

Case Study: Elsevier



Elsevier improves global operational efficiencies aided by CCC's RightsLink® point of content licensing solution

Elsevier is a world-leading publisher of scientific, technical and medical (STM) information products and services. Working in partnership with the global science and health communities, Elsevier's 7,000 employees in over 70 offices worldwide publish more than 2,000 journals and 1,900 new books per year, in addition to offering a suite of innovative electronic products, bibliographic databases and online reference works. Headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Elsevier is part of Reed Elsevier Group plc, a world-leading publisher and information provider.

As one of the most prolific and respected publishers of STM journals and books, Elsevier has long enjoyed a vigorous permissions business, receiving nearly 60,000 requests annually from scientists, researchers, teachers and others in the scientific community seeking to reuse its content. With inquiries coming in from all over the world via standard mail, email and fax, the publisher had rights teams in both the U.S. and England working feverishly to try to keep up with the demand. Because the process was manual, the typical turn-around time for a permissions order was 10 business days, even for the thousands of zero-dollar transactions the publisher grants each year for academic use.

The right fit for Elsevier

Determined to find a more efficient solution to handle this critical business process, Elsevier's Global Rights Director Helen Gainford turned to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), a long-time partner and a global rights broker for millions of the world's most sought after books, journals and other content. CCC had been authorizing the use of select Elsevier content for corporate and academic use for many years through its annual licensing and pay-per-use services.

“Prior to RightsLink, we were manually creating invoices and mailing them out but because many of them were for small amounts, if people didn't pay they weren't always chased. We're getting a lot more money in with RightsLink because people can choose to pay with credit cards and CCC handles all the collections.”

Helen Gainford
GLOBAL RIGHTS DIRECTOR
ELSEVIER

“I went to a meeting at CCC and saw a demo of RightsLink and it just seemed like a great fit,” recalled Gainford.

RightsLink is an online e-commerce service that allows content users to instantly license content and order reprints online. The most widely used web-based licensing application, RightsLink is in use on more than 11,000 journals, magazines and newspapers, as well as thousands of books online. Customers have used RightsLink to place tens of millions of dollars in permission and reprint orders. In addition, RightsLink's real-time reporting capabilities provide publishers with a comprehensive view of licensing and reprint activity.

CCC's RightsLink implementation team worked closely with Elsevier's global rights team and IT staff to enable Elsevier

subscribers — as well as non-subscribers — to order permissions directly through the publisher's major full-text platform, ScienceDirect (www.sciencedirect.com) and its Health Sciences platform (www.elsevierhealth.com). Together, these sites deliver more than a quarter of the world's STM information — over 9 million articles from more than 2,500 peer-reviewed journals published in 24 fields of science, technology and medicine.

“RightsLink gives the client the ability to purchase our products any time, any place from an e-platform, plus CCC is a known and trusted brand so they know it's a safe transaction.”

Luis Portero

VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMERCIAL SALES
FOR U.S. JOURNALS
ELSEVIER

RightsLink results — a study in success

Since deploying RightsLink, Elsevier has seen an increase in its royalty revenues for its journals content. RightsLink has also helped Elsevier become much more efficient, as the publisher is able to instantly process most of the 4,000+ permissions requests it receives each month. According to Gainford, RightsLink has also made an impact on the Company's bottom line in yet another way, explaining “Prior to RightsLink, we were manually creating invoices and mailing them out but because many of them were for small amounts, if people didn't pay they weren't always chased. We're getting a lot more money in with RightsLink because people can choose to pay with credit cards and CCC handles all the collections.”

An extremely secure, PCI-compliant e-commerce application, RightsLink supports credit card and purchase order transactions managed through VeriSign's 128-bit SSL

encrypted e-commerce solution. What's more, RightsLink supports micro-chunking and micro-commerce, enabling Elsevier to ascribe monetary values to chunks of content, such as charts or images used in articles, and make these smaller elements available to its customers.

Much more than an e-commerce solution

RightsLink has also helped Elsevier to improve customer service by enabling instant permissions for its global subscriber base. “When we deployed RightsLink, we centralized our rights department in the U.K., but our subscribers in the U.S. and Asia can also get permissions very quickly thanks to RightsLink,” stated Gainford.

In addition, by freeing staff from handling thousands of tedious, routine permission requests and the associated billing and collection activities, RightsLink enables Elsevier's global rights team to spend more time on other activities, such as contracts.

Gainford also appreciates RightsLink's publisher reporting tools which provide real-time information about customer buying behaviors, including how content is being licensed, by whom and in what formats — a capability she never had before. Rights staff are able to view information about transactions and royalty distributions online, or download detailed reports into spreadsheet format.

Elsevier continues to expand its use of RightsLink

Based on the resounding success Elsevier experienced using RightsLink to automate copyright permissions for its journals content, recently, the publisher expanded its use of the service to help handle permissions for more than ebook titles offered on ScienceDirect.

The order process is much the same for ebooks. In those cases where republication rights must be checked by staff, users receive a message indicating that they will be contacted by an Elsevier representative. This “managed redirect” capability provided by RightsLink gives Elsevier flexibility to handle requests that require manual attention.

Using the order information entered into RightsLink by the customers, Elsevier's rights staff determines what rights are available and follows up directly with the customer. Once rights are "cleared" for an ebook, they are entered into Elsevier's rights database so that future permissions orders for that particular book can go through RightsLink in a completely automated fashion.

Most recently, Elsevier further expanded its use of RightsLink enabling readers and subscribers to quickly and easily order article reprints directly from ScienceDirect content pages online. According to Luis Portero, Elsevier's Vice President of Commercial Sales for U.S. Journals, customer reaction to this newest development has been extremely favorable. "RightsLink gives the client the ability to purchase our products any time, any place from an e-platform, plus CCC is a known and trusted brand so they know it's a safe transaction," stated Portero.

Although Elsevier has a global sales force, RightsLink is viewed as a highly-efficient complementary sales channel. Elsevier sales reps focus on reaching out to a known universe of contacts at large pharmaceutical companies and other frequent buyers of commercial reprints, while RightsLink fills critical gaps and provides new opportunities for reprint sales beyond the reach of the sales force. Behind the scenes, sales reps can view each order that comes in through RightsLink in real time via the application's publisher reporting tool and are able to deliver enhanced customer service when appropriate. This can range from correcting an error on an order before it goes to the printer to contacting the customer and offering to add color or a custom cover to the reprint. Because RightsLink is integrated with Elsevier's print-and-delivery business process, orders are then

automatically routed to one of the publisher's printing partners — Sheridan Press or Cadmus Communications — depending on where the reprints are to be shipped, providing the company with enhanced global operational efficiencies.

In reflecting on his Company's experience with RightsLink and the long-standing relationship Elsevier and CCC have enjoyed over the decades, Portero concluded "It's a really great collaborative partnership."

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About Copyright Clearance Center

Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), the rights licensing experts, is a global rights broker for millions of the world's most sought after books, journals and other content. Founded in 1978 as a not-for-profit organization, today CCC provides smart solutions that simplify the licensing of content that lets businesses and academic institutions quickly get permission to use copyright-protected materials, while compensating publishers and content creators for the use of their works. For more information, visit www.copyright.com.

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