

ISC14D025

Title: Project update – Reading Online (TALIS Aspire)
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Issue

The project to implement the Talis Aspire Reading List software and provide a large amount of online reading lists and scanned chapters via the Blackboard VLE is gathering pace. Three strands are currently underway. This paper highlights the core offering of the service and progress and activity to date on the project to implement the software, populate it with UEA Reading Lists and launch it as a core service.

Recommendation

Recipients are invited to note progress in their school or faculty based on data presented and to advise on any approaches likely to increase the pace of take-up.

Equality and Diversity

No negative impact envisaged.

1) Overview of service

Reading Online is a new service aiming to offer online reading lists and a much higher proportion of online reading. This will be accessible via Blackboard sites and via the library website on the UEA Portal. Reading Online has been “soft-launched” with a major launch scheduled for early September 2015

It will provide academic colleagues with reassurance that the right teaching resources will be available to their students and provide time saving tools to contribute to an enhanced student experience.

Reading Online is also a direct response to students’ major pleas in surveys for more books and library resources.

“If there were links available on blackboard for each module which linked to online books/journals as suggested reading, it would save a lot of time and encourage wider reading”
[ISD Survey, 2013]

A set of web pages to promote the service are available at <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/library/resources/reading-lists>

1.1) Key benefits

1. Greater visibility of resources

Often, resource provision is in fact adequate but students have encountered difficulty navigating online resources and search systems. The service aims to change that through clear and direct links and clear availability information.

2. More scans of key reading

Once a list is created, academic staff can order scans of chapters from the library directly in the interface. Students often feedback to the library their appreciation of scanned chapters and articles to deliver their core lecture and weekly seminar readings. The library can use this service to deliver more scans directly, quickly and within the constraints of copyright licensing agreements. 600+ scan requests are now in progress with 300 existing scans already uploaded. Library staff have been trained and are ready to use the digitisation functionality to manage all future requests

3. Ensuring the right books are in place at the right time

Getting reading lists into the service greatly speeds up library processes that check stock of print books and e-books allowing the library to order more material in time for teaching.

1.2) Lists received so far by Faculty and School

The following table shows the numbers of lists so far received by the Library and the number that have subsequently been entered on the Reading Online system. The breakdown shown is by Faculty and School.

The numbers of lists received and the number entered on the system are reliable figures.

By contrast, the module figures and percentages are indicative only as the data from Blackboard includes modules repeated across semesters and different permutations of modules (UG/ PG) which in reality may well share a reading list. Also there are a large number of 'modules' listed here that we would not expect to have Reading Lists as they only require a Blackboard site for discussion or handouts e.g. 'jobs and careers' and 'lab skills'.

So the following data should be viewed with caution. However these data are useful to identify possible gaps between modules currently taught in each Faculty and School and number of reading lists actually received so far:-

Difference between lists received so far and estimated numbers of modules:-

Faculty/School	Lists Received	Lists Entered in reading software	Modules in Blackboard /SPOT Hierarchy	Difference between number of modules & lists received*	% lists received / modules
Cross FMH			103	103	0.00%
HSC	12	12	303	291	3.96%
MED	12	12	150	138	8.00%
FMH total	24	24	556	532	4.32%
Cross HUM	2	2	97	95	2.06%
AMA	66	30	223	157	29.60%
HIS	24	2	114	90	21.05%
LDC	7	2	224	217	3.13%
PPL	46	24	320	274	14.38%
HUM total	145	60	978	833	14.83%
Cross SCI			233	233	0.00%
BIO	52	52	94	42	55.32%
CHE			68	68	0.00%
CMP			116	116	0.00%
ENV	77	69	104	27	74.04%
MTH			68	68	0.00%
NAT			13	13	0.00%
PHA			53	53	0.00%
SCI total	129	121	749	620	17.22%
Cross SSF			109	109	0.00%
DEV	21	17	100	79	21.00%
ECO	45	26	48	3	93.75%
EDU	47	36	152	105	30.92%
LAW	18	3	114	96	15.79%
NBS	86	75	188	102	45.74%
PSY	22	5	42	20	52.38%
SWK	18	15	49	31	36.73%
SSF total	257	177	802	545	32.04%
Unknown	1	1	0		
Unknown total	1	1	0		
Grand Total	556	383	3085	2530	18.02%

*number of modules we are theoretically missing reading lists for.

The most obvious areas to prioritise are in FMH and SCI. In recent weeks we have made better progress with FMH having identified the fact that FMH often provides course-level, rather than module-level reading. Work is now underway to provide better guidance on how to use

the system to support this pedagogic approach in FMH and plans are underway to work on this over the summer.

