Roll with the Times, or the Times Roll Over You

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Collection Development—E-Books
Open Access, Open Access, How Does Your Catalog Grow? With Selection, Access, and Usage All in a Virtual Row!

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Abstract

Much of the open access (OA) focus and discussion has been on journals (think Glossa), but the open access monograph has come fully into its own. University and scholarly publishers are providing high-quality books, often in areas that rely on long-form scholarship. However, open access monographs presented a challenge. How do they fit into the traditional models of selection, acquisition, cataloging, and tracking usage?

In the spring of 2016, Texas Woman’s University Libraries created a simple workflow to make open access monographs accessible through the libraries’ discovery layer using Google Sheets to track the workflow and EZproxy to track usage.

Introduction

Texas Woman’s University (TWU) is a public doctoral/research university and has campuses in Denton, Dallas, and Houston. With a student enrollment over 15,000, TWU is the nation’s largest university primarily for women. It offers both traditional and online degrees in the liberal arts, education, business, nursing, health sciences, and the hard sciences. The TWU Libraries hold over 600,000 volumes, subscribe to over 2,000 journals and databases, and have a collections budget of $1.7 million.

Texas Woman’s University had begun initiatives to promote and include open access scholarship on campus and make data-driven decisions. As a leader and an integral part of that effort, the libraries were interested in supporting and including open access materials in the collections when possible. Throughout early 2016, open access initiatives filtered through our e-mail and into our conversations. However, lacking a process, these open access materials never moved beyond discussion and into our collection. We realized that we needed a systematic way to review and add these materials.

Formal meetings were not the norm in our library, but we decided that creating an open access workflow warranted one. Representatives from acquisitions/collection development, cataloging, electronic resources, and information technology gathered together to design the process. The goal was simple: An open access workflow that was simple, effective, and flexible.

We decided to use Google Sheet as the basic workflow mechanism. Google would allow for multiple editors. It would track changes, allow comments, allow for multiple staff members to concurrently access the sheet, as well as provide notifications. The workflow would move from the selection process in collection development to cataloging for MARC record decisions, then to electronic resources for URL and proxy enabling. Information technology would become involved once a month to extract usage data.

How Do We Identify Open Access Materials?

The workflow was easy. To a certain extent, it mirrored the purchased workflows for electronic monographs. The challenge for collection development was identifying open access materials to acquire. In print collection development, selecting titles is easy. There are established tools and methods that notify selectors and libraries about new and forthcoming titles. However, not all publishers or book vendors incorporate open access materials into their catalogs, flyers, and selection tools. At TWU, we relied primarily on open access announcements on library listservs, at conferences, and from fellow librarians or university faculty.
How Do We Select?

Texas Woman’s University uses the Ex Libris Alma system. One of the options Alma provides is a community zone of electronic journal and e-book packages. Libraries can easily “turn on” access to their subscription and purchased electronic book and journals packages. Additionally, Alma provides such community zone bibliographic records for the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), and the HathiTrust. When we first went live with Alma in 2012, we activated the DOAJ, DOAB, and HathiTrust collections, making available OA material through Primo, our discovery layer.

We revisited this decision during our OA discussions. Do we need to provide access to all these free materials? Perhaps it would be better to select based on our crafted collection development policy and allow researchers to discover any additional open materials via Google Scholar? We reversed our initial 2012 decision to make everything available and instead looked toward our collection development policy and criteria. If it did not fit into our collection plan, we were not going to add it even if the book was free, but having said that, we hoped that OA monographs might be used to supplement areas of the collection where budget constraints would not allow for acquiring materials of tertiary importance.

Our first open access monograph selection was the open access art book collection made available from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This collection was selected based on the results of a LibQUAL survey the libraries conducted during the spring of 2015. Feedback indicated that faculty and students needed additional visual art and photography materials. Since we were not able to expand the visual art budget to substantially increase the collection with new print books, we looked toward open access to help alleviate some of the perceived deficiencies.

The Met materials were perfect. They were high quality and covered a variety of art disciplines and areas. By adding them, we would be able to supplement not only the visual arts department’s needs but that of fashion design. Moreover, the books came with an added bonus: Free machine-readable cataloging (MARC) records. After adding the collection to Primo, we extracted selected ISBNs and highlighted these open access books on our new books widget, placed prominently on the libraries’ homepage, to market our new additions and hopefully boost usage.

In addition to expanding the libraries’ collection with supplemental materials, we decided to add access to an open access monograph if it could provide access to materials the libraries already owned in print but were not generally available to the public. For this, we targeted our children’s historical collection (CHC).

Located on the Denton campus in the Blagg-Huey Library, the children’s historical collection is a noncirculating collection of approximately 5,200 items dating primarily from the 19th and early 20th centuries. It includes picture books, fiction, classic children’s series, poetry, nonfiction, as well as early readers, primers, and some textbooks. Many of the books are fragile and irreplaceable, and they are housed in the libraries’ special collections vault. As part of an inventory and assessment of the collection, collection development searched the HathiTrust to see if any of the materials were openly available. If one of the CHC books was openly available, we added it to the open access spreadsheet. Since the HathiTrust is part of Alma’s community zone, opening up these resources was easy: Locate the title, connect it to the institution zone, and update the proxy. We hope that by providing open access to materials from this collection, TWU faculty and students in education and library science would be able to more fully utilize this specialized resource in their research and coursework.

Figure 1. Example of Met title online.
In addition to content, a selection decision point was the e-book format. Publishers often make their open access monographs available in multiple e-formats, such as PDF, HTML, even Mobi and EPUB. We decided to make only one format available through our discovery layer, opting for the PDF version when available, since most browsers and operating systems have some type of Adobe viewer. We also opted to link to the actual item and not just the open access site. When a patron clicked through to the resource, the book would open in the viewer.

**How Do We Manage Workflow?**

Since open access materials did not need purchase orders for invoices, we opted to develop a simple process that was outside the purchased monograph (print and electronic) workflow. Instead of using Alma to manage the workflow, we decided to use a Google Sheet for interdepartmental workflow management. Google Sheet was flexible and allowed for customized fields, multiple users could work in it at the same time, and it tracked all modifications. By using the notification feature, each person along the work line knew when modifications and/or additions were made.

Once we began using this process, we were able to easily count the number of open access titles we were adding through our discovery layer. We started to track the number of open access e-books added into our monthly acquisitions statistics as a separate line item, which should help with Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) statistical reporting. Since this workflow was new and experimental, the librarians from each area took ownership and did the work. Beginning in collection development, the acquisitions librarian entered in the data for each selection. The sheet contained the date requested, name of the open access collection, title, author, ISBN, the URL, and any additional information such as the availability of MARC records or Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) numbers.

Using the libraries’ established standards for MARC records, the catalog librarian evaluated any freely available publisher provided MARC records and checked Alma’s community zone to see if the resource was included. If the existing records did not meet TWU’s cataloging standards, they would import records from OCLC. The electronic resources librarian verified the URL and added in the proxy in conjunction with information technology, who managed the library’s EZproxy and maintained the appropriate stanzas.

One final workflow step was to market the resource. Each month, the acquisitions department would prepare a listing of newly received books to highlight using a LibraryThing widget. When open access title-by-title selection was implemented, acquisitions began adding in the open access monographs to its monthly lists. Now the new books widget contains purchased print, electronic, and open access items.

Figure 2. Example of original Google Sheet with columns used.
How Do We Analyze Usage?

At TWU, the electronic resource librarian gathers and maintains, on a monthly basis, all database and e-book statistics for the libraries. These statistics are heavily used by collection development and acquisitions who rely on them for renewal decisions and collection analysis. While open access books would not need to be renewed, collection development was still interested in seeing usage. Usage would still help inform general collection decisions. Additionally, usage would also assist in evaluating the entire open access workflow. Is open access title-by-title selection worth it? Or should collection development encourage subject libraries to add open access monograph collections on their LibGuide pages, and rely on Google Scholar?

