

Taking the License out of the Equation: NISO's SERU Initiative

NISO SERU Working Group
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What is SERU?

Shared E-Resources Understanding


- Developed by NISO Working Group of librarians, publishers, subscription agents, lawyers
- Libraries and publishers forego a license agreement and rely on a mutual understanding



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Why SERU?


- License agreements as written contracts cannot be standardized
- Bilateral agreements do not scale for small publishers
 - Add costs for publishers and librarians
 - Prolong sales cycle and delay access by users
 - Processing costs can exceed publication costs
- Growing consensus on most points



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Perceptions & Reality

- Perception
 - Librarians required licenses
 - Publishers required licenses
- Reality
 - Librarians often have a backlog of licenses
 - A few publishers didn't have license agreements
 - Growing environment of trust based on amicable resolution of problems



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Evolving Process

2005


- Idea vetted at meetings

2006

- Engaged Organizational Support
- Legal consultation
- Representative group created draft
- NISO adopted Working Group

2007

- Draft vetted with stakeholders
- NISO comment period, pilot, approval



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Without a License Agreement

Omit Contract Terms	Purchase Order Terms
• Jurisdiction	• What content
• Warranties	• For what price
• Liabilities	• For what period
• Force majeure	• How many (for whom)
• Assignment	
• Severability	



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Topics in Shared Understanding

- Subscriptions and subscribers
- Appropriate and inappropriate use
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Online performance and service
- Archival access and perpetual rights

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Working Group Discussions

- Determining language that represents widely accepted practices
- Language issues rather than permissions
- Issues internationally (China, document delivery)
- Document as a framework with examples in the FAQ (i.e. archiving)
- Types of libraries – variations

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Expectations for SERU

- SERU can
 - Reduce costs for publishers
 - Streamline sales/acquisitions process
 - Recognize community consensus
- SERU cannot
 - Replace or eliminate all license agreements
 - Be a standard license or click through
 - Be customized

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How SERU Works

- Forego license and link to SERU on NISO website
- Purchase Order is acquisitions vehicle
- Orders placed through vendors such as serials agents or consortia
- NISO Registry for publishers & libraries

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Next Steps

- Formal NISO Review Process
- Signup for SERU Information Listserv
- Pilot June-December 2007
- Formal Approval 2008

www.Niso.org/committees/Seru

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Future Developments

- New formats of publications
- Interactive PDFs, multimedia
- Resources created by social networks
- New business models
- Lack of global consensus
- Authors' rights
- Technology guidelines

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