

talis



Building on the legacy of cooperation



A white paper by

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Executive summary

Talis Base has been a flagship service for Talis for many years. As a truly cooperative catalogue record service, it has provided the cataloguing community with a shared, quality resource for over thirty years.

The premise has always been simple. Individual libraries contribute their records to enable re-use, thereby lowering the cost for all by avoiding duplication of effort. For a little cost, all members of the Talis community have reaped big rewards.

Talis sees this ethos of collaboration as key to the future of library services. Thus, when we embarked on a substantial technology refresh of the Talis Base service, our ideas remained focussed on this type of cooperative endeavour.

Talis Base 2.0 is the result. It represents a significant upgrade to the service for Talis customers.

In addition, Talis Base 2.0 now makes even more datasets available than before and pre-existing datasets are now available in MARC21.

Most excitingly, though, Talis has created an entirely new architecture underpinning Talis Base 2.0, which is ensuring that the value of this service can be realised for a much wider audience. A shared platform, which supports Talis Base 2.0, enables more content to be sourced from more content providers and redistributed to more libraries.

Thanks to the changes to Talis Base 2.0, participating libraries can gain even more value.

1. A legacy of cooperation

Talis, or as it was previously known, BLCMP (Birmingham Libraries Cooperative Mechanisation Project) was founded in 1969: its purpose to enable libraries to work together to catalogue resources.

Thirty-six years later, and Talis Base, as the service is called today, is still enabling libraries to source and originate catalogue records. Over one hundred libraries, in a true spirit of collaboration, contribute catalogue records to a shared service known as the Union. All can then benefit from access to their combined efforts.

In addition, Talis works with eleven separate data suppliers to ensure the widest possible selection of records are available for use.

Thanks to this service, Talis Base had had a profound impact, enhancing cataloguing record quality for the whole Talis community.

The benefit of an architecture of participation

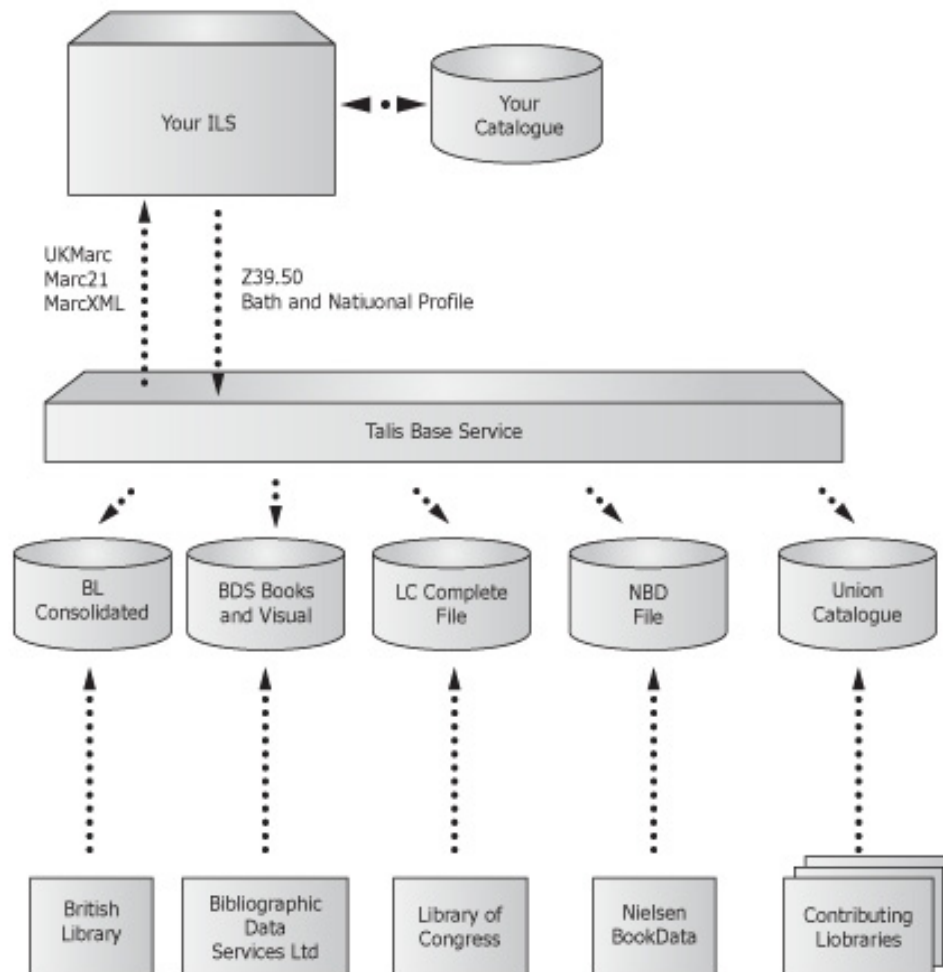
Over the years, Talis has witnessed the benefits that a central service, such as Talis Base, has had for the library domain. The value of collaboration that Talis Base highlighted and its enduring success, has given us a unique insight into how an architecture that embraces participation can actually improve, almost exponentially, the value that the customer derives from the service.

