People Profile: Tina Feick

Editor

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Publisher Profiles

In the publishers’ module of the Swets system, we now store information about e-journals for each publisher. For instance, a publisher may have a separate ordering address for just electronic orders, or e-journal orders may be required to go directly to a platform provider. The publisher contact for the e-journals will also vary from the print contact. Additional information such as the license location, publisher’s URL, IP address and/or password authentication, and terms and conditions have become part of our tracking. No longer do we have one address and one contact.

Pricing

Customized pricing is now part of the agent’s routine. For a single title within a package plan, there could be as many price listings as there are customers. The base price for each title in a package is the price of that title in the year it became a part of the library package. For example, if the title was ordered to start in 2001, the price for 2001 is now the base price for that title. For package plans, deals often call for a guaranteed inflation “cap” of anywhere from four to eight per cent. Following on the above example, in 2002, the price for the subscription will be the base price from 2001 plus the contracted “cap.” This price will not match the publisher’s pricing for 2002 for that title when not ordered as part of a package! Of course, cap levels differ from deal to deal and customer to customer. It is entirely possible that there could be 2,000 price listings for one title. In the print world, there was usually one price with up to three options (for types of institutions: academic, corporate, etc.)—this no longer exists in the e-world.

Additional programming has been required to update our catalog of titles, adding fields of data, providing links to publishers, connecting customized pricing to the correct customer account, and sending out information bulletins about the e-journals. Because of the changing nature of the e-journal, almost daily we receive notification about changes to our system, demanding that staff keep up-to-date on publishers’ pricing policies, system changes, and new procedures and often requiring additional training in order to ensure that everything is understood.

Collection development in the e-world is full of options. Customers can certainly view online offerings through an agent’s online catalog, but to provide customers with a comprehensive overview agents have developed a variety of management reports. Swets, for example, has an Internet Availability Report (IAR) showing the possible electronic options for each subscription. Each listing includes over thirty fields of information including publisher, pricing, URL and requirements. A Free with Print report is also on our list of standard reports along with a multi-year financial analysis, publisher, subject, fund/budget code, and other reports.

Additional Services in the E-World

The publishing industry’s relationship with agents is being redefined in providing e-journal services. Publishers were willing for agents to handle the majority of print subscriptions, but in the e-world, some publishers want to control the marketing and the setup of the subscription with the customer. Agents can place orders with many publishers, and for a small majority we can process the registration. A few publishers stipulate that orders for the electronic version must go directly to them, bypassing the agent. In response, Swets, for example, has increased our Publisher Relations staff in order to work with publishers and seek ways of improving services for e-journals. We find that after a publisher has tested the market, they are often willing to go back to working with agents.

After sending the order to the publisher along with e-profile information, Swets asks that the publishers provide the appropriate reference and registration numbers. Some publishers willingly do so, usually via electronic files. Swets then forwards this information to the customers.

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