

M A Y 2 0 1 4

When Search Gets in the Way

**How to Clear Obstacles to Information and
Get Back to Innovating**

For many organizations, innovation is the result of talented and insightful people working together to identify and solve problems and satisfy market needs. At the core of this activity is information. Despite a surplus of content, today's employees are caught in an endless loop of searches in the pursuit of relevant and credible information.

From scientific, technical and medical research, to business and financial news, your colleagues depend on published material. But there are very real obstacles that prevent your R&D team and other staff members from finding the information they need and the cost to your business is tangible. In fact, according to research and advisory firm Outsell Inc., in its "Knowledge Workers: 2013 Trends that Matter" report, 43% of knowledge workers blamed time constraints for getting in the way of acquiring information; 24% cited the absence of support staff in their company as another major obstacle.

When employees spend too much time searching for information instead of analyzing it and making decisions, the impact is felt across the organization in loss of productivity, slowed innovation and delays in getting products to market. Colleagues with immediate, time-sensitive content needs require clearer and faster routes to that published material.

Here are some steps you can take to clear obstacles to information and help get your colleagues out of search mode.

Shorten the Distance between Employees & Content

Your colleagues have access to a vast information landscape, but much of it is uncharted, fragmented and difficult to navigate. From search engines and Open Access platforms to publisher websites and your own internal library, they are inundated with information sources and a multitude of access points. 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.

Do your colleagues know what materials are available to them or how to search those holdings?

For example, a researcher wants to find a specific article, but does not have important information such as the exact title, journal or volume number. In this case, she has to search for the article in PubMed or Google Scholar with keywords, but often the search yields too many potential article abstracts. The search filters in these search engines are imperfect and narrowing down the list of potential articles may take some time. Even after finding the right article, she can't access the full text of the article, because she doesn't have the required subscription. She could request the full text article through her company library, but turnaround can take days or even weeks. Since researchers typically cite 10-30 references in an article, a long wait time for articles is not feasible. Though this is just one example of how a search for a single article can go awry, consider the many routes your colleagues take to get to published information.

You've invested in content subscriptions and document delivery and understand the value these resources bring to the organization. Do your colleagues know what materials are available to them or how to search those holdings? If you are already using collaboration tools or have an internal library, are employees aware if a subscription is already in place, if the materials are Open Access, or if an article was already obtained through document delivery? If not, they may end up buying content your organization has already purchased. If someone orders an article, would their colleagues be able to see it in your company library? Connecting people with the information you bring into the organization helps you derive the most value from that investment.

Knowing which information is in high demand is also important in helping you tailor your holdings to the specific needs of the organization. Equally critical is having a clear picture of how much you are spending on subscriptions and document delivery. For example, there may be opportunities to save money by getting a subscription versus purchasing individual articles. Having usage and cost data can help you quantify the value of the material you acquire and ensure that you are satisfying the information needs of your employees. It can also help you get the most from your content budget.

When looking for ways to address these challenges, consider technology solutions that provide visibility into your organization's content holdings, help you track usage and spending, and most importantly, give hours back to your highly-skilled and busy colleagues.

Nearly 1/3 (29%) of Outsell study participants cited source credibility as a major obstacle in getting information.

Promote Credible Sources of Information

In addition to the complexities of access and discoverability in this content-rich environment, there are questions of credibility. In a digital world in which virtually anyone can publish information, how reliable are the many information sources your colleagues encounter on a daily basis? Nearly 1/3 (29%) of Outsell study participants cited source credibility as a major obstacle in getting information.

Employees interact with a variety of sources in their daily work, from peer-reviewed scholarly journals published by universities, societies and commercial publishers to publications with questionable review processes and dubious claims of expertise. While citation databases can provide further insight into source credibility, it is one more step between your colleagues and the right content. Further complicating this issue is the prominence of Open Access journals which have sprung up over the last decade. With varying levels of peer-review, these journals present additional challenges to employees requiring more scrutiny and verification.

Consider ways to connect your colleagues to the best, most credible information sources your organization has acquired. Your content holdings reflect a careful selection of top journals, databases, newspapers and other publications to equip your employees with the material they need to stay informed and be inspired. You've done the work in vetting these information sources, so there is little question as to their credibility. Pointing your colleagues to the best sources will go a long way in reducing the time they spend qualifying information.

Provide Visibility into Content Use Rights

In addition to the challenges surrounding information search and source credibility, there are other issues that could slow down your colleagues' ability to share that material with others. According to Outsell's 2013 Information Consumption and Use Study, more than 40% of the content employees share comes from outside sources. And they do share. In fact, business professionals share published information an average rate of 34 times per week.

Take a look at your rights licenses for content usage. You've probably purchased some licensing agreements. Do they offer consistent usage rights for colleagues to share published material? And do they cover sharing of the many different information sources colleagues rely on? If your employees are based in multiple countries, it's important to assess whether your licenses allow cross-border content sharing. Licenses from individual publishers can vary and leave gaps in your coverage. A license from a rights aggregator, which offers rights to share material from many different copyright holders, can make your life much easier.

Streamlining the research process and understanding how published information is used and shared in your organization can help you save time and money.

Consider how easy or difficult it is for employees to see the rights they have. Giving them visibility into your licenses will make it easier for them to forward articles to team members and other colleagues in a more timely fashion, get the most value from your subscriptions and minimize your organization's infringement risk.

Remove Information Roadblocks

Behind every innovation is the exchange of information, but getting to that information is often a long, frustrating road. Time spent searching for content means less time and energy to analyze and solve problems, make key decisions and bring products and services to market. Streamlining the research process and understanding how published information is used and shared in your organization can help you save time and money, see gains in employee productivity and innovation, minimize infringement risk and help you get the most value from the content to which your organization subscribes.

Help Is Available

More than 35,000 organizations depend on content workflow and compliance solutions from Copyright Clearance Center (CCC). How can we help you maximize your content and licensing investment, operate more efficiently and save money? Contact us +1.978.750.8400 (option 3) or email licensing@copyright.com.

About Copyright Clearance Center

Copyright Clearance Center, the rights licensing expert, is a global rights broker for the world's most sought-after books, journals, blogs, movies and more. Founded in 1978 as a not-for-profit organization, CCC provides smart solutions that simplify the access and licensing of content. These solutions let businesses and academic institutions quickly get permission to share copyright-protected materials, while compensating publishers and creators for the use of their works. We make copyright work. For more information, visit www.copyright.com.