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"Forming" a Collaborative Resolution to EZproxy Host Errors

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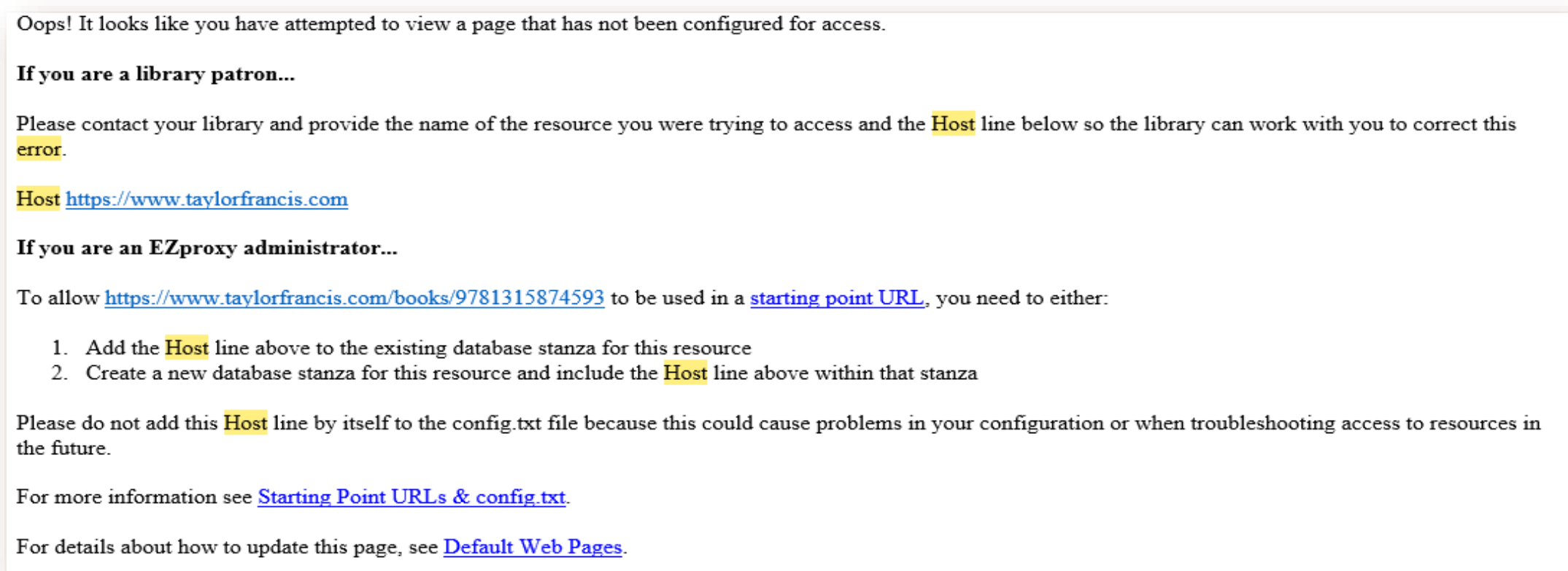
“Forming” a Collaborative Resolution to EZproxy Host Errors

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.



Solution:

In order to uncover and resolve more host errors, this error message was replaced with one that was easier to understand. A Google Form was created and customized and the form's code was embedded into a new error page. This coding automatically captures the information required to resolve the error and adds it to a spreadsheet located in Google Forms. Library staff can be notified of each submission by a generic Google Forms email or by creating a script that will send a more detailed email. This email can be sent to the library staff member in charge of resolving host errors or directly to a library support system/help desk. To improve security and support system integration, Rowan University Libraries' Web Application Engineer replicated the form's functionality on Rowan's own server. The examples to the right show different options for improving the error message and for types of email notifications.

```
EZproxystat script
Code.gs
1 function onFormSubmit(e) {
2   Logger.log('[METHOD] onFormSubmit');
3   sendEmail(e.range);
4 }
5
6 function sendEmail(range) {
7   Logger.log('[METHOD] sendEmail');
8 }
```

