Nordic and Baltic Union Catalogue of Serials (NOSP) - future services and organisation

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Written by Siv Hunstad, Brodd

1. The assignment

The National Library of Norway has asked Brodd to do a survey on the use of NOSP. Planning of future services and organisation will be based on the collected data.

The study was initiated by Noron and financed by Nordinfo. Noron is the forum for The Directors General of Research Documentation, Academic and Special Libraries and The National Librarians in the Nordic countries.

Please note that within this report, when nothing else is stated, the term Nordic countries includes the following: Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden.

It was agreed to base the study on the following two surveys:

> a) Interviews with key players, selected from the NOSP partnership and from libraries involved in ILL services within the Nordic countries.

> b) A web based survey, inviting a broad range of Nordic libraries to come forward with their views on NOSP.

This report is based on the findings of the two surveys.

Information from the ISSN International Centre (Paris), the SVUC project (Nordic) and the SUNCAT project (UK) is also taken into account.

A summary of statistics from the web survey is available in appendix 1. Please note that comments the respondents have come forth with, will not be published, but have been a valuable source of information for this report.

The reporting is focused on analysing the market for the NOSP service, including areas for improvements.

2. NOSP

The Nordic/Baltic Union Catalogue of Serials (NOSP) contains references to serials available in Nordic countries. NOSP is based on a cooperation between national union catalogues and national libraries by merging data from The ISSN International Centre with location and holding information from the participating countries.

Article copies may be requested from the holding libraries via the online ordering service.

NOSP covers all subject areas.

3. Why a union catalogue

The idea of a union catalogue for serials was first on the agenda in 1956.   However, it took a number of years before NOSP was established as a tool for interlibrary lending.

As a union catalogue, NOSP has focus on the following tasks:
- Give easy access for libraries and library patrons to information on serial holdings in Nordic countries.
- Make available and increase the use of library holdings within the Nordic countries.
- Make available and increase the use of documents published within the Nordic countries.

The only way of efficiently addressing these tasks has been through the gathering of records for titles and holdings from relevant sources into a common, physical database.

Until very recently there has been no alternative solution.   But now, the use of Z39.50 to establish joint access to relevant Nordic resources, must be addressed.   This is discussed in chapter 5 "Technological issues".

4. The Findings

<u>Decrease in use</u>
Statistics on the use of the NOSP database shows a significant decrease in use.

The survey shows the following major factors behind the observed decrease:

1. A great number of libraries prefer other sources than NOSP. This has nothing to do with the quality of NOSP or NOSP service. The problem is delivery time and fees charged by the libraries. Most Nordic libraries deliver too late and charge to high fees. Some libraries use NOSP for verification of serials titles, but order articles copies through other channels.

2. NOSP records are included in the DANBIB database and most Danish libraries use NOSP records through Danbib. Many Danish libraries know they are using NOSP records.

3. NOSP records are included in the Libris database and an increasing number of Swedish libraries use NOSP records through Libris. However, in Sweden the focus has been on Libris interlibrary lending. Few are aware of the availability of NOSP records in Libris.

4. More college libraries have joined the BIBSYS cooperative in Norway. Within the BIBSYS cooperative, there is a preference for BIBSYS interlibrary lending.

5. Electronic serials and fulltext databases are as a general rule not registered in NOSP. Increased use of such resources will result in decreased use of NOSP. Such resources are often available through consortium agreements, limiting the availability of these resources to a given group of students and staff.

6. Increased use of the Internet as a primary source of information. Students, staff and all other library users, perform their own searches, at home, at work, in the library or anywhere else.

All this taken into account, printed serials are still much in demand in libraries. The main reasons for not using NOSP are the delivery time and the charging policies for Nordic libraries. This issue must be addressed.

Printed serials face heavy competion from their electronic counterparts, and also from other Internet based resources. This competion will increase as more serials are converted to continuing resources.

NOSP quality

The general impression is that the NOSP database is regarded as a high quality resource, appreciated by the Nordic libraries. Quality issues are not the cause of decreasing use. However, some areas for improvement have been identified.

1. More frequent updates of the NOSP database will improve quality.

2. Improved procedures for cooperation with the ISSN International Centre in Paris will improve quality both of the NOSP and the ISSN databases. This should include regular reporting of "ISSN request" to the ISSN Centre in Paris, when no ISSN match is found for serials normally expected to have an ISSN.