What we came up with was not perfect but a workable solution of using our proxy server to track usage at a basic level. However, since EZproxy log gathering does not fall under the electronic resources librarians’ purview, information technology agreed to assist with this part. Sending a free resource through a proxy seems odd and counter to the open movement. However, we were interested in capturing usage and using the proxy was the immediate solution.

Since we decided to use EZproxy, we needed to use a log analyzer. At TWU we used Sawmill, but there are many different ones available, such as AWStats, Splunk, ezPAARSE, The Webalizer, and FastStats Log analyzer to name a few. As we started to explore the proxy log in Sawmill, we realized not enough of the URL was being captured, and our URLs in the spreadsheet were not always consistent. The workflow spreadsheet contained the URL to the monograph, but it did not track the final, proxied URL that underpinned the record in our instrument landing system (ILS). Without this specific URL, finding the various OA books would be near impossible, as our system logged well over 700,000 lines a day. Additionally, we discovered not enough information was being logged in the proxy to identify individual books at the same host site. We did not have a chance to test any additional system before we left for new opportunities.

Questions Raised and Improvements for the Future

Our fledgling process works, but it is far from perfect. The next step in this workflow evolution would be to fold open access monograph selection into the existing acquisitions and cataloging channels and improve and streamline usage statistics collecting.

TWU’s ILS, Alma, is purchase-order-line driven, and the purchase order line is the beginning for all new electronic and print materials. Would it be worthwhile to create purchase orders for OA books and route them through the same channels as a purchased e-book would go? It would routinize the process, allowing ordering assistants in acquisitions to create and route the purchase order, and it would eliminate most of the need to maintain a separate spreadsheet. The exception is the usage statistics component. How would we keep track of the URLs to extract from the proxy logs?

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the long-term management of these open access resources: How will changes in URLs be tracked and managed?

We also need to be careful and consistent about our URLs. Consistent URLs for items within the same collection should be maintained rather than having the links for one e-book in a collection go to one provider and another link in the collection go to a different provider. We discovered that using MARC records from different sources often caused the root of the URL to be different.

Gathering usage statistics proved to be more difficult and problematic than we originally thought. Should we invest in another type of log analyzer for better usage tracking and evaluation? It may be worth investigating to see if another analyzer would allow us to easily gather information from a particular resource provider, thus improving our ability to calculate package statistics as well as individual e-book usage. Another desideratum is the ability of the log analyzer to export statistical data in COUNTER statistic formats. This would align the OA statistics with those from the libraries’ fee based
databases and e-books and, thus, allow more productive comparisons. Could we automate the statistical harvesting process? We would like to have specific reports be designed to automatically run month to month. Would we get the full data? We were capturing all data possible within the proxy logs, but what we were extracting in the analyzer was only partial; it truncated the results in the analysis.

We would also like to revisit the default e-book version. What e-book versions do our patrons really find the most beneficial? We could analyze purchased e-book statistics to see if there are any patterns or preferences on e-book views or downloads. In addition, we could possibly work with our assessment staff to create a tool and survey our community. We need to be mindful of developments and changes in the university’s course management system, as well as our researchers needs in terms of data mining and analysis.

We also discovered that some of our e-book aggregators were including open access monographs as part of their subscription collections. It inflates their collection numbers, but our statistics may not have been specifically from our catalog’s links.

Conclusion

Data-driven decisions drive libraries, and it is crucial to be able to track and assess how libraries and their patrons interact with resources. Identifying those resources and bringing them into the catalog can be time consuming. The fruits of the labor is quality resources for the end user they may have never found. This article outlined our attempt to use open access freely available e-book monographs and track usage. We have since left Texas Woman’s University Libraries for other gardens, and we have not been able to do any reassessment, exploration, or refinement to this process.
Nobody Knows and Nobody Is Responsible: Issues in E-Books Workflow and Access

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Abstract

Hunter Library at Western Carolina University is a midsized academic institution managing 10 large e-book packages and about 80,000 individual e-book titles. Managing e-books involves working with multiple vendors and staff from different areas of technical services. This paper examines issues in e-book workflows; in particular, we will share the results of a project to document our e-book workflows and utilize an existing technology, Microsoft SharePoint, to better manage this workflow and share information and communication among staff involved in this process. The idea for this project came with the almost simultaneous hiring of the electronic resources librarian and the metadata librarian's assumption of the responsibility for loading e-book machine-readable cataloging (MARC) records into the catalog. We found the existing workflow related to downloading MARC records from vendors' sites confusing because of the involvement of multiple units within our technical services department, Content Organization and Management (COM). We also noticed there were questions from both users and library faculty about e-book user limits and download rights that were not easily answered by looking at the catalog record, nor was the information readily available. How might we share unique access information with users and public services staff? How might technical services staff better communicate with each other regarding their individual roles and responsibilities in this process? How do we document and maintain relevant information for technical services staff? This project dealt not only with our e-book workflow but also helped to eliminate knowledge silos we discovered in our technical services department.

Background

Hunter Library at Western Carolina University is a medium-sized academic institution with just under 10,000 full-time equivalent (FTE). The library employs a shared common catalog as part of the Western North Carolina Library Network (WNCLN) consortium, which is comprised of Western Carolina University, University of North Carolina Asheville, and Appalachian State University. As of this writing, Hunter Library subscribes to 10 large e-book packages and maintains a total of about 80,000 e-book titles. In fiscal year 2014-2015, the library spent $162,962 on firm-order e-book titles, spending an average of $299 per book, thanks to, for example, some expensive reference materials costing as much as $14,850 per title.

Our technical services department is called Content Organization and Management (COM) and is comprised of four units: Acquisitions, Electronic Resources, Cataloging and Metadata, and Collection Development. These four units include four librarians and eight support staff who report to the COM department head (see Figure 1).
In late 2015, a new electronic resources librarian was hired, and at the same time, the existing metadata librarian took over e-book responsibilities when the cataloger who had previously been responsible for this process left. Shortly thereafter, in early 2016, COM hired a new collection development librarian, and our acquisitions librarian left, so our collection development librarian became our acting acquisitions librarian.

The result of all this turnover was that all librarians involved in e-books acquisitions, activation, and cataloging were new to the process. As we soon discovered, we had no documentation for the e-books acquisitions and activation process at Hunter Library, and while we had some documentation of the MARC record-loading process, it was inadequate. The drawbacks of having no documentation for the e-book workflow process quickly became apparent to both the electronic resources librarian and the metadata librarian.

The Workflow Problem

The first thing the electronic resources librarian noticed was there was no clear responsibility for setting up access to e-book packages, as the acquisitions workflow was not organized. Instead, it was haphazard with regard to activation and follow through consisting of sporadic e-mails from various COM staff members. The electronic resources librarian further discovered troubleshooting was complicated by the fact that when there were turnaways for an e-book it was difficult to know why because there was no documentation of user limits for e-book packages and titles. This also made it difficult for her to respond to user limit questions from public services staff. Thus, when there were problems accessing content from our catalog, she wasn’t sure if it was a user limit issue or if the content had been dropped from our packages.

When the electronic resources librarian consulted the metadata librarian about these issues, other problems were discovered. The metadata librarian pointed out problems she herself was having due to a lack of any documentation regarding e-books workflow. For example, she did not know how frequently MARC records needed to be updated for e-book packages, nor did she know who to contact when faced with problems such as extremely slow downloading of MARC records from vendor sites or incorrectly delivered sets of MARC records. She wasn’t sure who she should rely on—the electronic resources librarian or the acquisitions librarians—to contact the vendor, or whether she should contact the vendor herself.

