Efficient Web Research Cataloging at Scale: Ipas Leverages Soutron's Customizable Workflows and Integrations

INTRODUCTION

Ipas, an internationally recognized organization for reproductive justice, works across institutions and communities worldwide to provide information people need to make informed decisions about reproductive health.

Since 2016, the research library collection at Ipas has been managed with the Soutron Integrated Library System (ILS), delivering knowledge services to staff, partners and researchers worldwide via their Soutron library portal, which provides secure access to their evidence-based, specialized collection.

CHALLENGE

Ipas Lead Librarian, Allison Campbell has watched the library collection transition to an all-digital collection during her 17-year tenure with the organization.

Part of that digital transition has extended library services to include monitoring the Web for news articles in which Ipas staff have been quoted or Ipas is mentioned, to help the organization keep a record of their media reach and impact.

In addition to extending library services to include media monitoring services, Allison was also faced with a backlog of cataloging work due to staff reductions and began looking for a solution.

She needed a tool that would help her solo special library more efficiently import both Web articles with Ipas mentions in addition to helping her catalog the backlog of research articles and publications related to reproductive health.

Ipas

SOLUTION

Allison began using Zotero, a free open source tool, to help address the 'media mentions' research cataloging, but discovered that with the number of media mentions Ipas was receiving, she needed a more efficient way to not only catalog the Web-based research, but also a way to ensure access to the articles was preserved case the URL for the article no longer worked or was put behind a firewall. She needed a solution for both Ipas media mentions and published authoritative reproductive health research articles.

Allison contacted Soutron Client Services seeking a more efficient way to handle her expanded library services requirements. After understanding Allison's need to quickly catalog a large volume of digital materials, the Soutron development team created a custom back-end service that would speed up her workflow.

🕐 **5x**	📄 **1,300+**
Productivity Increase	**Items Cataloged**
From 10 items/hour to 50 items/hour	In one year with new functionality

With this newly customized workflow, Allison captures article metadata with Zotero (Google Scholar, Mendeley or other Web research tools could also be used).

Once a week, the captured metadata is uploaded to the Soutron FTP server and imported into the Soutron database. Post import, a background task checks the data and enables the URL to PDF check field. A final background workflow task looks for URLs that have the URL to PDF field checked, generates the PDF and auto attaches the PDF to the Soutron record.

After all of the metadata is imported and the PDF generated, Allison then verifies the imported metadata with the Ipas controlled vocabulary in Soutron. Allison further adapted the new efficient URL to PDF workflow import procedure to import Web-based media mentions and any research articles and subscription journal articles that are not in PDF format into the Ipas internal knowledge-base of reproductive health literature, not only providing staff with access to many otherwise inaccessible articles (behind paywalls), but also ensuring access to those articles by converting the URL to a PDF document.

This functionality and customized workflow significantly streamlined the cataloging process, saving time and reducing manual effort. Allison is now able to better address the cataloging backlog as she works to create a well-organized digital collection that supports the Ipas health information ecosystem.

"I used to be able to catalog only about 10 items in an hour when it was all manual entry. With the new automated Soutron capabilities, my output has more than doubled. Depending on the record type, I can now "touch" up to 50 items in an hour!", Allison said. "In this past year, I cataloged over 1,300 items with this new Soutron functionality."

The partnership between Allison and the Soutron Client Services team exemplifies the power of collaboration that is rooted in trust and responsiveness.

Faced with the challenge of expanding her library's digital services, Allison turned to Soutron not just as a vendor, but as a strategic ally. Her confidence in the Soutron Team's ability to understand and address her unique needs led to the development of a custom URL-to-PDF converter, an innovation born directly from her request. "It's really cool - they [Soutron R&D] built the URL to PDF converter for me," states Allison. "I just asked Soutron Client Services: Do you have something like a URL to PDF converter and they said no, but we could build one for you.

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> Lead Librarian, IPAS

Their ability to go above and beyond for me was awesome." With this new functionality, Allison now sometimes imports 200 new catalog records at a time, as she monitors media mentions and whittles away at the backlog of research materials.

Soutron's willingness to listen, adapt and build a tailored solution reinforced Ipas's trust in their platform and the extended Soutron team, transforming a technical challenge into a streamlined workflow.

For more information about third-party integrations with Soutron, visit the [Soutron Integrations](#) page.

FUTURE

Now that Allison has an automated process, "I want to get my catalog up-to-date and redo my Soutron library portal." Currently, the library research collection portal is accessed by staff via a link on the Ipas Intranet, using SSO for automated, secure access to library materials. Ipas staff use the Libby app to access, read or listen to the books in her collection and use the Soutron PDF viewer to read the converted PDFs. To provide external researchers access to the collection, Allison worked with Soutron client services to set-up a secure password-protected portal so that external researchers can access the collection the same as a staff member can.

Due to the inherent flexibility of the easily customizable Soutron library platform, Allison will be able to customize the Ipas portal so that she can support everyone in the organization with their research needs, "no matter if they're in Washington DC, Indonesia or South Africa," adds Allison.

As Lead Librarian, Allison's cataloging work using Soutron supports Ipas as the organization builds-out their information ecosystem to support gender equality and women's health.

"The original research Ipas conducts around the world is supported by our unique library services, which elevates our position as a thought-leader in the sphere of reproductive health," states Allison.

To find out more about iPas and the range of services available, visit their website for details:
www.ipas.org

To find out how you can migrate to a fast, secure, cloud based research library system to support your organization, start a conversation with Soutron Global today:
www.soutron.com