Chapter 7
Comparative Analysis of Electronic Resource Management Systems (ERMS):
A Web Study

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ABSTRACT

Electronic Resource Management Systems (ERMSs) have been developed to manage e-resources by several proprietary and open source products, which are now available on the market. The main purpose of these ERMSs is to manage the workflow of e-resources, access, centralize data, and improve administrative interfaces, etc. This chapter compares and analyzes the 16 ERMSs' information available on their respective Websites. The comparison covers on ERMSs' functionality, use of standards and compatibility, distinguish features, modules, etc. These 16 ERMSs are Innovative Interface's Innovative ERM, TDNet's TDNet ERM Solutions, Ex Libris's Verde ERM, OCLC's Web-Share License Manager, SemperTool's SMDB, University of Notre Dame's CORAL, MIT's VERA, SerialsSolutions's 360 Resource Manager, HARRASSOWITZ's HERMIS, The Johns Hopkins University's HERMIES, Colorado Alliance's Gold Rush, WT Cox's Journal Finder, EBSCO's EBSCONET ERM Essentials, Simon Fraser University Library's CUFTS, SIRSI Corp's E-Resource Center, Priory Solution's Research Monitor. This comparison found that basic features and standards adopted are more or less common in all ERMSs. However, the modules, programming language, and platform used in the ERMSs are somewhat unalike. This study concludes with usefulness of ERMSs for librarians and end-users.

INTRODUCTION

Does your library have an electronic resource (e-resources) which includes databases, e-journals, e-books, free e-resources etc? Does your library face a growing challenge to adequately access and manage the diverse e-resources such as evaluation, selection, acquisition, renewal/cancellation, license agreement, open access and institutional archives, access rights, usage statistics, single access point, implementation and administration. If so, it is required to have your library an Electronic Resource Management System (ERMS).

An ERMS is a software that assists the library in managing the details access and manages the e-resources. An ERMS is basically a tool for librarians, but its impact relates to end-users. The information gathered in the ERMS can serve as a starting point for user's interaction with e-resources. Further, ERMS addressed the issues on new standards and protocols.

ERMS are used "… to keep track of a library's digital titles, subscription and vendor/publisher information, and link resolution with more accuracy and less duplication" (McCracken, 2007). ERMS are systems designed to manage the details involved in the acquisitions of e-resources, including subscription and licensing details, usage, cost, and access tracking and data gathering. In general, an ERMS is used for record keeping and budgeting activities, while Content Management Systems (CMS) are used for access and authority control. In some respects these are functions can overlap. Several good stand-alone ERMS both commercial and open source are available and many ILS (Integrated Library System) integrate some form of ERMS (Breeding, 2008; Fons and Jewell, 2007).

In 2002, the Digital Library Federation (DLF) and the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) co-sponsored a workshop that eventually led to the Electronic Resource Management Initiative (ERMI). The landmark ERMI report published in 2004 (http://www.diglib.org/pubs/dlf102/) articulated the challenges of e-resource management and offered a blueprint, of sorts, to companies and individuals engaged in building new or expanding current electronic resource management (ERM) systems. The original work of the ERMI evolved into ERMI, Phase II, which continued to explore the variegated issues associated with e-resource management, such as data standards and usage statistics (http://www.diglib.org/standards/dlf-erm05.htm). Bob McQuillan noted in a January 12, 2011, presentation at a NISO webinar (The Three S's of Electronic Resource Management: Systems, Standards, & Subscriptions, http://www.niso.org/news/events/2011/nisowebinars/erm/) that the early challenges for librarians dealing with e-resource management were four-fold: e-resource data existed in many formats and locations, was not centralized, was often stored and accessed in a variety of silos, and was not integrated with the Integrated Library System (ILS). To what extent have we solved these challenges and what obstacles remain? (Collins and Grogg, 2011)

Generally, ERMS has a one-stop solution of e-resource management which contains two parts includes "management" and "access" for both librarians and end-users, compliance with specific standards and compatibility.

The features and functions includes in "management" aspect of ERMS are:

1. **Workflow Management:** ERMS support e-resource workflow (Life cycle) such as selection, acquisitions, trial, review/renewal/cancellation, usage statistic, cost, and administrative data etc. Workflow management helps to keep track of task assignments throughout the e-resource life cycle.
2. **Licensing Management:** It manages license details with central storage of all license agreements. It is also manage number of users and permission to make copies, printouts,

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