There were other issues that need to be resolved as well. It soon become apparent that for a couple of our packages MARC records had not been added recently. For example, our business reference librarian and the acting acquisitions librarian identified a couple of hundred titles from our business expert press (BEP) package that were missing from the catalog. There were also missing titles from our credo academic core collection. The titles from BEP hadn’t been loaded because the metadata librarian, and the cataloger who previously loaded e-books records, were under the impression that they would be notified by the former acquisitions librarian if new titles were available. In reality, Cataloging was expected to periodically check the vendor site for additional titles and download any available new titles. This problem was sometimes further complicated by the fact that our library shares a common catalog as a member of the WNCLN consortium, and a few of our e-book packages are loaded on our behalf by our consortium’s network librarian, who oversees this process. For example, our Credo Academic Core titles were at one point loaded by the network librarian, but this process was no longer in place. Each of the schools are now expected to load their Credo Academic Core titles. There was no documentation of this change, and we had neglected to load the new MARC records.

The electronic resources librarian and the metadata librarian realized the three units of COM—Acquisitions, Cataloging, and Electronic Resources— which were heavily involved in the e-book workflow functioned in silos with their own practices and expertise, which weren’t shared or documented anywhere. Acquisitions handled purchase and licensing of e-book packages with the vendors, Electronic Resources was responsible for turning on access and creating proxied links, and Cataloging customized and batchloaded MARC records into the instrument landing system (ILS). However, the units did not communicate well with each other about these processes, and other than the documentation involving MarcEdit procedures to customize MARC records for loading, there was no documentation of the e-books workflow itself. Panchyshyn, in his 2012 article, had stressed the importance of cooperation
and communication among the various areas within Technical Services in the context of establishing an e-books workflow, and our problems clearly indicated we needed to do the same (Panchyshyn, p. 12). A literature review of how other libraries have dealt with issues relating to e-book workflows showed that any improvement to our current workflow should begin with an assessment of, as Beisler and Kurt (2012, p. 103) write, “all the different paths e-books could take from ordering to providing access . . . with an examination of which departments and individuals needed to be involved.”

Problem Solving

With this in mind, the electronic resources librarian and the metadata librarian met to discuss a potential workflow for e-books. Key outcomes of a workflow would include better sharing of unique e-book access information with users and public services staff; better communication among technical services staff regarding individual roles and responsibilities in the e-book acquisition, activation, and cataloging processes; and maintaining necessary information with regard to e-book packages and individual titles for technical services staff for future reference.

We started examining what staff were currently doing with regard to e-book processes. Although there was no set workflow with regard to e-book packages, there was a process in place for firm order of e-book titles. We documented the firm order e-books process by interviewing the staff who performed these duties and asking them to tell us about any bottlenecks that they encountered in their workflow so that we could make any necessary changes to the firm order e-books workflow based on feedback from staff interviews.

Some examples of bottlenecks discovered include the acquisitions specialist’s concerns that liaison librarians were submitting owned titles for e-book ordering. To remedy this, the acquisitions librarian reminded liaison librarians to pre-search the catalog before submitting titles. Another issue was that the metadata librarian was not getting information about user limits for firm order e-book titles from the acquisitions specialist so information was lost once we received the firm order e-book. In the new process, the acquisition specialist now includes simultaneous user limit information on the e-book invoice sent to the metadata librarian so this information can be incorporated in the catalog record in the MARC 856 field in user friendly language for public view. Lastly, the technical specifications for the simultaneous user limit information as it appears in our GOBI ordering module is added as a note field to the order record in both firm order and package e-book records so that technical services staff know the exact entitlements for each package or title.

These changes to the firm order e-books process were helpful, but now it was time to devise a workflow for e-book packages. We took our cue with regards to developing a workflow from our proposed outcomes to share unique e-book access information, improve communication, and to maintain necessary information for future reference. We also needed a tool that would allow us to clarify staff responsibilities. We decided to utilize SharePoint, which we already had access to and had employed for document sharing and storage, as it could be used to develop a workflow that would help us achieve these simple outcomes.

The E-Books Checklist and SharePoint

SharePoint has a workflow product called Nintex workflow that integrates seamlessly into SharePoint and provides an intuitive interface for creating a workflow with notifications and tasks, which is helpful for clarifying responsibilities in the workflow.

To design a workflow, the first step is to create what SharePoint calls a “List.” You must have the “Custom List” app downloaded in SharePoint. You must then create a “Custom List.” We developed a form we called the e-books checklist with fields that the acquisitions librarian would populate when she is adding an e-book package at licensing (see Figure 2).

Once you have created a “Custom List” you can then design a workflow (see Figure 3). Go to Nintex workflow and choose “Create a Workflow” and drop and drag “Send Notifications” and “Assign Flexi Tasks” to develop a workflow made up of tasks and notifications appropriate for your workflow. In the “Configure Action Screen” you can “Insert References” to pull over the fields you want from your checklist. Then go to the list you created and apply the workflow you developed to your checklist.
Figure 2. E-books checklist form in SharePoint with markup of who is responsible for filling out which parts of the form.

Figure 3. Example of e-books workflow overview in SharePoint with tasks and notifications along start and stop route.

The information that comes in the notification email (see Figure 4) and the task assignment e-mail (See Figure 5) is generated from the appropriate fields in the e-books checklist form so that the pertinent information for the package is sent to each librarian in the process at the point-of-need in an email. The e-books checklist form requires manual input from the acquisitions librarian inputting information at the time of licensing to initiate the workflow.
Metadata Librarian Notification

Figure 4. Example of a notification e-mail sent automatically from SharePoint to notify a participant (in this case the metadata librarian) of pertinent e-book package information.

Metadata Librarian Task Assignment

Figure 5. Example of a task assignment e-mail sent automatically from SharePoint to notify a participant (in this case the metadata librarian) of an e-book package task assigned to her with a link to the e-books checklist prompting her to complete her portions of the checklist.
The electronic resources librarian is first in the workflow to receive an automated task and notification and uses the information in the e-mail notice to activate the package and complete the additional fields of the e-books checklist. Next, the pertinent information from the e-books checklist is sent to the metadata librarian in a task e-mail and a notification e-mail once the electronic resources librarian has activated the package. The metadata librarian then downloads the MARC records, uploads the records to the catalog, and submits her information into the e-books checklist form and completes her task. The loop is closed once the electronic resources librarian and the metadata librarian have completed their tasks. Completion of the final task prompts a notice to the acquisitions librarian that the package has been activated, cataloged, added to the database list if necessary, and announced to public services library staff.

The e-books checklist thus ensures the digital rights management information, simultaneous user information, MARC record method of download, frequency, credential information, and last MARC record update are easily located by anyone who needs it for future reference. We realize that while the checklist includes all the information that we consider necessary now, it is not meant to be static and should be flexible to accommodate information on new procedures that need to be performed for any e-book package so the processes can be added to or altered in the future as needed (Cope, Bunting, & Vause, n.d., p. 9).

Future Steps

We have retroactively created e-books checklists for all our existing packages. As noted by Chen et al. (2016, p. 257), while some vendors send out notifications when records are ready to be downloaded, updated, or deleted, some do not have a good notification system, and the cataloging staff need to check vendor websites regularly for record availability. Hence, it is important to record vendor specific information on updating/deleting of MARC records to maintain uninterrupted access to e-books, which is what the e-books checklist will allow us to do.

We have also started recording access restrictions, such as user limit information for e-book collections and individual titles in the catalog, alert users and public services staff who may experience an access issue so they can understand why they may not be able to access a particular title at that moment. Standardized language for links that users click to access titles will also be implemented. Currently, we have a variety of phrases for these access links, including some really lengthy ones like “an electronic book accessible through the World Wide Web-WCU ONLY” or “available via Gale Virtual Reference library-WCU ONLY." We have decided to use “Click to view—WCU ONLY” along with the specific user limit of (one user, three users, or unlimited) with the “WCU ONLY” part added to distinguish our records from the other two schools in the consortium (see Figure 6).