3. Inclusion of more bibliographic information on serials will improve quality. This should include linking of related titles.

NOSP - pricing and economy

Most libraries find NOSP prices reasonable. The problem are fees from the delivering libraries, not payment for NOSP services. There is one exception - public and school libraries seem to be more price sensitive.

Income from subscriptions to NOSP products are supposed to cover the costs of running the NOSP Centre. The present level of subscriptions do not generate enough income. The National Library of Norway can not run the service for a long period of time without cost recovery.

5. Technological issues

In the history of NOSP, technology and organisation have been the issues. In the present situation this is not the case.

The choice of establishing the NOSP Centre as part of the National Library in Norway has been a happy one, and made it possible for the NOSP Centre to serve its users well, and also to improve products gradually. The present web solution with ordering facilities is easy to use for anybody interested.

Concerning the use of Z39.50, there are three factors to be taken into account:

a) Use of Z39.50 to give joint access to a large number of databases does not work well. The limit is 10 - 12 databases with the present day technology. Complexity of the searches might alter this limit up and down a bit, but on average the figure is 10 - 12. Which means that Z39.50, from a technological point of view, might be used to join the national union catalogues to give joint access, like in the SVUC project. Clumping all single, Nordic libraries holding serials through Z39.50 is not feasible. Again, with the present day technology.

b) Bibliographic information has a complex structure. Given great acceptance for international standards, there still is plenty of room for differences in registration practices. This is particularly the case with serials.

This is a problem to be faced with when gathering records into a union catalogue, which easily ends up with a duplication problem. Good algorithms for duplication control has to be found, bearing in mind that when facing the cardinal sin of deleting information that should not have been deleted, duplication is to be preferred.

The problem is even greater when using Z39.50. It becomes a matter of recall and precision. Basically a case for bibliographical control rather than a technological issue. Matthew J. Dovey has described this very accurately in:
http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue23/dovey/

c) Due to the lack of standards for holdings, the function "item order" is not available in most Z39.50 applications. You can find a serials title, but you can not put an order for an article.

Conclusion:
This is not the time to discharge of a well running web based NOSP service for a new and unproven Z39.50 solution. This being said - the possibilities the Z39.50 gives us, are promising. The Nordic library community, including NOSP, should put Z39.50 to use in projects, and gain experience. And we might make some good use of it for particular purposes.

Both Sweden and The UK are now implementing the Marc21 format, a giant step forward. Widespread use of the Marc21 format, copy cataloguing, export and import of bibliographical and holding records, improved services from the ISSN Centres, improved standards for holdings and other activities will gradually give us better odds concerning bibliographical control.

Z39.50 might be, or will be, the solution at a later stage.

6. The NOSP challenges

6.1 The Decrease in use

6.1.1 How to cover costs
The interviews and survey show that NOSP is a much appreciated service, available through more than one channel. But the present level of subscriptions does not generate enough income.   New sources of income must be found, and soon. Use of NOSP records through Danbib and Libris do not result in income for the NOSP Centre.

The NOSP contract includes the following statement: - "§ 3.4 The Participant has the right to receive edited data from the NLN in machine readable form. The price will be subject to negotiation between the two parties. The data can not be sold or given to a third party without the written consent of the NLN."

Contributions in the form of bulk payments for each country might be an alternative to the present subscription system.   A combination of bulk payment and subscription might be considered.

6.1.2 The delivery time and fee problem.
This is really a problem outside NOSP's scope.   It is up to the library authorities and politicians, and the Nordic libraries themselves, to solve it.

Subito is at present the most used source for ordering articles, and it is fast, reliable and cheap. Subito is a frontend organisation for a number of German libraries.   The price of an article copy and the time span for delivery are set by the German politicians. It must have been quite a challenge for German libraries to meet these demands.   German libraries were not known to be fast, or cheap, previously. It is not known if the German libraries manage to cover their costs, but this is an interesting question, indeed.

In the Nordic countries, Norfri and Nordkvik are positive initiatives to overcome this speed/time problem.

6.1.3 The availability of electronic serials and fulltext databases.
This is a copyright issue. Requires an initiative from the library authorities.