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

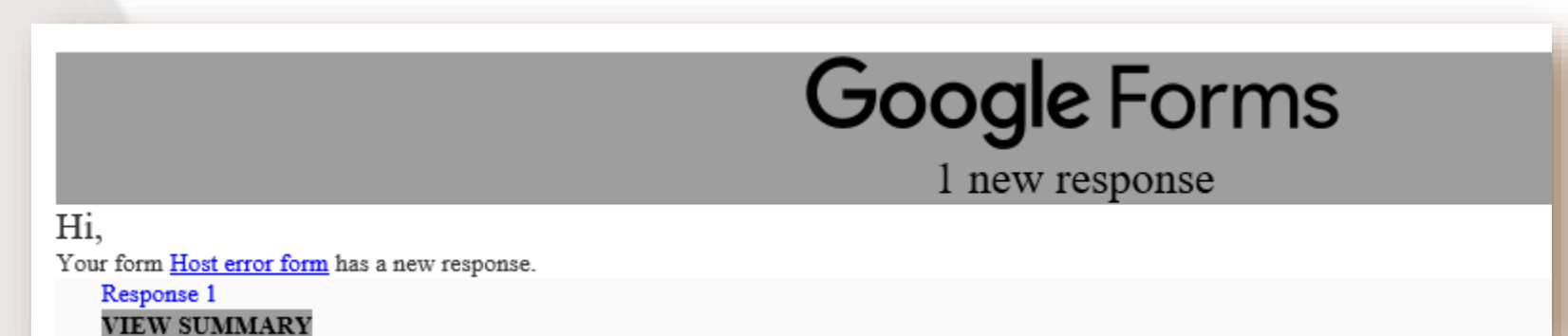
Option #2: Intermediate, optional user input

Option #3: Advanced, branding and required user input

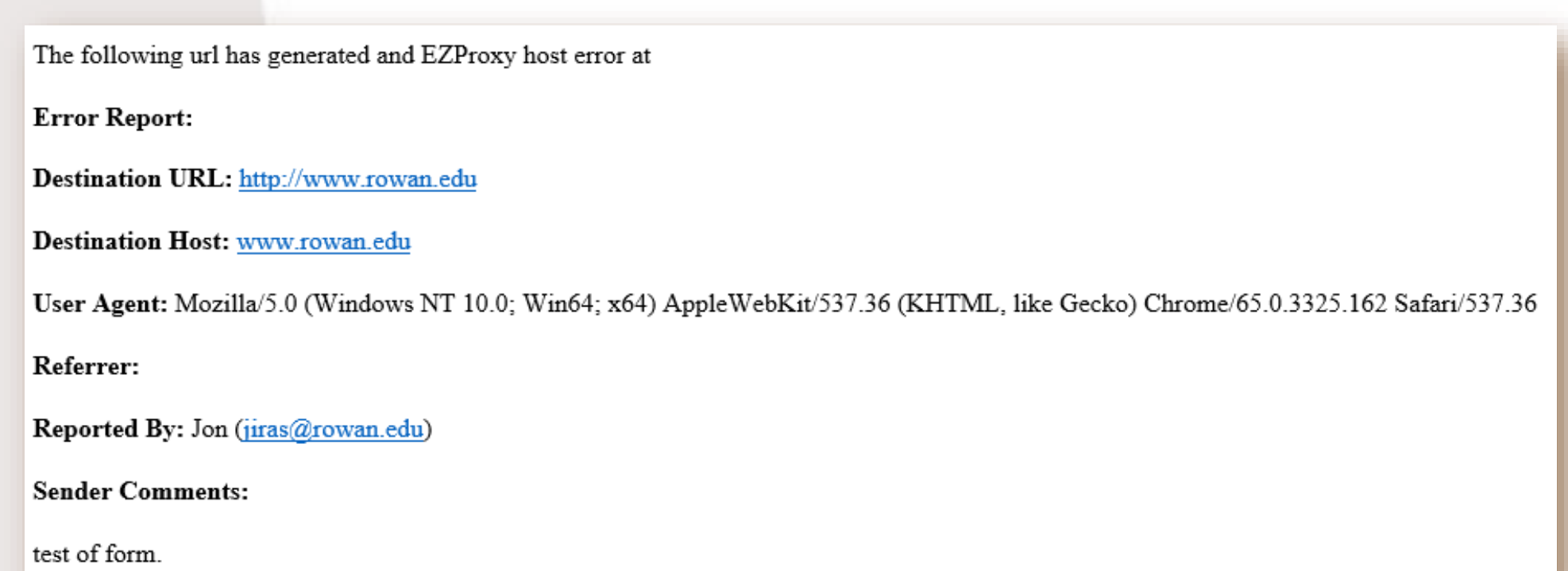
Email Integration Options:

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.