Other changes to e-books MARC records we might consider include using a 9xx field instead of a 730, which is currently used, for recording locally created titles of e-book packages. This might alleviate some of the issues that can arise from having a locally created title that is the same as a series title found in the 490/830 field. These titles can also come up in user searches since the 730 fields are indexed and publicly searchable, and large collection searches based on these terms can deluge the user with an unmanageably large result set (Panchyshyn, 2013, p. 21). On the other hand, there is also the concern whether public services staff can search for these packages via a nonindexed field, since a nonindexed field requires using the backend of an ILS as opposed to the public catalog interface with which public services staff are more familiar.

Duplication of titles is also a concern. While complete elimination of duplication is impossible, having a sense of how much and where the duplication exists might be useful in collection development decisions (Chen, Kim, & Montgomery, 2016, p. 261). Having a method to tackle and reduce duplication in e-book titles is something we will need to work on in the future.

Conclusion

The newly devised e-books workflow is benefiting both technical services and public services staff. We now have a place to check for unique e-book information as well as a process with clear responsibilities among staff. Standard language in catalog records and more efficient processes have benefited users, and we have begun a retroactive project to ensure that all of our e-book packages
have an entry in the e-book checklist and that all of our packages have simultaneous user information in the public catalog view. The workflow is working! In fact, we have found it so useful we are considering using a similar workflow for database activations and resource trials. We will definitely be using this workflow to train new staff who will be involved in e-books package process in the future.

One thing that surprised us was the learning curve for everyone involved. Coming up with a workflow helped us all to learn more about the different aspects of acquiring, activating, and cataloging e-books, where before we worked in silos and didn’t understand what the other units did in this process. Just working on the e-books checklist was a helpful process as we learned that the acquisitions librarian did not understand jargon that the electronic resources librarian and the metadata librarian had taken for granted, and we had to alter the form to be understandable to everyone.

Conversely, the acquisition librarian pointed out a missed step in our e-books process of which neither the electronic resources librarian nor the metadata librarian were aware, specifically needing to record a step regarding contacting our book vendor to suppress new e-book package titles from our DDA profile so we didn’t risk purchasing a title twice. This had never occurred to either of us, but it was the first thought of the acquisitions librarian. Another benefit of the e-books checklist was that the form helps the acquisitions librarian know the technical questions to ask of the vendor at licensing and acquisition.

Overall, the new e-books workflow has led to better sharing of unique e-book access information with users and public services staff; better communication among technical services staff regarding our individual roles and responsibilities in the e-book acquisition, activation, and cataloging process; and a way to maintain necessary information with regard to e-book packages and individual titles for technical services staff for future reference. We hope this tool will allow us to remain flexible in how we approach this work and will work well enough to be useful in other resource workflows, so we can now say that we all know, and we are all responsible.

Figure 6. Standardized language showing user limit information in the public view of the catalog record.
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Post-Acquisition Management and the Issue of Inaccessibility

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Abstract

Though advocates are calling for publishers to develop born-accessible e-books to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) standards and the EPUB 3.0 measures now backed by the Society for Disability Studies, the realistic timespan for this achievement to become standard practice is far from ideal. To equitably serve users with disabilities, stronger technology and a mindset toward accessibility must become the standard in electronic collections. Librarians are expected to have a strong working knowledge of the library’s collections but receive little training in best practices for assisting patrons with disabilities. We cannot wait for the e-book landscape to change on its own. Instead, we must recognize how to develop usable collections for all and how to respond to those whose access has been limited. This research is the product of both current research and earlier findings of the user experience research team from the Mellon-funded Charlotte Initiative project. This paper focuses on the accessible e-book landscape and provides librarians with tools to better assist users working independently in discovery systems as they interact with the library’s current acquisitions. Additionally, librarians will acquire techniques for responding to those who cannot use the texts they wish and understand how such a mindset can help us develop stronger collections of use to all.

Introduction

Because we now live in an age where the use of technology is commonplace, most users with no apparent disabilities have come to accept that there are still hiccups with how technology operates, illogical design or programming choices, or workarounds necessary to accomplish certain goals. However, we must recognize that these matters can be the determining factor for a user with disabilities to successfully complete a task. Many platforms that academic libraries have access to are not only frustrating to use but are either partially or wholly inaccessible to users with disabilities. Therefore, the library has a responsibility to ensure that services are in place to assist all students with any technology in a timely manner and in ways that best fulfill the help request.

While library systems and databases pose one set of inaccessibility issues best left to another discussion, e-books and e-book platforms are particularly tricky. The Mellon-funded project, “The Charlotte Initiative: Principles for Permanent Acquisition of e-Books for Academic Libraries,” currently addresses three principles: simultaneous users, no digital rights management (DRM), and irrevocable perpetual access and archival rights. Though the project is hosted by J. Murrey Atkins Library at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte), it involves nearly 70 librarians, publishers, and consultants from universities throughout the United States and Canada. The user experience (UX) research team, focused on here, has thus far conducted a literature review (Caruso & Bradley, 2015) and has begun user studies of various e-book platforms. The literature review showed that many e-book studies lack specificity in noting the platforms studied, that they attempted to suggest ease of use by way of statistics, and that e-books and the platforms that host them are frustrating and not user friendly. However, it also uncovered an unnerving fact—that most studies and platform evaluations focus only on what we might think of as an average user, ignoring issues of accessibility altogether.

One issue is that librarians often use the term accessible when referring to material that can be accessed, meaning able to be navigated to and downloaded. The result is that when talking with librarians about accessibility, the assumption is that we are speaking about access, not about accessibility—access and usability for users with disabilities. Because of how these terms are used in their respective fields and because of the lack of accessibility training, it is easy for librarians to equate the two, assuming that accessibility only refers to access. However, when this occurs, the larger problems with systems and materials remain overlooked. This piece aims to overturn that mentality.
The Issue of Inaccessibility

In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau noted that approximately 8.1 million people had visual differences, and 19.9 million had narrow physical dexterity capabilities. While there are further statistics from the Bureau, these two are especially important when considering e-book user experience, visual, and physical differences. These, along with learning disabilities, which are traditionally invisible, could greatly influence user interactions.

Many students with visual and physical differences cannot use e-books with the following characteristics:

- Prove difficult to find in the library’s systems or require many clicks to navigate to and open.
- Are scanned or untagged PDFs.
- Present static, nonreflowable text.
- Require proprietary, inaccessible reading platforms.
- Present individual chapters for download without an option for the full text in a single file.

Many issues, such as the first and last in this list, relate to all users but in different ways. To those with disabilities, the issues can mean a complete limitation; to those without disabilities, they can simply present frustration. Either way, these lead to problematic user experiences, and e-books and e-book platforms must be reconceptualized to meet users’ needs at all levels.

Universal Design for Learning

The concept of universal design for learning (UD) illustrates that in order for everyone to learn, the developer of a work or a product must provide the opportunity for users to interact with the material in a multitude of ways. Following the principles of UD creates the ideal user experience. While UD can provide for users who prefer learning in specific ways, it also accommodates those with learning or physical differences, as interaction is customizable. The concept tells that we should “provide multiple means of . . . Engagement, Representation, [and] Action & Expression” (Universal Design, 2016). While there are many more ways in which creators can provide these three mechanisms, the standards below show the options necessary for e-books and e-book platforms.

- Engagement:
  - “Provide options for recruiting interest”
    - “Optimize individual choice and autonomy”
    - “Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity”
    - “Minimize threats and distractions”
- Representation:
  - “Provide options for perception”
    - “Offer ways of customizing the display of information”
    - “Offer alternatives for auditory information”
    - “Offer alternatives for visual information”
- Action & expression:
  - “Provide options for physical action”
    - “Vary the methods for response and navigation”
    - “Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies” (Universal Design, 2016).