More and more serials are converting to these forms.   The ISSN organisation has great attention on what they call continuing resources.   Iceland has managed to negotiate a common agreement for all libraries in the countries. But they are not allowed to deliver to libraries outside Iceland. Hopefully more countries can get such general agreements. "Permission granted for ILL transactions", at least within the Nordic countries, must be part of these consortium agreements.

These resources must be catalogued in a suitable way as part the library holdings and be

available in NOSP.

6.1.4 Copies as file attachments or by fax
This is a copyright issue. Requires an initiative from the library authorities.

Subito normally forwards all copies as file attachments to an email.   This is the case also when the original document is in paper form.   Nordic libraries prefer this form of delivery.   It is fast, reliable and easy to print out by the library for the library patron.

There is some concern that Subito might not be within the boundaries of present European copyright law.   Nordic libraries in general, adhering to common understanding of copyright law, do not deliver the same service. Though they would very much like to.

From the library point of view the best thing would be if the file attachment from the delivering library could be passed on electronically to the library patron requesting the article.   This procedure saves a lot of work and paper handling. And would be appreciated by the library patrons. But it is not acceptable from a copyright point of view.

6.2 Recommendations for quality improvements
These are ideas for long term improvements.

- The NOSP partners should investigate the possibility of more frequent updates, including the feasibility of some sort of replication between the national union catalogues and NOSP. The possibility of two-way replication might be considered to ensure consistency.

- The NOSP partners should investigate the possibility of improving quality by closer cooperation with the international ISSN Centre and with the national Centres. The ISSN International Centre has a tender out for new software for the ISSN database, requesting among other things Z39.50 functionality. This new software might give new opportunities for smooth processing. Efficient workload distribution between The ISSN International Centre, national ISSN Centres and national libraries must be in focus.

- More information available on serials. The Draft Invitation to Tender for the Provision of a National Serials Union Catalogue for the UK Education and Research Community includes in appendix 1: SUNCAT Statements of Requirements.   The Tender documents is available at :   http://www.jisc.ac.uk/pub02/suncat_tender.doc

  This document points out areas for improved bibliographical information.   In the NOSP context this might be done by allowing Zsearches on demand against the national union catalogues where this is relevant, or CONSER in other cases.

Nordic and Baltic Union Catalogue of Serials(NOSP) - future services and organisation

Survey available from 01.10.2002 until 18.10.2002. 264 responses where given.

1. How important are the following tools when you verify information about serials? Select a number on the scales below, where 1 is no importance and 5 is most important:

Your own library system:
1 selected by 20 which is 8,0% of total 251
2 selected by 17 which is 6,8% of total 251
3 selected by 20 which is 8,0% of total 251
4 selected by 20 which is 8,0% of total 251
5 selected by 174 which is 69,3% of total 251

NOSP:
1 selected by 42 which is 17,3% of total 243
2 selected by 31 which is 12,8% of total 243
3 selected by 48 which is 19,8% of total 243
4 selected by 67 which is 27,6% of total 243
5 selected by 55 which is 22,6% of total 243

Danbib:
1 selected by 82 which is 37,1% of total 221
2 selected by 46 which is 20,8% of total 221
3 selected by 33 which is 14,9% of total 221
4 selected by 19 which is 8,6% of total 221
5 selected by 41 which is 18,6% of total 221

Libris:
1 selected by 58 which is 24,7% of total 235
2 selected by 52 which is 22,1% of total 235
3 selected by 44 which is 18,7% of total 235
4 selected by 42 which is 17,9% of total 235
5 selected by 39 which is 16,6% of total 235

Other sources:
1 selected by 25 which is 10,1% of total 248
2 selected by 25 which is 10,1% of total 248
3 selected by 67 which is 27,0% of total 248
4 selected by 56 which is 22,6% of total 248
5 selected by 75 which is 30,2% of total 248

2. How important are the following tools when you order copies of articles from serials? Select a number on the scales below, where 1 is no importance and 5 is most important:

Your own library:
1 seleceted by 38 which is 16,2% of total 235
2 selected by 13 which is 5,5% of total 235
3 selected by 19 which is 8,1% of total 235
4 selected by 21 which is 8,9% of total 235
5 selected by 144 which is 61,3% of total 235