Taking Talis Base as the example, its value increases as more customers contribute their cataloguing output to the Union. In other words, the greater the level of participation in enhancing the Union, the more benefit can be derived from it.

2. The introduction of Talis Base 2.0

Today, Talis is building on its success with this product to make it available to an even wider audience. A new development that expands on the existing service has therefore been created: Talis Base 2.0.

Figure 1.



Why does this new infrastructure matter?

Talis Base 2.0 is now based on the Talis Platform, an entirely different infrastructure, designed to expand our reach. From a library's perspective there are a number of benefits to be obtained from taking this approach to development.

3. What benefits does this type of architecture provide?

A shared platform provides access to more content

The realm of cataloguing has suffered severe cutbacks over the years. Talis Base 2.0 and its underlying infrastructure will help to aggregate as much relevant cataloguing content as possible from across the globe and help to alleviate local resourcing issues.

A shared content platform delivers greater value to users

Because we have focussed our company-wide development efforts on creating a defined set of platform components, we can continually re-use them in multiple products, without incurring substantial development costs, thereby ensuring faster delivery to customers at lower cost.

A shared platform could lower the costs for a much wider audience

Consider, for example, a Special Library that has a very limited requirement for access to cataloguing data. Its budget may be small but it's keen to gain the widest access possible it can with the amount of limited funds they have available to them. As Talis Base is servicing a large proportion of the UK public and academic library sector's cataloguing requirements already, the barriers to enabling access to a smaller library are negligible. The platform could enable a limited subset of the overall content to be made available. This is big enough to be useful to the library, whilst not exceeding what they are prepared to pay and what data providers who work with Talis are prepared to offer.

A shared platform could give greater choice to libraries

As the benefits of the platform are recognised, Talis will start to work with a much wider selection of data providers, in particular those data providers who recognise the value of being able to utilise the significant infrastructure investment Talis has made. This will ultimately benefit customers, giving them a greater choice of resources to work with.

The value of data aggregation

Talis Base 2.0 provides the recognition, if needed, that there is a value in aggregating data from disparate sources. Why?

- a) Because no single source is going to provide the full requirement
- b) Because dependency on a single source usually raises the bar in terms of cost

The cooperative effort of libraries to share cataloguing records in the last thirty years has been a tangible demonstration of this. So too has been the efforts of data providers to work with Talis to provide a low-cost and integrated solution to their cataloguing requirements.

4. Improvements to the core service in Talis Base 2.0

As well as the new architecture, Talis Base 2.0 has been improved in other ways:

Leading the way in data conversion

Talis has found itself at the forefront of work to get the UK library domain fully Marc21 compliant. In 2005 Talis has been working with many data providers who are not currently supplying records in Marc21.

The knowledge Talis has acquired through its work on various standards bodies has been put to good use in validating conversion rules, which ensures the highest possible record quality as conversion from UKMarc to Marc21 in Talis Base takes place.

In many instances, Talis is now offering datasets in Marc21 that are not available in this format anywhere else.