Often, we may think of something such as “customizing the display of information” as a privilege and not a right. However, there are many users who require these types of options in order to access content. When those options are not provided, they must seek out other information or find someone who can assist them. Because this is not a typical experience for those without disabilities, those who require these options are immediately “othered” by the system. Approaching design with UD in mind ensures that tasks are normalized for all users, from those who require the options to those who just prefer to have them. As publishers and platform designers apply these concepts, they will ultimately cultivate products that are not only viable for the broadest possible spectrum of users, but are also less frustrating and less confusing.
The Frustrations

Many members of the UX team are in the process of completing user tests on several platforms, each chosen by members at those institutions. At UNC Charlotte, we decided to test four platforms, and while the user study is currently underway, we have already found that seemingly straightforward platforms can greatly confuse users. When interacting with Taylor & Francis, a user commented that scrolling through the e-book was an option, but the platform’s e-book reader caused a single scrolling motion to jump as many as six pages. Another user noticed that the same platform reader did not allow a user to move from page to page using the keyboard’s arrow keys. While this was simply a preference for this user, those with motor skills or dexterity differences may find it more difficult to move through the e-book because of an inconsistent keyboard alternative. Additionally, when attempting to find page 100, many users would type the number in the page number box, believing that the system took them to the correct page, when, in fact, it took them to a much earlier page in the book because the system included the cover and all front matter in the page count. If users were assigned a page to read, they would be reading the wrong page and may never notice.

The issues mentioned here were discovered by participants without any disclosed disabilities and may seem trivial or easily fixed by the user.

However, not only is this not a streamlined user experience for those without disabilities, but for those with disabilities, these functions can be unbearable and can cause users to give up on reading the book or finding information within it.

The Current Issue

Initiatives are currently underway to make all e-books accessible to users with disabilities, but the realistic timespan for this achievement to become standard practice is still far from ideal. Until every e-book is accessible, our libraries will still have e-books that are unusable for these students.

Standard Practices

When attempting to access or use an e-book that poses limitations, students with disabilities are often faced with the response that the technology they need in order to use that material simply has not been applied to that e-book yet. Sometimes, they are left to fend for themselves, but in other instances, librarians do their best to get information to the student quickly.

Often, the first step in making an e-book accessible to a user with disabilities is to contact the publisher for an accessible or tagged file (Michaud, 2012; Rosen, 2016). However, if an e-book is presented in an inaccessible format for purchase, it is likely not presented in a second, accessible version. In these cases, librarians may scrape out the text to create a text-only file (Spry, 2016). While this can be a quick-fix, the time commitment involved usually only allows for text-only files. In these cases, librarians must forego accessible headings, causing navigation difficulties, as well as captioning or tagging pictures and graphs, excluding the items meant to enhance ideas. Other libraries also extend scanning services to users with print disabilities to create an optical character recognition (OCR) file, which can then be accessible to users who require the use of assistive technologies (Rosen, 2016).

A Note on Disability Services

First, it is important to note that if a student has a disability that changes the way they work with materials, they will have likely registered with the campus’ Disability Services office and will know of
various services available to them. One such service is the electronic textbook service, which closely mirrors librarians’ practices mentioned previously for textbooks sent to them before or at the beginning of the semester. The service is both helpful and widely used, but because the many requests Disability Services often needs to complete, librarians would be a timelier resource when students need accessible files for research, quick reference, or unexpected readings.

Recent Initiatives

While the techniques mentioned above do help to an extent, the mere existence of inaccessible e-books is against the law. To comply with Section 504 codes and to ensure equality and equity of access, interest groups across the United States are calling states to make accessibility a priority. Petitions to publishers, the white paper that instigated an initiative in Texas, and the Tennessee Board of Regents giving deadlines for making materials accessible (see "Initiatives Resources") are all certainly steps in the right direction. However, because so many libraries have e-books that are not accessible and will not be for quite some time, librarians must be trained to assist all users with the e-books the library already has. The sections to follow will highlight techniques that libraries can implement while waiting for the evolution of accessibility. Additionally, many of these suggestions can give direction for assisting with other digital materials even after e-book accessibility is commonplace and can help define factors that will cause accessibility to be a priority in all areas.

Techniques for Further Assistance

While the standard practices are certainly helpful and the initiatives mentioned previously are a step in the right direction, there are other things we can do to better or further assist these users. The practices below can lead to further initiatives and further discovery of best practices for working with all users.

Technology Aids

Libraries should explore what other programs and departments are doing to assist users with disabilities. For example, Disabilities Services offices can hire temporary technology aids to assist students with their technology needs. However, they are often hired per semester, and not all students have access to one. To provide this service for all library users on demand, the library should hire and train its own technology aids, whether they are student workers or full-time librarians. Then, users may receive immediate assistance with library technology, such as e-books and e-book platforms. Training all student workers in these platforms will ensure that they can sit down with a student for any length of time to assist them with the technology. Once these services are in place, they should be advertised in the library and through Disability Services.

Professional Development and In-House Workshops

It is no secret that librarians and other university professionals have little experience with accessibility training, but they have a great deal of training in their respective fields. Most programs and departments offer in-house workshops or support outside professional development for those disciplines, but sponsoring and encouraging accessibility training is of the utmost importance. As they participate in this training, librarians will not only better understand how to assist students with disabilities, but it will better prepare them for working with all types of individuals and better understand users’ needs.

Report Difficulties

Too often, platform issues go unreported either because we assume they are already being fixed or because they seem too trivial to report. While the process of reporting can be frustrating, keeping quiet about the issues will only serve to prolong them and will continue to limit users who wish to use materials in specific ways. Collecting the same issue complaint from multiple libraries will help the publisher or platform developer realize that it is not an isolated issue and is more likely to instigate change.

Conclusion

Though the initiatives currently underway by interest groups may suggest that full e-book
accessibility will be routine in the very near future, global implementation is still likely far away. While the techniques mentioned above will assist librarians until accessible e-books are the norm, they are applicable to many other library-related issues. Even after all e-books become accessible, all discovery systems and new systems that come into focus will still need continuous user experience assessment. Working with users in need of accessible texts or who use assistive technology can better inform us how to develop finding aids and shortcuts that can help all users navigate to and make use of e-books and other digital materials. Accessibility training will also allow librarians to better understand any physical limitations the library may place on students.

Libraries have always taken pride in their holdings and with good reason, but as times and holdings change, we must reassess the effectiveness of those collections, and that pride must now be earned. As librarians come to understand more about accessibility measures and how to cater to all students equitably, better collection development decisions will be made. Librarians will come to demand accessible e-books from publishers and accessible platforms from developers, and such a demand will change the e-resources landscape, the types of holdings libraries retain, and how they are used. Accessibility will become a priority. In the meantime, we must outwardly demonstrate our commitment to accessibility and assisting all students equitably.

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Initiatives Resources


Ordering E-Books From a Print Book Vendor

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Abstract

The University of Southern Mississippi began ordering e-books through its primary print book vendor, Midwest Library Service, in 2016. The demand to purchase e-books has steadily increased, and when the opportunity arose to save valuable staff time searching over several vendor sites for e-books and print books by consolidating the search interface, a change was made. There were multiple steps to set up this program; however, the time invested was worth it. While there were challenges along the way, the program is up and running, and there have been many benefits in addition to the staff time savings.

Background

The University of Southern Mississippi is located in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and was founded in 1910. It has a current enrollment of about 15,000 students, both in person and online. The University of Southern Mississippi has more than 180 programs that grant bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD degrees.

