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“Forming” a Collaborative Resolution to EZproxy Host Errors

Lauren Gibbs
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Problem:

When a library user finds an electronic resource that is not properly configured for access through EZproxy, an error message will state that a host error has occurred. This error page, full of text and technical jargon, can be confusing to users. The page also leaves users disappointed with no easy option to report the problem or way to get back to where they started.

Improved Error Message Options:

These options show what the user will see when they encounter a host error. The options are ranked by technical skill and time required to implement and by user input required.

Option #1: Basic, limited user input

Ooops!

This resource is not configured for access.

Report this problem:
Submit

Option #2: Intermediate, optional user input

Ooops!

This resource is not configured for access.

Report this problem:

Name (optional): 
Email (optional): 
Message (optional):

Option #3: Advanced, branding and required user input

Ooops!

This resource is not configured for access.

Report this problem:


diagram showing form and spreadsheet integration

Email Integration Options:

These options show emails library staff will receive when a user submits one of the forms above. The options are ranked by technical skill and time required to implement.

Option #1: Basic Google Forms notification

The following notification was generated and sent to the email address provided in the Google Forms notification:

Subject: Report of EZproxy Host Error

The following error was encountered:

Error Report:

Destination URL: [URL]

Problem Resolution:

Fixes:

Implications:

Option #2: Use a script - information included in body of email

The following notification was generated and sent to the email address provided in the Google Forms notification:

Subject: Report of EZproxy Host Error

The following error was encountered:

Error Report:

Destination URL: [URL]

Problem Resolution:

Fixes:

Implications:

Option #3: Send email to university support system

The following notification was generated and sent to the email address provided in the Google Forms notification:

Subject: Report of EZproxy Host Error

The following error was encountered:

Error Report:

Destination URL: [URL]

Problem Resolution:

Fixes:

Implications:

Lessons Learned:

• Users are willing to collaborate with the library by reporting host errors
• Errors are reported more often-from 1 or 2 the previous year to 27 in the 4 months since implementation
• Problems other than host errors were uncovered by this tool, including:
  • Full EZproxy stanza updates required
  • Discovery system flaws
• Users submitted anonymously in most cases before name and email were required
• Users may appreciate knowing the issues is resolved, but most do not reply to the support ticket created
• Improvements to other error messages are possible with this use of technology (ex. Max Virtual Host error)
• These methods are fully customizable for each library and its users: from fast, free, and simple options to more advanced and secure options

Resources Used:

• Locascio, Jill. “When it Breaks: Minimizing and Mitigating System and User Errors in Eresources.” Electronic Resources and Libraries Conference, 3 April 2017, AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center, Austin, TX.