NOSP:
1 selected by 56 which is 24,8% of total 226
2 selected by 31 which is 13,7% of total 226
3 selected by 42 which is 18,6% of total 226
4 selected by 48 which is 21,2% of total 226
5 selected by 49 which is 21,7% of total 226

Danbib:
1 selected by 94 which is 44,1% of total 213
2 selected by 33 which is 15,5% of total 213
3 selected by 28 which is 13,1% of total 213
4 selected by 16 which is 7,5% of total 213
5 selected by 42 which is 19,7% of total 213

Libris:
1 selected by 71 which is 33,5% of total 212
2 selected by 38 which is 17,9% of total 212
3 selected by 34 which is 16,0% of total 212
4 selected by 28 which is 13,2% of total 212
5 selected by 41 which is 19,3% of total 212

Other sources:
1 selected by 26 which is 11,1% of total 235
2 selected by 20 which is 8,5% of total 235
3 selected by 55 which is 23,4% of total 235
4 selected by 48 which is 20,4% of total 235
5 selected by 86 which is 36,6% of total 235

3. How important are delivery time and fee/prices when you order copies of articles from serials?

Select a number on the scales below, where 1 is no importance and 5 is most important.

Delivery time:
1 selected by 3 which is 1,2% of total 260
2 selected by 5 which is 1,9% of total 260
3 selected by 37 which is 14,2% of total 260
4 selected by 84 which is 32,3% of total 260
5 selected by 131 which is 50,4% of total 260

Fee/prices:
1 selected by 4 which is 1,5% of total 260
2 selected by 18 which is 6,9% of total 260
3 selected by 57 which is 21,9% of total 260
4 selected by 92 which is 35,4% of total 260
5 selected by 89 which is 34,2% of total 260

4. If you use NOSP on Web or `Directory to Nordic and Baltic libraries`, what is your opinion of the price for use of these?

Select a number on the scales below, where 1 is too high and 5 is too low:

NOSP on Web:
1 selected by 10 which is 7,1% of total 141
2 selected by 11 which is 7,8% of total 141
3 selected by 103 which is 73,0% of total 141
4 selected by 10 which is 7,1% of total 141
5 selected by 7 which is 5,0% of total 141

Directory to Nordic and Baltic libraries:
1 selected by 10 which is 11,0% of total 91
2 selected by 9 which is 9,9% of total 91
3 selected by 65 which is 71,4% of total 91
4 selected by 4 which is 4,4% of total 91
5 selected by 3 which is 3,3% of total 91

5. The ISSN part of the NOSP database is updated quarterly. Would more frequent updates improve the quality of the service?

Select a number on the scale below, where 1 means no improvement and 5 means
1 selected by 20 which is 9,1% of total 219
2 selected by 29 which is 13,2% of total 219
3 selected by 80 which is 36,5% of total 219
4 selected by 49 which is 22,4% of total 219
5 selected by 41 which is 18,7% of total 219

6. What is your view on the data quality of the NOSP database?
Select a number on the scale below, where 1 means bad quality and 5 is very good quality.

    The ISSN part of the NOSP database:
1 selected by 1 which is 0,5% of total 195
2 selected by 3 which is 1,5% of total 195
3 selected by 45 which is 23,1% of total 195
4 selected by 93 which is 47,7% of total 195
5 selected by 53 which is 27,2% of total 195

    The non-ISBN part of the NOSP database:
1 selected by 0 which is 0,0% of total 189
2 selected by 12 which is 6,3% of total 189
3 selected by 71 which is 37,6% of total 189
4 selected by 74 which is 39,2% of total 189
5 selected by 32 which is 16,9% of total 189

7. How important is the non-ISSN part of the NOSP database?
Select a number on the scale below, where 1 is less important and 5 is very important:

    1 selected by 11 which is 5,7% of total 193
    2 selected by 13 which is 6,7% of total 193
    3 selected by 63 which is 32,6% of total 193
    4 selected by 53 which is 27,5% of total 193
    5 selected by 53 which is 27,5% of total 193