Midwest Library Service is headquartered in Bridgeton, Missouri, and has been in business for over half a century. Midwest Library Service provides a comprehensive range of products and services, including books supplied from more than 20,000 U.S., Canadian, and U.K. publishers, and an out-of-print book service. In addition, they now facilitate access to ProQuest e-books provided on their EBL and Ebrary platforms. Being a small- to medium-size vendor, Midwest Library Service waited to provide e-books until the top e-book platforms were established, and their customers would not have to repeatedly change platforms with industry changes.

The University of Southern Mississippi has had increased enrollment in distance programs and each year has more online courses and programs added. The demand for materials for online students, and to increase access to materials in general, has increased the requests to purchase e-books. In addition to the increase in requests for e-books is the increased availability of e-books from a wide variety of vendors. It was appealing when book vendors first started offering access to ordering e-books, as it offered the opportunity to cut staff time spent searching multiple vendor sites for materials, since several e-book vendors could now also be searched together and in conjunction with print materials. Southern Miss previously ordered e-books with another book vendor but only briefly, and within the last two years, it switched to ordering directly with the e-book vendors E-book Library (EBL) and Ebrary. Extra fees and procedural changes were the primary reason the previous plan with the other vendor was cancelled. In 2016, these two packages of e-books became available through Midwest and thus was a major reason for setting up an e-book program with them. Another reason was the convenience and streamlining of workflows by having the ability to order e-books and print materials through the same interface, is why The University of Southern Mississippi ultimately decided to try purchasing e-books through their primary print vendor, Midwest Library Service. Southern Miss has been purchasing print books from Midwest Library Service for several years and already had a well-established working relationship.

Process

The University of Southern Mississippi began ordering e-books through Midwest Library Service about midway through 2016. The e-books are provided by ProQuest, who owns and has plans to merge the EBL and Ebrary platforms in a two-phase upgrade, the first of which took place on November 15th for The University of Southern Mississippi, with a second phase soon to follow that will eventually provide access to more than 700,000 e-book titles in this program.

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This program has allowed for the ability to order both e-books and print through one system after setting up the e-book plan in a few easy steps.

1. Complete Midwest’s customer specification form to open account.
2. Complete Midwest’s e-book profile/
3. Sign ProQuest’s license agreement for third-party ordering. (Southern Miss signed a license agreement for Ebrary and EBL separately because the platforms had not yet been merged into one by ProQuest.)

Midwest’s InterACQ database allows searching for both print and e-books, with options to choose single user, three users or multiuser where indicated and available for e-books, and users can place both formats in one cart for ordering. InterACQ is a Web-based system that allows for searching, selecting, and ordering of materials (see Figures 1, 2 and 3). The University of Mississippi only allows acquisitions staff to order from this system, with limited searching and selection rights granted to librarian liaisons. Acquisitions staff has the option of ordering within InterACQ or by electronic data interchange (EDI). After e-books are ordered, in the InterACQ system or by EDI, an order confirmation e-mail will be sent from Midwest the following business day. Machine-readable cataloging (MARC) records that are available directly from ProQuest are free and downloadable from the admin login on the ProQuest site. (The University of Southern Mississippi chose this option for MARC record retrieval.) Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) or Midwest’s MARC records are also available at time of invoice but for a fee. Invoices are e-mailed from Midwest within a week after the purchase of an e-book.

![Image](image-url)

Figure 1. Search screen in Midwest’s InterACQ system.
Figure 2. Results of search for the title “Hope and Change” in the InterACQ system.

Figure 3. Order Record in the InterACQ system for the e-book *After Hope and Change*. This is the where the e-book can be placed in the order cart for purchase.
Benefits

There have been several benefits that helped influence this decision for The University of Southern Mississippi to order e-books with Midwest Library Service, and benefits have been seen since it began. One benefit is that there are fewer payments needed for ordering multiple formats from the same vendor instead of separate vendors. The ordering procedures were also identical for ordering print or e-books, which required no additional training for staff. Staff are now using one interface for ordering instead of three, which saves valuable staff time in searching and ordering. There is only one invoice to purchase print and e-books at the same time with Midwest, as opposed to several if ordering print plus e-books from EBL or Ebrary directly. There have been no additional costs as with previous vendor where we ordered both print and e-books, and any issues in ordering, shipping, or invoicing are resolved with one customer service department. The ability to select print or e-book formats from one search instead of multiple vendor site searches and the availability of both viewable on one site is invaluable especially during higher volume ordering times.

Although the program is new for Midwest Library Service, there are already forthcoming upgrades in the works. Currently, The University of Southern Mississippi receives slip notifications each week for new books. These titles are matched with the profile setup in InterACQ for each academic department. E-books will eventually show up in these slips notifications as appropriate for each profile, and a possible upgrade date for this feature is slated for 2018. Midwest Library Service is also pursuing the ability to provide e-books from additional e-book vendors in the future. No information is available as to what vendors or when this might happen.

Challenges

With any new program or service, there are always challenges when getting started. Some challenges that came up along the way were that the program was implemented at the end of the fiscal year for The University of Southern Mississippi, and ordering does not usually begin until about a month into the new fiscal year once department allocations for materials are established. This caused a delay of about two months before e-books could be ordered, although the records had been loaded in the system, and searching capabilities were turned on. When ordering finally began, the first e-book was ordered, but the record did not come in as quickly as expected. It was discovered that some settings with ProQuest were not correctly set. As a result, the first invoice was also delayed. Also, the ability to order EBL titles was not available immediately as expected because of the merge and upgrade ProQuest was making for the EBL and Ebrary platforms. However, both ProQuest and Midwest aided in some of these corrections to get the plan corrected, and the service activated as quickly as possible.

Summary

Although a slow start, the ability to order e-books and print from the same interface has been a nice streamline in the work flow for the Acquisitions Unit at The University of Southern Mississippi. While Southern Miss orders e-books from a variety of vendors, having the ability to search less interfaces is helpful. Midwest Library Service has been responsive for issues and has helped tremendously in the process of setting up this program. Having already been trained on the InterACQ interface and knowing how to search and order materials from Midwest the addition of e-book ordering did not change any procedures or add any additional staff training time for this new service. With e-books eventually showing up in slip notifications, as well as possibility of additional partnering of Midwest Library Service with other e-book providers, this arrangement could save more staff time in the future for Southern Miss.
We’re on a Roll: Transforming E-Book Acquisitions in a Shifting Budget Landscape

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Abstract

In response to the challenging budget landscape in 2015–2016, the University of British Columbia Library took a new approach to e-book acquisitions. The Associate University Librarian, Collections, established a working group with a mandate to develop and implement a strategy for library-wide e-book purchasing. Members of the group were drawn from both campuses and represented public and technical services and a broad spectrum of disciplines. In this presentation, we will briefly review the factors that led to the formation of the working group, then discuss the steps taken in the analysis, selection, and purchase of e-books. The committee’s two-pronged approach—the purchase of large e-book packages and participation in evidence-based acquisitions programs with Cambridge, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and CRC Press—will be explored in depth. We will highlight the benefits of cross-unit collaboration, the vendor and publisher relations, and the effective use of limited funds. We will discuss the many challenges around discovery and access, evaluation and decision-making, and transitioning the program into the current fiscal year. We expect that our presentation will contribute to the broader picture of how large academic libraries can address rising costs, limited budgets, and the variety of publisher e-book offers.

Background

The University of British Columbia (UBC) has two main campuses, one in Vancouver (UBC-V) and the second in Kelowna in the Okanagan Valley (UBC-O). UBC is a large research institution that has a wide diversity of programs including law, medicine, First Nations and Asian studies, and many science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and humanities and social sciences (HSS) degrees. UBC Library is challenged to meet the information needs for these diverse areas of study.

