
What Are the Common Causes of Full Text Linking Problems, and How Can Linking Be Improved?

- **Product:** SFX, Alma, 360 Services
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Question

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Answer

While our link resolvers are constantly being monitored to and improved to maximize user access to Full Text content, there are some issues inherent to OpenURL linking that are common causes for full text access problems:

- **Metadata inconsistencies** - The most common cause for linking problems is metadata inconsistencies between publishers, database vendors, link resolver knowledge bases, and central indexes like the Central Discovery Index (CDI) and the Alma Community Zone. For example, you find an Article from Provider A, and go through a link resolver to link to Full Text from Provider B, it can happen that the metadata for the same Article from Provider A and Provider B are not the same, so Provider B cannot match the article, and the link fails. It can also happen that linking from the CDI citations, which have corrected and normalized metadata, may fail if the link is going to a provider with inconsistent or incorrect metadata.
- **Granularity of indexing** - A difference in the level at which articles are indexed by the vendor/provider. For example, a database vendor may group a section of sub-articles as a larger article under a single title. When CDI provides more granular citations for sub-articles, links to the provider with less granular indexing will fail to link properly to the larger article. Another example is providers not indexing all articles in an issue, or not indexing an entire issue. This can lead to link failures, even though the content is within the provider's coverage period (threshold). See more, in this article: [What is a granularity mismatch and are there workarounds to improve linking?](#)
- **Multiple articles on a single page** – A database vendor may group a section of sub-articles as a larger article under a single title. In these situations, the OpenURL link will direct users to the first article on the page rather than the article desired.
- **Author ordering** - Differences may exist in the way database aggregators and publishers order the authors of an article. Difference in author order may cause an incorrect author to be sent to the full text provider, resulting in an article not being retrieved properly.
- **Inability to specify database** – A full text database provider may not allow the link resolver to pass on all the information that may be available to direct users to a specific resource. For example, instead of getting a database name from the link resolver's OpenURL to provide full text from a specific resource, the provider may not accept the database name, and instead randomly select one resource from all the databases that hold the same content. As a result, the user may be directed to get full text from a resource the library doesn't subscribe to, and the link fails.

Data Services, Product Management, and Support teams for SFX, 360 Link, and Alma Link Resolver are constantly improving methodologies, technology, and vendor relations to improve linking success. Here are some the ways we work to improve Full Text linking:

- Alma / SFX link resolver default configuration to always prefer Full Text to the same provider as the original Citation (to prevent the metadata inconsistencies problem)
- Wherever possible, we work directly with providers to determine the most effective linking solutions for their content;
- Automated link checking mechanism for sampling links to proactively identify problems;
- Automated link checking for every new collection prior to release
- Metadata correcting tools to rapidly address problems
- Significant staff and processes to manage the CDI, as well as maintenance of knowledgebase metadata
- Effective Support processes to quickly diagnose the root cause of linking problems and refer to the relevant Data Services team for action.
- Participate in the creation and maintenance of standards designed to improve accurate access to your preferred vendors/providers, including KBART and ODI.

While we are making every effort we can to improve full text linking, there are some clear changes that providers could make that would significantly reduce the frequency of these problems. We are committed to working with any provider to improve linking to their resources.

What can my library do to help improve linking?

While submitting a Support Case to report examples of a pattern of linking problems is a good idea, keep in mind that because of the issues we described, if you look for linking problems, you will find them. Here are some things you can do to maximize linking success:

Make sure your resource activations are complete

Make sure you have accurately activated your Full Text holdings in Alma Link Resolver, SFX or 360. Not only will this affect how the link resolvers display available full text options, it also dictates how full text availability is represented in Primo in most cases. You also want to make sure that your activations in Primo/Primo VE and CDI are up-to-date for article searching.

Make sure “Source to Target” configuration is Active

In Alma Link Resolver and SFX, you can set the link resolver to always prioritize the full text provider that matches the provider of the Source record in Primo. For example, if a user searching Primo discovers an article from Gale and the Alma Link Resolver or SFX can offer full text from Gale and EBSCO, Alma will place the service from Gale at the top of the results, followed by the remaining electronic services as defined in the sort settings for this page.

In SFX: See the [SFX General User's Guide](#), page 370.

In Alma: See Alma Online Help: [Configuring the Order of Online Services](#)

Please note that this configuration only affects the sorting of Full Text Targets, so you should also be

aware that any display logic rules you have configured in SFX or for Alma Link Resolver may affect what Full Text options are displayed.

Consider activating the Ebsco Full Text Linking API

If you subscribe to a lot of Full Text content via Ebsco, you may see improved linking success to Ebsco content by configuring Alma Link Resolver or SFX to use the Ebsco Full Text Linking API. See the knowledge article: [Configuring Ebsco API for Full Text Linking via Alma and SFX link resolvers](#).

Consider enabling Related Records

In cases where the publication's title or ISSN have changed over time, there could be issues related to mismatch between the title/ISSN in the SFX KB or Alma CZ and the ones used by the vendor. One of the most common issues would be missing full-text links, despite full-text availability displayed in Primo.

Enabling display of related records could allow the display of the full-text links.

In SFX, go to: SFX Admin > Setup & Administration > Configuration > Menu Configuration. See [Displaying Related Objects in the SFX Menu](#).

In Alma, go to: Fulfillment > Fulfillment Configuration > Configuration Menu > Discovery Interface Display Logic > Related Records. See [Link resolving to journals that changed title/ISSN](#).

Support is happy to discuss your overall experience with linking to full text so we can assess these issues and see where there are options for improvement. For tips on reporting linking problems to Support, see the Knowledge Article: [How To Report Full Text Linking and Availability Problems to Support](#).

We also encourage you to share these experiences with your full text providers.

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