These improvements continue. In 2006 we will be migrating the UKMarc Catalogue across to the new service. We will be running a Marc21 and UKMarc service simultaneously on Talis Base 2.0, as libraries take the necessary steps to migrate their service to Marc21.

An extended service

In 2005/2006 we have been increasing the range of available datasets within Talis Base, and introducing brand new sources focussed on non-book materials.

The BDS Moving Mediata database is a unique source supplying approximately 100,000 records for the UK DVD and Video market. In 2005, this database became accessible via Talis Base 2.0 as a Marc21 supply¹. Talis have negotiated a special offer to libraries, giving them access to the data as part of their Talis subscription until April 2007.

This is a vital source of information given that AV items now account for a quarter of the total public library lending stock in the UK.

From 2005, Talis is also loading the Library of Congress Complete Marc Description Service. The *Complete Service* gives you all of the MARC records contained in the Books All service (including Books English and Books U.S.), Maps, Music, Serials, Visual Materials, and Computer Files services.

Figure 1 shows the extended list of the data providers to Talis Base 2.0.

¹ The BDS Moving Mediata Service is not available in UKMarc on Talis Base.

Providers currently supplying records to Talis Base

Data Supply	Description	Coverage	Record (no.)
BDS Books	UK publications since around 1986; printed material;	1986-	710,000
BDS Visual - <i>NEW!</i>	Catalogue records for videos and DVDs		100,000
British Library Consolidated File	BNB, HSS, STI (formly SRIS), Document Supply Centre Monographs, Document Supply Centre Conferences, Serials, Music, Maps	1500-2005	9,000,000
Catalogue of Indic Languages	Indic Language material (printed);		60832
Coutts	Customised academic book records	2000-	1090
Cramer	Specialist AV (sound recordings, inc talking books)	2000-	91578
Dawsons	Academic book records supplied to Fastracq customers only;	1999-	11398
LC Books All	Print monographs written in nearly all the world's languages and published anywhere	1968-	5,700,000
LC Computer Files - <i>NEW!!</i>	Cataloguing records for machine-readable data files and computer software	1990-	7000
LC Maps - <i>NEW!!</i>	Single and multi-sheet maps, map sets, and maps treated as serials	1973-	234,000
LC Music - <i>NEW!!</i>	Printed and manuscript music and for music and non-music sound recordings	1984-	305,000
LC Serials - <i>NEW!!</i>	CONSER serials either cataloged or processed by LC or by CONSER (Cooperative Online Serials Program) participants.	1973-	1,000,000
LC Visual Materials - <i>NEW!!</i>	MARC records for all motion pictures, video recordings, filmstrips, transparencies, slides, and non-projectable graphics catalogued by LC. Records include all languages	1972-	169,000
Nielsen BookData	Official ISBN agency, supplier of UK book information		3,050,118
Peters Library Supply	Children's books	1998-	278575
Remploy*	AV (talking books, sound recordings, video's/DVDs) supplied to Remploy customers;		40148
The Stationery Office - <i>NEW!!</i>	Government titles covering a very broad range of topics including the economy, work and welfare, health, transport and the environment	1999-	295201
Union Catalogue	Records created and contributed from over 100 Talis LMS customer libraries		6,500,000

* Dataset is only available to customers of Remploy

5. Conclusion

The last twelve months has seen the complete overhaul of the structure underpinning services like Talis Base. We have refreshed our skills and technology, and we have a solution that befits cutting-edge software development as a result.

Talis Base 2.0 marks the introduction of a brand new database structure and z39.50 target, which has enabled us to introduce enhanced searching and indexing.

Key performance issues have been addressed and testing shows that response times on Talis Base 2.0 are up to a hundred times faster.

Libraries now using Talis Base 2.0 can benefit from access to even more content and, consequently, gain even more value.

6. Next Steps

Looking forward, the platform approach we have adopted gives us the ability to scale access to the data to a far wider audience. Project Skywalk will investigate the relationship between the platform and how it can be utilised from the perspective of resource discovery and resource sharing.

If you are a data supplier, an application provider or a library/institution that would like to receive more information on the Talis Base 2.0 service, please contact Fiona Leslie at fiona.leslie@leslie.com



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