For a Canadian academic library, the collection budget is susceptible to two important variables that can push it into negative territory. The first is common to all academic libraries, namely the yearly serials increases levied by publishers. The second is mostly important to Canadian academic libraries and is the CAD/USD exchange rate. This is important because over 80% of UBC Library’s collection budget is invoiced in USD; a 1 cent drop in the value of 1 Canadian dollar to 1 U.S. dollar is a loss of over $100,000 CAD from our budget.

The UBC Library had an English language approval plan and a demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) plan, both through GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO (GOBI), formerly YBP. In fiscal year (FY) 2014–2015, the Canadian dollar began to drop in value, adding stress to both monograph acquisition strategies. On top of this, many titles in the DDA program were coming up on four short-term loans (STL) and being triggered for purchase, and the cost of STLs had increased significantly. These factors resulted in both the approval and DDA plans being discontinued in December 2014 because the allocation was fully expended.

By the beginning of FY 2015–2016 (April 2015), the Canadian dollar had dropped significantly, and we found we had lost 25% of our buying power. Because of these financial strains, our then Associate University Librarian (AUL) Collections took a different approach in allocating funds for monographs. She convened a consultative meeting in April 2015 with librarians involved in collections work from both campuses. The group worked
through the allocations for the collections budget, and after prioritizing money for serials, inflation, and the exchange rate, it became clear that the monographic budget would be severely reduced from the previous year, nearly $600,000 CAD less. For this reason, we needed to be very strategic in purchasing material to be able to get the most out of our spend.

As a result, the AUL Collections established an e-books working group charged with developing and implementing a strategy to purchase large multidisciplinary packages and participate in new models of e-book purchasing. A decision was made to not reinstate the DDA program or the approval plan, shifting these allocations from UBC-V and UBC-O (a total of $360,000 CAD) to a central e-book fund. The working group was comprised of representatives from both campuses, as well as from public service and technical service units. The group reported to the Collections and Information Resources Standing Committee (CIRSC) that had final approval for purchases.

**Purchases for 2015–2016**

The e-books working group developed the following criteria for evaluating e-book purchases:

- Demonstrated usage,
- Broad subject appeal,
- Timeliness of content,
- Discoverability,
- Digital rights management (DRM)-free (ideally), and
- Perpetual access.

We identified publishers of interest based on librarian expertise and demonstrated past usage, including those observed in the DDA program.

After negotiating with publishers, the e-books working group selected the following frontlist packages: Columbia and Harvard on the De Gruyter platform, Project Muse, Elgar Law, and Palgrave MacMillan Business and Management. Packages were purchased through GOBI to obtain machine-readable cataloging (MARC) records and simplify invoicing. Earlier in the year, the library’s purchases also included the Association of Canadian University Presses (ACUP), Springer, four presses from University Press Scholarship Online (UPSO), and other smaller packages.

Furthermore, the library began participation in four evidence-based acquisitions programs: Cambridge University Press, CRC Press (select subjects), Taylor & Francis, and Wiley. Evidence-based acquisitions (EBA) is a program where for a negotiated amount of money a publisher provides access to a specified amount of content for a specified period of time. During and/or at the end of the program, the library selects a list of titles to own with perpetual access that is equivalent to the dollar amount negotiated. Selection decisions are typically based on usage; UBC Library expanded that and used the following criteria: Usage, librarian and faculty recommendations, course readings, and balance across disciplines. Expected benefits included increased access to a publisher’s content, a predictable spend for the year, selections based on demonstrated usage, and potentially time savings for librarian selectors. We made the decision to use ProQuest Serial Solutions and 360 MARC to manage our records for all the programs, since we wouldn’t own everything right away and do not have the staff capacity in technical services for large record loads. Titles were discoverable in Summon and the local catalog.

Since it is not possible to include details in this paper for all purchases, what follows is a description of our experience with UPSO and the four EBA programs, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned. We conclude with our plans for FY 2016–2017 and a wish list of improvements to strengthen e-book purchasing.

**University Press Scholarship Online (UPSO)**

The primary reason for selecting a large multidisciplinary package such as UPSO was that it addressed needs for a variety of program areas; it also allowed for cost-sharing between the campuses. The library had purchased portions of this package previously, but during our first year as a working group, we chose four university press packages for 2015: Oxford, Chicago, Stanford, and Yale, as these were publishers that had shown high usage in the past. We purchased these knowing that the content was not the complete output of the publishers, as is the case with many packages.

When selecting the 2016 content, we realized the cost of Oxford titles alone exceeded our budget. It was important to purchase at least some Oxford content, so we shifted to purchasing subject packages that included all presses. To decide which subjects to select, we reviewed the title lists to ensure they matched the teaching, learning, and research areas of either campus. A significant
drawback was that we would no longer be getting the complete UPSO Oxford coverage that we had in the past, but we saw this as an opportunity to offer our users access to a more varied pool of university presses in relevant subject areas.

We acquired the 2015 and 2016 packages through GOBI. This allowed us to continue our relationship with them but in a new way, and it provided certain advantages, including the provision of MARC records for expedited discovery and notes in the GOBI ordering system that showed selectors what titles had already been purchased. One drawback was that the timing of our purchase didn’t match the publishing cycle and caused some duplication in purchasing. Finally, our purchase of only 19 of the 30 possible areas in 2016 caused issues with workflow at the back end, requiring title lists from publishers and manual activation in our knowledge base.

**Successes and Challenges of Packages**

Frontlist packages offer several advantages. In comparison to purchasing titles through other means such as EBA, DDA, or single title selection, frontlist packages typically offer discount pricing. Additionally, the broad subject coverage that can come with large packages may appeal to institutions with a wide variety of programs. On the flipside, there are certainly many publishers that focus their packages in single areas, an approach that may appeal to institutions with very specialized programs. Finally, they allow institutions the opportunity to create consistent acquisitions and access workflows for a large amount of content that can be replicated across other similar packages, or at least from year to year.

When purchasing frontlist packages, there are also some common challenges. The overlap with other publisher packages will be a concern for institutions, as will duplication if the time of purchase is later in the publishing cycle. Another downside is that many publishers do not make all their content available as e-books or in packages. They hold back individual titles, specific types of resources (i.e., handbooks or textbooks), and certain imprints, and this creates confusion for the institution. These parameters are not always well defined, and receiving an explicit title list of what is expected to be published is not always possible. Again, this may result in duplicate purchasing by selectors or concern that certain titles by a valued publisher may be missed in single-title selection.

**Cambridge University Press EBA**

The Cambridge Books Online EBA was our first program to run from start to finish and was also the first EBA in Canada for Cambridge. We made one single payment, which gave us access to five times (multiplier access model) the amount of content per the value that we paid. The first program ran for a total of nine months with access to titles from 2015 and 2016. We found that the duration of the program was not long enough to provide meaningful usage statistics and made it more difficult to make selections.

Our decision to use Serial Solutions and 360 MARC meant having to get monthly lists from the publisher to manually update the knowledge base with titles that were part of the program. This activation method created delays (four to eight weeks) in the records making their way into our local catalog, which contributed to the slow uptake of the content by users.

We selected a total of 275 titles based on our set criteria: Usage, librarian and faculty recommendations, course readings, and disciplinary balance. In this case, course readings were not criteria we needed to consider because the program was so short, the titles were so new, and faculty had not yet started to use this content in their syllabi. We were able to achieve a balance across disciplines that occurred naturally. Some challenges occurred during the selection process. The BR2 (section downloads) usage reports from the publisher did not identify titles that had been previously purchased on Cambridge’s platform, in print, or on aggregator platforms, so we had to do this duplication check manually. Cambridge required us to purchase all titles with five or more uses, a restrictive obligation that other EBA publishers did not have. Luckily, we could afford all titles with five or more uses and those recommended by librarians. In the end, the demonstrated usage and the diversity of subject areas convinced us of the need to extend the program.

