

Usage of IEEE Electronic library

The university has now had access to the IEEE Electronic library (IEL) since August 2008, and during that period the interest in this resource has been consistently high. As there are now two full years of usage data available, this report attempts to expand on the information in my previous summary, and to compare that with more recent figures.

My previous report was based on figures from January to June 2009, over which period there were 16409 downloads of conference papers and 13504 for journal articles. In the remainder of 2009 there were consistently fewer downloads, although the figures were still substantial. The table below summarises the usage for the whole of 2009 and compares it with the most recent figures for 2010:

Collection	2009 usage	2010 usage
IEEE Conferences	26157	32023
IEEE Journals	25450	27141
IET Conferences	740	761
IET Journals	2491	2708

This shows that overall there was a small increase in the usage for 2010, confirming that these figures represent real research needs, and not merely exploratory usage. I should caution that the statistics for 2010 showed anomalously high usage for January (in total as much as all of 2009 put together). Further investigation revealed that this was confined to an extremely small number of IP addresses which are apparently no longer allocated within the university. Whatever the reason for this, I suggest that it was not intentional and consequently I have used an interpolated figure for January 2010 when calculating the totals above. Also, it is worth noting that the lower usage in the second half of 2009 was also apparent in the first half of 2010, possibly suggesting a change in usage for the academic year 2009/10.

Once again, I have attempted to analyse usage by department by using usage statistics by IP address. The method used to identify departments is based on performing a reverse DNS lookup, as before. The top ten in the data for the calendar year 2010 were as follows:

Domain	Department	Requests
eng	Engineering	18562
csx	<i>Computing service</i>	9659
cl	Computer Laboratory	5302
phy	Physics	2729
msm	Materials science	1959
nanoscience	Nanoscience	1275
lib	<i>University library</i>	1205
cheng	Chemical engineering	1043
pwf	<i>Public workstations</i>	746
cup	Cambridge University Press	713

The relative ranking within this table remains broadly the same as in the last report. The main difference being that the usage from the Computing Service domain has increased significantly, due in the main to this including demand from the Lapwing wireless network, and from VPDNs which may be used to gain access from home machines. The other difference is that the department of Chemical Engineering (domain cheng) has replaced Chemistry (ch) within the table. Once again the anomalous usage from January 2010 has been filtered out.

The above figures clearly show that there is still a significant need for the IEL, and that this demand has not declined since we first obtained the resource. As I understand that the IEL is now regarded as an 'established resource' and part of the Journals Coordination Scheme, it should be easier to meet the rising cost of the subscription, but only if it is deemed as representing value for money in comparison to other resources. To put the above figures into context, I have obtained usage statistics for some other major packages currently offered by the University Library:

Package	usage in 2009
Elsevier science direct	743903
Springer	170902
Wiley/Blackwell	139297
ACM Journals	5293

In the first three cases , it should be stressed that these are very large packages, each with well over a thousand titles, and covering a much broader range of subjects than the IEL. For comparison I have also included the ACM package as being typical of a single subject collection from a professional body. To be fair, the latter apparently counts only journal paper requests, and is much cheaper.

In summary, the IEL is still very well used, and even in comparison with larger collections covering a larger range of subjects the demand is still very respectable. While the greatest usage from single departments was, as might be expected, from the Engineering department and the Computer Laboratory, they were not the only users by any means. On this basis the IEL represents considerable value to the university, and surely justifies its continued funding.

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