5 Content Challenges
Derailing Your Research Process

(And how to fix them!)

The ability to seek, discover, access, and share scientific, technical and medical (STM) articles is vital to the success of an emerging life science organization. But without a centralized information center or library, barriers tend to emerge.

Establishing a company information center is the ideal approach, but many growing companies may not be able to invest time and money in that kind of initiative.

If developing a centralized information center isn't viable, here are a few ideas to solve the challenges that may be present for researchers:

1 Challenge: Journal articles are hard to obtain

There's no doubt that there's a surplus of information out there — 2.5 million scientific articles are published annually.

Accessing that content isn't always easy. From search engines to publisher websites and Open Access platforms, employees have a multitude of potential access points, but often hit a paywall, even when a subscription is in place. If the company doesn't have a way to point researchers to subscriptions and give them an easy process for buying unsubscribed articles, researchers may not get the content they need. When they are kept at a distance from vital content, whether due to licensing issues, navigating complex websites, or just a deficit in research skills, the net result is wasted time and money. Data suggest that lack of centralized information sources can cost each information seeker 2.5 hours a day.

Tip: Consider technology solutions that provide access to subscriptions and purchase of single articles in one place. Doing so reduces having to access multiple systems to get the content you need.

2

Challenge: Researchers are reading and citing more abstracts than full-text documents

When researchers hit a paywall, they sometimes decide to just use the abstract. But that often means missing vital data and assertions that can lead to new discoveries.

Article abstracts are an excellent way to determine whether you need to read the full-text, but with only 250 words, they typically do not provide enough information about experimental design and the interpretation of study results to be relied upon on their own.

In addition, studies have shown that abstracts often present data that are inconsistent with the body of the manuscript as well as conclusions not justified by information in the full-text of the article.[1] Some abstracts also underreport harm even when that information is provided in the main body of the article.[2]

Tip: Promote the need for searching, accessing and using full-text content sources. Provide an easy method for getting immediate access to subscribed articles and an easy ability to purchase — ideally through a centralized budget — articles that are not part of the company's subscriptions.

3

Challenge: No one is looking at content usage across the whole company

Without a strategy behind literature management, it can be hard to understand why the high costs of content are worth the spend. Without a view into what employees are using content, it's difficult to make the most out of your content investments.

Tip: If you don't have a dedicated information management employee, put together a team to survey employees on content use and pull together usage and cost data. Knowing which information is in high demand is also important in helping you tailor your holdings to the specific needs of the organization. You may find that subscribing to a package of journals provides cost savings and access to more full-text content.

| 4 | Challenge: Most researchers have minimal knowledge of copyright compliance |

Non-compliance with copyright often occurs innocently in small companies. For example, most online college libraries restrict use to current students — even though their accounts are still active post-graduation. Because of this, many post-docs at small companies report routinely downloading journal articles from academic sources that do not authorize use for commercial purposes. Others turn to ResearchGate to download articles without realizing more than a dozen academic publishers took ResearchGate to court in 2018 charging 'massive infringement of peer-reviewed published journal articles.'[3] Use of unauthorized sources like these can create significant business, legal and reputational risk for the company.

Tips: First, create a copyright policy. This is a document that provides guidelines for the use of your organization's copyright materials, and identifies the steps employees should take to determine if copyright permissions are needed and how to request and obtain them.

Second, keep that policy front of mind with onboarding new employees and providing refreshers to current employees. It's not enough to simply create a policy that sits in a drawer. Too often, organizations have a policy, but employees have no idea what the policy entails or where to find it. Keep your policy front of mind with these steps:

- Include your copyright policy in onboarding and training programs that are required when employees join the company.
- Create periodic reminders on your company intranet that the policy exists and where it can be found.
- Share information about new copyright laws, regulations or court decisions. (If you're looking for a place to start, CCC issues these regularly on The Velocity of Content blog.)
- Enlist support from your company to provide enterprise-wide training on issues related to copyright as part of its overall compliance program.

| 5 | Challenge: There are little to no company guidelines for sharing articles |

Sharing information with colleagues should be encouraged, but it's often stymied by old habits and information silos. Some of the causes are:

- Employees don't know the rules for sharing information compliantly, so they keep everything to themselves.
- Colleagues don't know what their peers are working on. In these cases, similar tasks might be duplicated.

Conclusion

As companies grow, their information needs grow, as well. Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) recognizes the difficulty in balancing current needs with future growth and is committed to providing smaller life science companies with sustainable licensing and content work flow solutions.

RightFind for Emerging Life Science companies provides you and your colleagues with fast, easy access to the full range of published content you need — anytime, anywhere.

RightFind includes an integrated CCC/RightsDirect copyright license to facilitate copyright-compliant collaboration. The result? A technology solution that bundles a robust set of best-in-class resources to provide a cost-effective, self-service information center.

It's best to reframe thinking about sharing from "Who needs to know?" — which is hard to define — to "Who's not permitted to know this information?" With this approach, people eligible to know certain information can access it, even if the information manager didn't know they need it.

Tip: Licenses from individual publishers can vary and leave gaps in your coverage. That's why it's important to look at individual rights licenses for content usage from each publisher, and make sure you know the answers to the following questions:

- Do our licenses offer consistent usage rights for colleagues to share published material?
- Do our licenses cover sharing of the many different information sources colleagues rely on?
- If employees are based in multiple countries, do our licenses allow cross-border content sharing?

A license from a rights aggregator, which offers rights to share material from many different copyright holders, can make your life much easier. Combining this with a content workflow solution can provide access to shared storage spaces, saving time, and promoting collaboration.

[1] https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/187740
[2] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18371200
[3] https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/10/04/publishers-accuse-researchgate-mass-copyright-infringement

Copyright Clearance Center (CCC)
A pioneer in voluntary collective licensing, Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) helps organizations integrate, access, and share information through licensing, content, software, and professional services. With expertise in copyright and information management, CCC and its subsidiary RightsDirect collaborate with stakeholders to design and deliver innovative information solutions that power decision-making by helping people integrate and navigate data sources and content assets.

Learn more about our licensing, content, and data solutions:

U.S. organizations:
🌐 copyright.com/business/rf-life-sciences
✉ solutions@copyright.com

Outside U.S. organizations:
🌐 rightsdirect.com/business/rf-life-sciences
✉ solutions@rightsdirect.com