

CDLALERT-L DIRECTORY ANNOUNCEMENT USAGE SURVEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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BACKGROUND:

The Directory of CDL-Licensed Content will be retired on October 31, 2005. Currently, the CDL releases a weekly announcement via the CDLALERT-L listserv notifying recipients of changes to the Directory, including the addition and deletion of database and e-journal resources. With the anticipated retirement of the Directory, the CDL has embarked upon an assessment of the current listserv service to understand the following:

- How does library staff utilize the information distributed in the CDLALERT-L listserv announcements regarding Directory changes?
- How important are the listserv announcements in helping library staff perform their work?
- Should the CDL continue to issue announcements of licensed resources holding updates? If so, what information should the announcements include and how often should they be distributed?

METHODOLOGY:

With the assistance of Steve Toub, Felicia Poe developed an online survey of ten questions, designed to assess usage of the CDLALERT-L weekly announcements of changes to Directory holdings.¹ The survey, available May 04-13, 2005, was distributed via a CDLALERT-L announcement on May 04, 2005 with a reminder distributed on May 12, 2005. Of the 310 subscribers to CDLALERT-L, 94 individuals responded to the survey. All UC campuses, with the exception of UC Merced, were represented in the responses.

PRIMARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following are the primary findings of the survey, including recommendations and supporting data.

FINDING 1

Survey respondents consider the Directory CDLALERT-L announcements as information worthy of their attention.

The majority of survey respondents characterize their reading of the Directory CDLALERT-L announcements as

- “skimming” the summary (43%), or
- “glancing” at resource titles for a majority of postings (16%).

A significant minority (26%) report that they “closely examine” resource titles.

SUPPORT DATA

Responses to the question, “Which of the following best describes how closely you read the weekly Directory of CDL-Licensed Content updates posted to CDLALERT-L?” include:

Response	Count	Percentage
Ignore or delete from email without opening.	6	7%
Skim the summary of additions/updates/deletions.	40	43%
Glance at resource titles for a majority of the postings.	15	16%
Closely examine resource titles and holdings for a majority of the postings.	24	26%
Other	8	9%

Further insight into how CDLALERT-L announcements are used, including how survey respondents define “skim” and “review” can be inferred from the respondents who included comments describing their usage habits:

- “Quickly review titles to see if any in my subject areas, in case there is something that I really need to know, e.g., important veterinary journal newly available via CDL.”
- “Skim, but pay close attention to any deletions.”
- “I investigate further if I see something that is of interest.”
- “Depends, if the summary is interesting, I look further.”
- “First I skim summary. If one of my key publisher/vendors is represented there, then I peruse the list. Being a compulsive reader, I tend to quickly skim the whole list depending on time.”
- “Look for ones significant to me and my faculty.”
- “I skim each issue to see if there are any new/changed databases. We maintain our own subject application listing databases by subject and in an A-Z list. The CDL Alert is a key mechanism for ensuring that subject selectors add all new titles.”
- “Closely examine new databases, skim journal titles.”

RECOMMENDATION(S) The majority of information currently included in the CDLALERT-L announcements is of value to UC library staff and continuing distribution of that information should be a priority of the CDL.

See below for recommendations pertaining to announcement content and frequency.

FINDING 2 **A significant majority of respondents (71%) consider the continuation of CDLALERT weekly announcements to be either “very” or “moderately” important to their work; a noticeable minority (29%) considers it “unimportant”.**

Of the 26 respondents who consider the continuation of weekly announcements to be “Very Important”, a majority (21) indicate they use the announcement to maintain their library’s list of e-resources.

SUPPORT DATA Responses to the question “How important is it to your work that the CDL continue to issue a weekly announcement of changes to electronic resource holdings?” include:

Response	Count	Percentage
Very important	26	28%
Moderately important	40	43%
Unimportant	27	29%

The 26 respondents who consider the continuation of weekly announcements to be “Very Important” describe action(s) taken based on the information as: <i>(check all that apply)</i>	Count
No actions taken; I do not read the notices.	0
No actions taken; I use it for personal informational purposes only.	2
I use it to make collection development decisions.	10
I use it to inform my public service activities.	11
I use it to maintain my library’s list of e-resources (e-journal directory, list of databases, etc.) or send it to someone who does.	21
I use it to maintain cataloging records in my ILS or send it to someone who does.	6
Other	6
<p>Comments from the respondents who consider the continuation to be “Very Important”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I notify patrons when content they have expressed interest in becomes available, particularly when we're waiting for something to get licensed.” ○ “Update my subject guides.” ○ “If I find any of my local titles in the list, I check them to make sure that either I should change it to CDL or there is a question about it that I need to pursue.” ○ “Identifying new domain names to be added to the proxy server.” ○ “Use the information to update our proxy server’s access file.” <p>Comments from the respondents who consider the continuation to be “Moderately Important”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I look at deletions most closely to see if we need to purchase or license a resource that is being dropped by CDL.” ○ “I use it to verify whether a source is systemwide or local.” ○ “I skim the summary in case collection managers ask me about the status of one of the titles (I work in serials acquisitions).” ○ “Update the what’s new on the website, use it for reference questions not in my field of specialty.” ○ “We write Featured Resources news for our home page.” ○ “I may add a database to a web page, use for reference or instruction.” ○ “I let faculty know of resources (usually ejournal) newly available online.” ○ “Informing librarians, as needed.” ○ “Use it for my resource liaison responsibilities.” ○ “We use it for general information for new resources. If we pay too much attention to this alert, it jumps the gun with resource records that come out with SCP.” 	

