concise and, particularly where a core title becomes unsubscribed and another is substituted, it can be difficult to discern what these substitutions mean for perpetual access. In some cases, where access to back content is lost and the library does not have sufficient evidence to hand, entitlement claims are not pursued:

“At the moment we don't have the record keeping to be confident in demanding access be restored. If we had a mechanism for recording our entitlements accurately independent of what a publisher was serving at any one moment we would be more confident”.

**Goals/ Task:**

- To track titles described as 'core' and be confident there is evidence to support continuing access of those.
- To have a clear view of when titles were included in packages and when they were subscribed to on an individual basis.
- Record multiple entitlements for a single journal.
- To ensure that the collection, as advertised, is accurate and the content is available to users.

**Name:** Annie  
**Type:** More efficient processes  
**Institution:** Mid-sized, subject focussed.

**Background:** Annie rarely cancels subscriptions; because of the specialised nature of the institution the collection is more likely to grow around the subject area. As such the library is not concerned about perpetual access for important titles that are consistently subscribed to. It is common procedure in the library to investigate entitlement when it becomes an issue but both perpetual access and walk in user access are part of standard checking before purchasing a subscription.



Because of the mainly expanding nature of the collection record keeping is a low priority. Entitlement data is stored with the licence and in email correspondence if queried with the publisher and retrieved if there is an entitlement dispute. Because of this if publishers cut off access to years subscribed assembling evidence to restore access can be time consuming.

Annie Identifies with the principals of LOCKSS and is aware that “an insurance policy is important” but dislikes the time and effort it takes to maintain. Also the library no longer has the dedicated IT support that was available when LOCKSS was implemented.

**Goals /Task:**

- To reduce staff time spent on LOCKSS.
- To reduce staff time spent assembling entitlement evidence, storage for existing evidence.

**Name:** Barney  
**Type:** Long tail librarian  
**Institution:** Large, research focused.

**Background:** Rarely deals with perpetual access in the very big but regularly in the very small. Tends to only cancel titles outside of packages – this may be because of low usage or value to users but boils down to value for money. Perpetual access is a key concern in relation to new subscriptions, if it isn't offered the journal is unlikely to be purchased.

Barnaby's institution was an early adopter of LOCKSS in the hope that big publishers would be involved. Eventually came to appreciate the content that LOCKSS was preserving, titles key to some areas that did not have perpetual access.

Barnaby is a KB+ enthusiast having recently become a KB+ user: "If you asked what our entitlement was we would go to KB+". He would like to see greater clarity from the KB+ data in relation to core titles as it can be difficult to identify these.

**Goals /Task:**

- To ensure preservation of small publisher's material that is relevant to users.
- To access a LOCKSS like solution to journal preservation.
- To achieve greater clarity around perpetual access rights for a title before subscribing.



**Name:** Amy  
**Type:** Value for money  
**Institution:** Mid-sized, mix of research and teaching.

**Background:** Amy recently reinstated two large packages. Some years ago there was a need to reduce spend and increasingly found titles included in the deals were irrelevant to the scope of the institution. Amy cancelled two large deals, retained 75 of 400 titles on individual subscriptions. This gave the library confidence that the collection met the needs of users at the institution. Year on year there were requests for additional titles from large publishers. Over time it reached a stage where individual subscription costs outstripped those of NESLi2 deals.



A consequence of reinstating the deals was that a great deal of time was spent with licences working out entitlement from previous deals and the period of individual subscriptions. There was also the need to ensure the current deals recognised the historical entitlements from previous deals and individual subscriptions.

Amy found that the process of cancellation produced anxiety within the library. Concern over perpetual access to core titles was high as staff had experience of the occasionally lengthy correspondence required to restore access or verify entitlements. Concern was primarily for the user experience but also the amount of work generated. Amy also found that perpetual access solutions offered by some publishers following cancellation are not practical as the library is unable to locally host contents of hard drives or batches of CD-ROMs provided.

**Goals /Task:**

- To ensure that core titles paid for during the course of the deals are accessible.
- To keep track of total spend across all journals.
- Compare current subscriptions to deals containing subscribed titles.
- Provide users with seamless access to material accessed post-cancellation.

**Name:** Craig  
**Type:** Increased communication  
**Institution:** Mid-sized, multiple campuses.

**Background:** At Craig's institution there are multiple campuses without a co-ordinated approach to managing electronic resources. Each campus has its own budget so subscriptions are managed at a local level across the institution. Historically some areas have relationships with suppliers which are akin to NESLi2 but not actually licensed as NESLi2 deals. Due to the independent activity between campuses it isn't clear what the subscription history of the institution as a whole is. Assembling proof of assertions is very difficult as is collating the terms of licence for these locally negotiated 'deals'.

**Goals /Task:**

To have a clear view of entitlements across campuses and the institution as a whole.  
Produce local and institutional reports of entitlements.  
Notify all campuses of new subscriptions.



**Name:** Gillian  
**Type:** Send help!  
**Institution:** Post '92 university, focused on teaching.

**Background:** Gillian is aware that perpetual access concern is something that should be addressed but has no solution in place currently. While the institution does have a small print collection the coverage does not match the amount of e-content available to users since signing up for NESLi deals. The deals provide the institution with a large amount of content for, what they see as, a reasonable cost. The library is unlikely to cancel any packages but aware that a perpetual access solution is required 'just in case'.

**Goals & Task:** To implement an approach to address perpetual access concerns.  
To have a clear view of what the institution would be entitled to 'just in case' deals become unaffordable or content unavailable.



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