Similarly in BIO and ENV there has been a breakthrough in terms of obtaining course handbooks which contain the kinds of readings needed. However further work is needed to really embed the concept of reading lists in this SCI workflow.

In some subject areas there has been no progress as yet. In CHE and PHA, we understand there may be more of a culture of providing course level readings, with weekly readings provided to support work done in the labs. Further discussions are needed about how the new reading list system might best support this approach to teaching and we are also asking other universities how best to obtain engagement from these Schools. In other subject areas, such as CMP and MTH, plans are to be put in place over the summer to try to identify the best contacts for obtaining their reading lists.

Another issue affecting the speed of upload of reading lists in HUM schools, especially History and PPL, is how to deal with lists which are essentially bibliographies, containing hundreds of recommended titles. Ways of prioritising core readings whilst signposting students to additional readings may need be found and again we are consulting with other university libraries that have already implemented to see how they are dealing with this.

1.3) What is being offered in terms of support?

Library staff are currently collecting lists from 2014-15 academic year modules that will run in future years. If academic staff have already supplied the library with a list or can do so by 1st August 2015, the library will aim to provide:

1. A first run at an online version of the reading list for academics to review and maintain going forward.
2. Support academics in updating the list ready for the next academic year.
3. A stock-check of material on the list against UEA library holdings to ensure adequate resources are in place to support the module. Library staff will order more copies if needed and ebooks if available.
4. Once lists have been entered, we contact academic staff ahead of the next academic year asking them to review the content.

The Library has also arranged demonstrations of Talis Aspire across Campus at school level with demos held or arranged with 20 schools (see Appendix 1 for details). The software has also been demonstrated to a number of administrative bodies and committees. Reaction has been positive throughout, Interest and requests for demonstrations have been forthcoming from all faculties except Science. Conversations are underway with Environmental Science. Whilst formal demos have not been held for Law and Economics, early discussions are underway with library reps in both schools on how to best integrate the service into teaching.

Administrative avenues are also being explored. A meeting has been held with LTS to discuss ways in which the Library's reading list workflows could tap into existing LTS and Faculty processes to secure reading lists earlier in the process and well in advance of semester.

FAQs

1.4) What is this service built around?

Reading Online is based on software called Talis Aspire used in 78 UK Higher Education institutions.

1.5) What is the difference between this service and Blackboard?

Talis Aspire is specialist software created to handle academic reading lists in a seamless and embedded manner. Whilst this is a separate software tool to Blackboard it is fully interoperable with that system. Lists created in Reading Online can be automatically linked to or pulled into a Blackboard module site by way of a common module code. Lists can be included in Blackboard sites in their entirety or in sections, as best suits the nature of the module and teaching needs.

1.6) What if academics have a new module or want to create a list themselves?

Although the software is intuitive and easy to use, we are happy to provide training and support for those wishing to create a list from scratch. Staff can speak to their Faculty Liaison Librarian or email Lib.Reading@uea.ac.uk if they want to use the service now.

Appendix 1) Demonstrations with Schools and committees

Arts and Humanities	Art, Media and American Studies	Art History and World Art studies	TBC
		Film, Television and Media	4 th March
		American Studies	11 th March
	History		June 14
	Interdisciplinary Institute for the Humanities		TBC
	Literature, Drama and Creative Writing	Literature	June 14
		Drama	June 14
		Creative Writing	June 14
	Politics, Philosophy, Language and communication Studies	Politics	5 th May
		Philosophy	5 th May
Language and Communication Studies		5 th May	

Medicine and Health Sciences	Health Sciences	2 nd June, 10 th June, 15 th June, 29 th June
	Norwich Medical School	16 th June, 1 st July

Science	Actuarial Sciences*	
	Biological Sciences	
	Chemistry	
	Computing Sciences	
	Engineering*	
	Environmental Sciences	
	Geography*	
	Mathematics	
	Natural Sciences	
	Pharmacy	

Social Sciences	Economics	4 th June
	Education and Lifelong Learning	18 th March, 15 th April (LL)
	Geography*	
	International Development	25 th March
	Law	27 th April
	Norwich Business School	10 th June
	Psychology	20 th May
	Social Work	24 th March

(* Virtual schools)

Committees	Library Forum	16 th January
	ISD Education Board	29 th January
	TPPG (Taught Programmes Policy Group)	30 th April
	Learning and Teaching Day	7 th May
	HUM LTQC	20 th May
	FMH LTQC	20 th May