RECOMMENDATION(S) The information currently included in the CDLALERT announcements is of value to campus library staff, particularly in the maintenance of campus e-resource lists. The announcements also serve as an important CDL communications tool, supporting library staff in their collection management, reference, and resource liaison responsibilities. CDL should consider the continued distribution of this information a priority.

FINDING 3 The number of respondents who identify the CDLALERT weekly announcements as either “very” or “moderately” important to their work (71%) are evenly distributed across campuses; there is no single campus that is more reliant than others on the information contained in the announcements.

Respondents who identify the CDLALERT weekly announcements as “unimportant” (29%) to their work are clustered on the UCSD campus (6 of 9 respondents) and the UCLA campus (7 of 16 respondents). A possible explanation for this clustering on the UCSD campus may be the presence of both SCP and staff from CDL Shared Acquisitions.

SUPPORT DATA Responses to the question, “How important is it to your work that the CDL continue to issue a weekly announcement of changes to electronic resource holdings?” include:

Response	Count	Percentage
Very important	26	28%
Moderately important	40	43%
Unimportant	27	29%

Cross tabulation of campus identification with the question, “How important is it to your work that the CDL continue to issue a weekly announcement of changes to electronic resource holdings?” indicates the following:

Question #2 “How important...”	UCB	UCD	UCOP	LBL/ LLNL	UCI	UCLA	UCR	UCSD	UCSF	UCSB	UCSC	Other
Very important	29% (5)	38% (5)	(0)	(0)	45% (4)	12% (2)	17% (1)	33% (3)	50% (1)	31% (4)	(0)	25% (1)
Moderately important	53% (9)	38% (5)	(0)	100% (2)	22% (2)	44% (7)	67% (4)	(0)	50% (1)	54% (7)	67% (2)	50% (2)
Unimportant	18% (3)	23% (3)	100% (1)	(0)	33% (3)	44% (7)	17% (1)	67% (6)	(0)	15% (2)	33% (1)	25% (1)
Total Counts	17	13	1	2	9	16	6	9	2	13	3	4

RECOMMENDATION(S) The information currently included in the CDLALERT announcements is of value to library staff across all UC campuses and continuing distribution of that information should be a priority of the CDL.

FINDING 4 While the majority of *all* respondents (60%) express a preference for monthly distribution of the information currently contained in the CDLALERT-L announcements, respondents who identify the weekly announcements as “*very important*” or “*moderately important*” to their work are more likely to express a preference for more frequent distribution - either weekly or every two weeks.

SUPPORT DATA Responses to the question, “If the CDL continues to distribute CDLALERT-L announcements of changes to electronic resources, how frequently would you like to receive those announcements?” include:

Response	Count	Percentage
Weekly	16	17%
Every two weeks	21	23%
Monthly	54	60%

Cross tabulation of respondents preference for distribution frequency (Q4) with the question, “How important is it to your work that the CDL continue to issue a weekly announcement of changes to electronic resource holdings?” indicate the following:

Base question (Q2): “ how frequently...”	Very important	Moderately important	Unimportant
(Did not answer)	(0)	(0)	7% (2)
Weekly	39% (10)	12% (5)	4% (1)
Every two weeks	39% (10)	23% (9)	7% (2)
Monthly	23% (6)	65% (26)	82% (22)
Total Counts	26	40	27

RECOMMENDATION(S) Information currently contained in CDLALERT-L announcements should continue to be distributed on a monthly basis. Assuming that the majority of information will be derived from the SFX knowledge base (KB), the timing of releases can be tied to Ex Libris’s monthly distribution of KB updates.

FINDING 5 **A majority of respondents (67%) indicate no preference for how electronic resource URLs are formatted; a significant minority (25%) indicates a preference for the PID format. (Current CDLALERT-L announcements contain electronic resource URLs in the PID format.)**

SUPPORT DATA Responses to the question, “If the CDL continues to distribute CDLALERT-L announcements of changes to electronic resources, what is your preference for how the URL is formatted? Note: Regardless of whether the URL is formatted as OpenURL or PID, both will be persistent, will be redirected to the same location, and will resolve to the same site.” include:

Response	Count	Percentage
OpenURL format	7	8%
PID format	22	25%
No preference	59	67%

RECOMMENDATION(S) Because a majority of respondents (67%) indicate no preference for how electronic resource URLs are formatted, CDL should choose the format that best suits its technical and workflow requirements, as well as campus requirements.

Assuming that, in the future, the source of electronic resource information distributed by CDL to campuses will primarily be derived from the SFX knowledge base, the URL format will necessarily be OpenURL.

