**CEIRC (CAUL Electronic Information Resources Consortium)**

**Guidelines for intermediary agents**

**Purpose**

To develop a clear understanding of the relationship and expectations between CAUL/CONZUL libraries and intermediary agents.

**Definition**

*Intermediary agents*: (referred to hereafter as *agents*). Those agents acting on behalf of publishers, aggregators or software providers with respect to publisher deals offered to libraries. Agents also represent the views of libraries to publishers with a goal of achieving agreement. Agents have the potential to add value.

There are different levels of service offered by agents to publishers. At one extreme, agents may simply co-ordinate billing (low mediation); at the other, agents may be the sole point of contact between the parties (full mediation). In some cases, an agent may be the sole authorised representative for a publisher locally.

**Advantages**

1. The negotiation of licensing and billing with multiple small to medium sized content owners is time consuming and complex for libraries. An agent manages this process
2. An agent provides local and experienced staff to handle email and phone queries in Australasian business hours
3. An agent has local knowledge of the academic industry, demographics, the government and economy
4. An agent has a fair perception of both the library and the publisher perspectives and can improve both communication and access
5. The negotiation and payment process should be more efficient and cost effective than via direct dealing.

**Disadvantages**

1. Increased service costs to libraries
2. Communication channel between the publisher and the library becomes unnecessarily extended
3. Extra layers may be added to: ongoing discussions, balancing the library/ publisher interests, and developing ongoing relationships between libraries and publishers.

**Expectations**

Where an agent is used, the agent becomes the billing and payment partner, and provides both library and publisher with management data.

Agents are expected to:

1. Liaise between the library and publisher to achieve the best outcome for both
2. Become familiar with the needs and requirements of CAUL members, and the environment in which each is operating
3. Be familiar with the wider Australasian academic environment
4. Advise and educate content owners on the local environment
5. Manage new orders, renewals and claims, and the invoice process. This will incorporate an understanding of individual library systems and requirements
6. Provide timely and up-to-date pricing, availability and licence information
7. Provide support for technical and access issues
8. Advocate for the provision of accurate, comprehensive and easily accessible statistical data. This includes title-level management information, historical holdings information and COUNTER and SUSHI compliant usage data (facilitating cost-per-use analysis)
9. Advocate for further improvements on user interfaces; and facilitate sophisticated, pre-populated electronic resource management (ERM) services incorporating high quality system integration, metadata and linking
10. Assist with publisher negotiations to ensure terms and conditions that synchronise with CEIRC Principles.

**Communication**

Establishing appropriate communication channels is critical to relationship effectiveness.

CEIRC endorses the following:

1. Where an agent requires pricing related to a library’s current subscription, the agent should contact the publisher
2. An agent should not disclose a library’s agreement terms to a third party e.g. pricing information to another publisher
3. A library should not disclose publishers’ pricing (for CEIRC agreements) to an agent without the permission of the publisher or the CAUL Office.

**CAUL and CONZUL members’ responsibilities**

CAUL and CONZUL members will:

1. Understand the Australasian and broader publishing environment
2. Contribute to the development of new pricing and access models
3. Provide feedback to agents on our library systems’ needs, so as to facilitate integration with publisher systems
4. Respond to agents in a timely manner
5. Deal with agents transparently, professionally and openly
6. Interact with agents in accordance with CEIRC Principles
7. Limit pricing and conditions of publisher offers to internal CAUL members only, unless otherwise stated.

**Bibliography**

ASA (Association of Subscription Agents and Intermediaries) - <http://www.subscription-agents.org/system/files/Latest%20Library%20Choice%20Flyer.pdf> (linked from <http://www.subscription-agents.org/library-choice>)

Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) - <http://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/eres/licensing-principles> *Drafted by the CARLI E-Resources Working Group. Adopted by the CARLI Board of Directors, January, 2008.*

CAUL - [CEIRC Models for Pricing Electronic Information Resources](http://www.caul.edu.au/content/upload/files/datasets/ceirc2013principles.doc)

Geleijnse, H. [Licensing Principles, Consortia and Practical Experiences](http://liber.library.uu.nl/index.php/lq/article/view/7559) *-* LIBER Quarterly Vol 9, No 4 (1999)

E-Books as a Shared Service in M25 ([E-BASS25](http://ebass.rhul.ac.uk)): a JISC-funded project - <http://ebooksguidance.jiscinvolve.org/wp/about-library-consortia/>

Turner, R. [Agents, intermediaries, and journal licensing](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC64766/#!po=85.0000) – J Med Libr Assoc., Vol 90, No.1 (2002)

The guidelines can be found at: [http://www.caul.edu.au/content/upload/files/dataset$doc/intermediaries2014.docx](http://www.caul.edu.au/content/upload/files/dataset%24doc/intermediaries2014.docx)

This version: May 18, 2015

Contact: CAUL Executive Officer