8. Below you will find a list of statements. Select one or more of the statements that you find to be true:

Statement	Statistics
"My library delivers article copies within 24 hours"	selected by 95 which is 12,1% of total 783
"My library has high priority in giving service to other libraries"	selected by 174 which is 22,2% of total 783
"My library orders copies from commercial sources because they are cheaper"	selected by 34 which is 4,3% of total 783
"My library orders copies from commercial because they deliver reliable"	selected by 17 which is 2,2% of total 783
"My library orders copies from commercial	selected by 62 which is

because they deliver faster"	7,9% of total 783
"Nordic libraries are reliable conserning interlibrary lending"	<u>selected by 170 which is 21,7% of total 783</u>
"Nordic libraries are fast delivering article copies"	selected by 73 which is 9,3% of total 783
"We think all Nordic libraries should join Norfri"	<u>selected by 114 which is 14,6% of total 783</u>
"We think all Nordic libraries should join Nordkvik"	selected by 44 which is 5,6% of total 783

9. How important are publications from the different countries in your library?
Select a number on the scale below, where 1 is less important and 5 is very important:

Publications from Nordic countries:
1 selected by 5 which is 1,9% of total 258
2 selected by 28 which is 10,9% of total 258
3 selected by 54 which is 20,9% of total 258
4 selected by 60 which is 23,3% of total 258
5 selected by 111 which is 43,0% of total 258

Publications from European countries:
1 selected by 11 which is 4,3% of total 258
2 selected by 20 which is 7,8% of total 258
3 selected by 32 which is 12,4% of total 258
4 selected by 78 which is 30,2% of total 258
5 selected by 117 which is 45,3% of total 258

Publications from USA:
1 selected by 22 which is 8,6% of total 255
2 selected by 24 which is 9,4% of total 255
3 selected by 43 which is 16,9% of total 255
4 selected by 66 which is 25,9% of total 255
5 selected by 100 which is 39,2% of total 255

Publications from other countries:
1 selected by 71 which is 31,4% of total 226
2 selectedd by 61 which is 27,0% of total 226
3 selected by 49 which is 21,7% of total 226
4 selected by 20 which is 8,8% of total 226
5 selected by 25 which is 11,1% of total 226

10. Do you find that Nordic publications are easy to find, when you verify information and order copies of articles?
Select a number on the scale given below, where 1 is difficult to find and 5 is easy to find.

When you verify information:
1 selected by 1 which is 0,4% of total 242
2 selected by 10 which is 4,1% of total 242
3 selected by 43 which is 17,8% of total 242
4 selected by 114 which is 47,1% of total 242
5 selected by 74 which is 30,6% of total 242

When you order copies:
1 selected by 2 which is 0,9% of total 232
2 selected by 6 which is 2,6% of total 232
3 selected by 44 which is 19,0% of total 232
4 selected by 106 which is 45,7% of total 232
5 selected by 74 which is 31,9% of total 232

11. How important are the following services for the users of your library?
Select a number on the scales below, where 1 is less important and 5 is very important:

Searching the internet:
1 2 0,8% of total 256
2 5 2,0% of total 256
3 37 14,5% of total 256
4 68 26,6% of total 256
5 144 56,3% of total 256

Use of fulltext journal databases:
1 21 8,4% of total 250
2 23 9,2% of total 250
3 46 18,4% of total 250
4 58 23,2% of total 250
5 102 40,8% of total 250

Interlibrary lending:
1 2 0,8% of total 254
2 5 2,0% of total 254
3 35 13,8% of total 254
4 61 24,0% of total 254
5 151 59,4% of total 254

12. How important is easy access to information about other libraries holdings for your library?
Select a number on the scale below, where 1 is less important and 5 is very important.

1 selected by 0 which is 0,0% of total 253
2 selectedd by 1 which is 0,4% of total 253
3 selectedd by 14 which is 5,5% of total 253
4 selected by 44 which is 17,4% of total 253
5 selected by 194 which is 76,7% of total 253

13. What type of library or organisation do you represent?

Public library 52, wich is 19,7% of total 264
School library 7, which is 2,7% of total 264
University library 69, which is 26,1% of total 264
College library 38, which is 14,4% of total 264
National library 4, whish is 1,5% of total 264
Private company 23, which is 8,7% of total 264
Other 71, which is 26,9% of total 264

14. Which are the major subject areas of your institution?

Medicine 81, which is 19,7% of total 412
Natural science 79, which is 19,2% of total 412
Social science 92, which is 22,3% of total 412
Humanities 62, which is 15,0% of total 412
Arts 27, which is 6,6% of total 412
Others 71, which is 17,2% of total 412