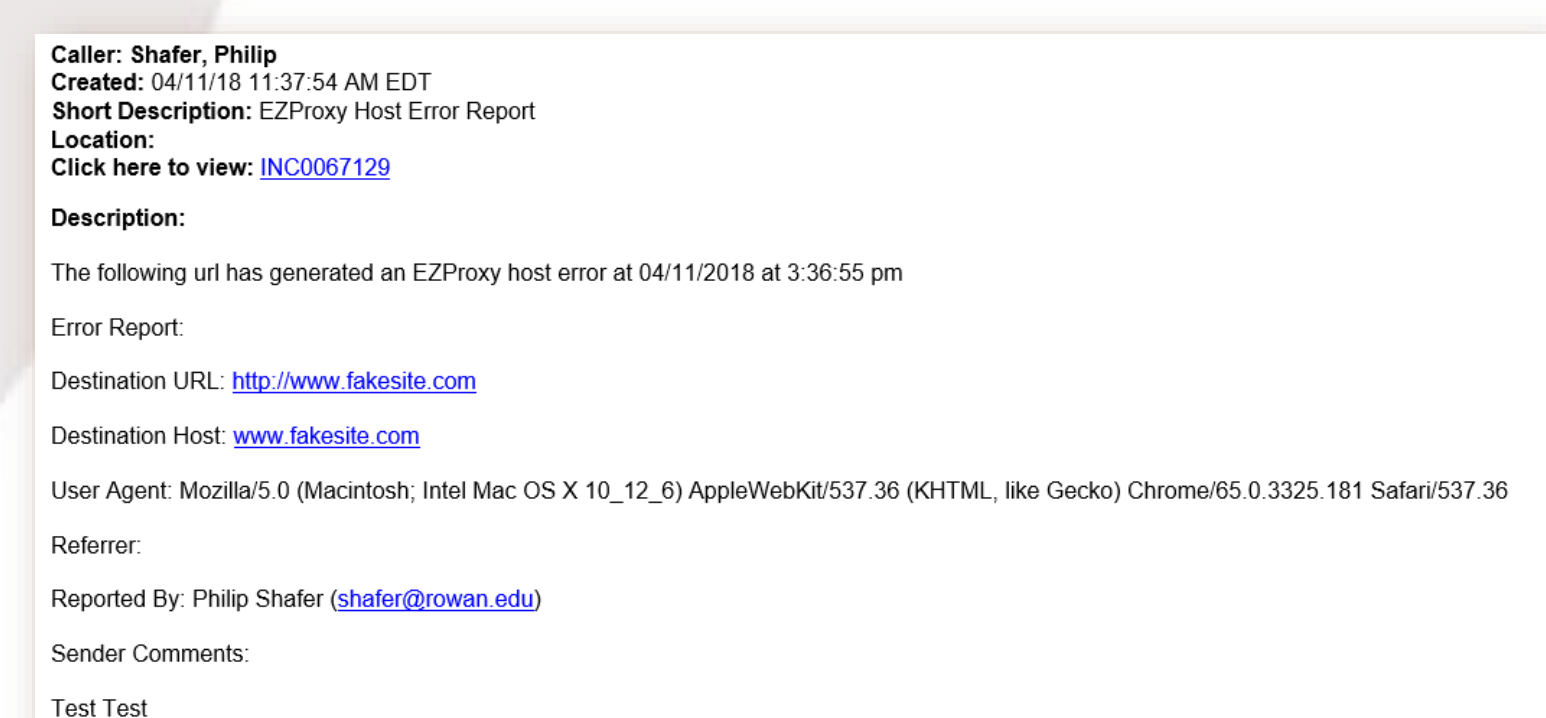
Option #1: Basic Google Forms notification



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



Option #3: Send email to university support system



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.
- Verbovetskaya, Alevtina. *How-to/User-Triggered Error Reporting in Ezproxy*. Cuny.edu, <https://ols57.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2015/03/19/how-to-user-triggered-error-reporting-in-ezproxy/>. Accessed 16 April 2018.
- Haggerty, Ken. *Supercharge your Google Form with Google Apps Script!* Madebymany.com, <https://www.madebymany.com/stories/supercharge-your-google-form-with-google-apps-script>. Accessed 12 April 2018.