FINDING 6 **A majority of respondents characterize as “very important” information pertaining to databases (74%), e-journals (64%), and reference texts (52%). Information pertaining to monographs and conference proceedings is considered of significantly less importance.**

SUPPORTING DATA Responses to the question, “If the CDL continues to distribute CDLALERT-L announcements of changes to electronic resources, how important is it that each of the following formats be included? Note: Formats marked by asterisk “*” are not currently included in CDLALERT-L announcements.” include:

Question 6	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
E-journals	64%	24%	12%
Databases	74%	18%	8%
Reference texts*	52%	28%	20%
Monographs*	27%	33%	40%
Conference proceedings*	20%	38%	42%

RECOMMENDATION(S) Information pertaining to e-journals, databases, and reference texts currently included in the CDLALERT announcements is of value to UC library staff. Assuming that, in the future, the majority of information distributed by CDL to campuses will be primarily derived from the SFX knowledge base, information pertaining to *e-journals*, *reference texts*, *monographs*, and *conference proceedings* will be included by default. Because information pertaining to *databases* is not obtainable through SFX, an alternative method for gathering data will need to be designed.

FINDING 7

A significant majority of respondents consider information pertaining to Tier 1 (85%) and Tier 2 (72%) CDL-Licensed resources to be “very important”. Additionally, respondents express a somewhat lesser but still significant interest in receiving announcements pertaining to Tier 3 and open access resources.

SUPPORT DATA

Responses to the question, “If the CDL continues to distribute CDLALERT-L announcements of changes to electronic resources, how important is it that the following resources be included? (check all that apply)” include:

Question 7	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
CDL-licensed resources (Tier 1)	85%	11%	3%
Campus-licensed resources (Tier 2)	72%	23%	6%
Campus-licensed resources (Tier 3)	42%	41%	17%
Open access resources	41%	45%	14%

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Assuming that, in the future, the majority of information distributed by CDL to campuses will be derived from the SFX knowledge base, information pertaining to Tier 1, Tier 2, and open access resources will be included by default.

Additionally, a cost/benefit analysis should be performed to assess the effort required to distribute information on Tier 3 resources. If deemed feasible and reasonable, information on Tier 3 resources should also be distributed.

FINDING 8

Library staff utilizes CDLALERT-L announcements in conjunction with Shared Cataloging Program (SCP) information. The timing and relationship between these two sources of information is cause for some confusion, prompting staff to crosscheck the information contained in each source.

SUPPORT DATA

Respondents offered detailed commentary on their use of CDLALERT-L and SCP information, including:

- “I know the library will reliably receive catalog records for electronic resources via the SCP. The CDL Alert provides a current awareness service for selectors and reference librarians. And it’s the one mechanism for listing all the new databases. The CDL is a tickler for adding the resources to local web-based resource listings not derived from the catalog. Although subject selectors will normally add the new resources in their areas, some items, particularly general resources, fall through the cracks. Also, often the PID is not known when the resource is first added to our subject application, so we catch those via CDL Alert as well.”
- “I’d like the announcements to be tied to the availability of the items in either SFX or SCP. It wasn’t always clear to me whether availability in the Directory

happened simultaneously with SFX or SCP. It would be great to see the e-books in there too, and if we are planning to continue actively adding DOAJ type resources, then those would be good to know about, again, more about knowing that they're linked. Maybe SFX can issue automatic change reports that can be slightly massaged and distributed or posted?"

- "We use it for general information for new resources. If we pay too much attention to this alert, it jumps the gun with resource records that come out with SCP."
- "I personally do not use these announcements... I assume we do or will have other communication channels so that SCP and CDL stay in-synch with the myriad of e.r. changes, so from my point of view I think we should let CDLAlert go."
- "I just skim it to verify that the CDL Directory info is in sync with SCP info."
- "I archive all of the CDLALERT-L emails which allows me to searching on a title or ISSN. I can then see the history of publisher changes, for instance. I can also sometimes pinpoint a period of time when we must have had problems with our SCP file and as our cataloging staff to check."
- "For something that doesn't need a new bibliographic record, CDL could send a list of changes rather than MARC records. I wish the announcements were in a searchable database."

RECOMMENDATION(S) After the CDL Directory is retired and a new distribution method for the information previously contained in CDLALERT-L announcements is designed, a document clarifying the source of the information should be posted on Inside CDL; a link to the document should be included in future announcements. Topics should include, but not be limited to: What is the source of the information distributed by CDL? What is SFX? OpenURL? PID? SCP? Tier 1, 2, 3?

FINDING 9 UCSF reports using the information sent in CDLALERT-L announcements for adding records to their OPAC.

SUPPORT DATA A UCSF respondent notes:

"We use them at UCSF for adding records to our catalog. We are working on getting set up to use the SCP records loads and hope to have this set up at some point soon, however this may take use several months and we will need to test."

RECOMMENDATION(S) Maintain close communication with appropriate UCSF staff during the decommissioning of the Directory and the transition to a new distribution method for the information previously contained in CDLALERT-L announcements.

¹ Becky Culbertson, Jane Lee, Ellen Meltzer, and Margery Tibbits also provided assistance