

EBSCO's Response to Gale's "Open Letter"



Please let this serve as EBSCO Publishing's response to Gale's "Open Letter to the Library Community" where Gale repeatedly references EBSCO and mischaracterizes our actions and intentions.

EBSCO supports libraries in many ways and will continue to do so. This includes programs to raise awareness of the value and importance of libraries on a national and local level. One of the ways we support libraries is by ensuring that our customers do not lose access to the most important titles in databases – whether academic journals or general magazines. It is with great effort and expense that such stability is offered and most of our customers appreciate this and recognize that we do everything possible to keep pricing affordable.

EBSCO has many agreements with many publishers, and is very open about the fact that our databases include dramatically more unique content than other aggregators. We think publishers choose to work with EBSCO because we listen to their concerns and attempt to find solutions that work for the publisher and for libraries. Publishers appreciate that we respect the value of their content and do not sublicense their content to free websites that compete with libraries and each publisher's core business. The idea that EBSCO forces publishers to do anything is not realistic as publishers own their content and make their own decisions. We can't respond to every inquiry about our publisher relationships, because we respect the privacy of our publisher partners and intend to keep those relationships for the long-term. In this rare case, we will respond specifically about the two publishers mentioned in Gale's "open letter" as we have discussed this situation with them. However, we will not comment on any other publisher relationships or agreements, even though Time Inc. and Forbes are just two of many publishers doing the same thing (i.e., working with EBSCO and not aggregators such as Gale).

As mentioned in the Library Journal article, according to the Time spokesperson, "Time Inc. sent an RFP to multiple aggregators soliciting an exclusive agreement for our publications."

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6716120.html?rssid=191>

While Gale is correct that ongoing full text for Forbes will be available via some EBSCOhost full-text databases and not Gale's; their depiction of the way this happened is not accurate. In fact, Forbes told us that they received multiple bids from library market aggregators and simply decided to go with EBSCO.

EBSCO is already the only place for libraries to offer their patrons online access to the majority of the most important general periodicals and we knew if we did not retain the content being discussed here that EBSCO customers would be forced to buy periodical databases from a second aggregator. Instead, this is not the case, and many libraries can save money by avoiding full-text database vendor duplication. It is understandable that Gale would be upset about this, but the reality is that they had the opportunity to make the necessary investment to retain the content on behalf of their customers. Now that they no longer have to pay for many very important publications, it will be interesting to see if they will be providing substantial discounts to their existing customers.

After numerous advisory board meetings and focus groups, we have learned that libraries put great importance on the quality of active full-text sources in our databases. Gale's letter says libraries should: "work with information providers who support your mission and understand your needs"; we agree and believe that we are one of those information providers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Brooks".

Sam Brooks
Senior Vice President
EBSCO Publishing