**Wiley UBCM**

Wiley’s usage-based collection model (UBCM) had some major differences from the other evidence-
based programs in which we participated. Pricing was based on the university’s full-time equivalent (FTE), not on the multiplier access model. While others only provided access to frontlist titles, Wiley opened up its entire catalog of Wiley online books from all publication dates during the 12-month program; this simplified the workflow for staff because they could select the complete Wiley database in the knowledge base. Over 18,000 titles published between 1936 and 2017 were included, including 3000 frontlist books published between 2014 and 2017. Unlike Cambridge, Wiley did not require us to select the most highly used titles; the decision on what to purchase, while influenced by usage statistics, was left to the librarians.

During the year, individual selectors spent some time recommending titles of interest, but overall little work was required by selectors or the e-books working group in the access phase, but selection time was busy. About 6,700 titles out of the 18,000 were used during the program, but we only had funds to purchase about 5% of those titles. In the end, we purchased 377 titles, evenly split between the frontlist and the backlist. Selections were done at the end of the program based on the same criteria as Cambridge. Unlike Cambridge, we did factor in course readings because older content had been course adopted. Wiley reports were delivered to us only at the end of the program, with standard BR2 usage data. Wiley was able to indicate titles previously purchased on the Wiley online library platform, somewhat reducing the amount of time we spent manually checking for duplication in our collection. After initial selections, we reviewed the balance of subject areas being purchased and found the selections to be spread across the disciplines. Of the 103 titles requested by selectors, about 50% had been used during the program. Compared to typical use in a first year for firm-ordered titles, we feel that is good usage, but given that we ordered about 50 titles not used in the program but requested by librarians it perhaps indicates a continued need for librarian review of titles to round out the collection.

In the end, access to the complete catalog was both a benefit and a challenge. Workflow for staff was minimal, and the library had exceptional access to Wiley’s online titles but there was significant usage of older titles during the year, creating an interesting dilemma when making selections. We had intended that the funds in the library’s EBA program be spent only on frontlist purchases, but in the end, about 50% of the titles we purchased were older imprints.

**CRC Press/Taylor & Francis EBS**

The library entered into two evidence-based selection (EBS) programs with the Taylor & Francis group. With CRC Press, we selected six frontlist netBASE subject areas, and with Taylor & Francis, we selected a frontlist of titles in the social sciences and humanities. The 20-month program hadn’t concluded at the time of this paper, but we can report out on one interesting discovery.

Although we won’t make our selections until March 2017, we have done a preliminary review of the usage reports. With Taylor & Francis, we were initially very dismayed by the low usage of titles until we realized that, unlike other EBA publisher reports, Taylor & Francis provides only BR1 reports (whole book download) rather than BR2 reports (section or chapter downloads). This made us very aware that usage comparisons across programs can be misleading, with very large and understandable differences between BR1 and BR2 reports.

**Successes and Challenges of EBA**

In this challenging budget year, it was crucial that we could control costs, so having a known spend per publisher at the outset of the program was a success. This was a definite advantage for the EBA over the DDA programs. Although both provided access to a large pool of titles, only the EBA programs gave us a known spend at the outset. Other benefits expected and realized included access to DRM-free titles and broad disciplinary coverage. An unanticipated benefit was the increased communication and collaboration between the two campuses, which has continued with other collections work.

There were also some challenges and lessons learned with the EBA programs. First, we were surprised at the amount of work required at the various stages. On the technical services side, three of the programs required a monthly title load in the knowledge base. Furthermore, our decision to use ProQuest Serial Solutions and 360 MARC caused a delay in records appearing in the discovery layer and catalog, which was problematic especially for titles added near the end of the program. For the e-books
working group, gathering the appropriate data to make selections was also time consuming. Publishers provided usage reports before the end of the program, but we then had to gather and add in recommendations from librarians and course reserve titles and de-duplicate the selections with already owned titles. Based on our experiences, we would recommend allocating a minimum of two weeks at the end of the EBA to finalize selections, submit them to the publisher, and arrange for final invoicing. We also heard back from some librarians that there was no reduction in workload for them. They continued to monitor new titles for selection rather than letting usage determine selections; they felt that short-term usage was not always the best indicator of future needs for long-term collection development. In terms of cost, while a known upfront cost was a definite advantage, we paid full retail price for each title selected, unlike with our package purchases that provided discount prices. In the category of lessons learned, we needed to more explicitly define the terms of each agreement, including publication dates (print, online, and copyright); dates to make selections; how many uses trigger a required selection; what defines a use; and what pricing will be used in the final selections.

**Plans for 2016–2017**

Being generally satisfied with the approach of buying e-book packages and running EBA programs, the e-books working group used the same strategies for FY 2016–2017. The initial budget was funded centrally by UBC-V and UBC-O, but as we identified other potential purchases, three branches opted to contribute additional funds from their book budgets. Packages included Harvard on De Gruyter, Princeton and U Penn on JSTOR, Elgar Law, and the Springer HSS content (formerly Palgrave-MacMillan). The first three packages were purchased through GOBI to obtain MARC records.

All four EBA programs were extended with some variation. Titles from 2015 and 2016 were retained in the pools for Cambridge, CRC Press, and Taylor & Francis because of an observed lag between time of publication and adoption in courses or use by our researchers. In addition, we negotiated a 12-month program for Cambridge to allow more time for titles to be used, and we added other subject areas to CRC Press. For Wiley, we used a hybrid approach. We still have access to the full catalog, but we have committed the funds to buying the frontlist with an option to purchase older titles for an additional cost. One question that remains unanswered is whether we have the capacity to participate in other EBA programs given the staff time required to make titles discoverable and do the analysis for selection. We have also yet to experience the end of an EBA program and plan a transition strategy, including a process for MARC record deletions and communication with the community.

**In an Ideal World**

In general, our e-books strategy means that costs are predictable, we are able to provide access to a great number of titles to our users, and we are purchasing titles with demonstrated usage. In an ideal world, we would also see time savings, but that is not yet the case because of existing workflows in our library and we suspect for publishers and vendors as well.

Our goal is to have timely and efficient discoverability of content so that it has the chance to be well used and reduce work on the back-end. For the packages, obtaining records from GOBI has been beneficial. For the EBA programs, we thought that using 360 MARC was a good strategy, since many titles will never be purchased perpetually (and we were not set up well to load MARC records regularly), but it has caused delays in discovery and has been a lot of extra work for technical services. This could be ameliorated somewhat if the databases in the knowledge base matched the parameters of the EBA program; for example, if Cambridge, CRC Press, and Taylor & Francis titles were grouped by publication year. Another improvement would be more frequent new title feeds into the knowledge base so that activated titles are immediately discoverable.

The selection process could be streamlined with better usage reports. At a minimum, we require title, publication year, subject, cost, and usage. The report should also indicate whether a title has been purchased previously on the publisher platform or exclude those titles from the report entirely. Ideally the report would indicate if a title had been purchased previously in print or on another platform, but that is probably wishful thinking! The attempt at de-duplication is staff intensive, and some institutions may decide it’s not worth the trouble. The individuals doing the analysis and
making the decisions should be aware of the different measures for e-book usage; for example, BR1 reports show downloads for the entire book versus BR2 reports that show section downloads.

Although we anticipated time savings for selectors, this is currently not the case as we continue to review GOBI notifications and must figure out whether a title is part of a package or EBA program before making a firm-order purchase. We offer a few suggestions to improve this situation. The first is to align decision-making and programs to better fit with fiscal and academic calendars. For example, the e-books group should be ready to make decisions about packages and programs as soon as the annual budget is confirmed and, where possible, avoid gaps in EBA programs. The second is to strive for well-defined parameters about which titles are included in a package or EBA program. It would help enormously if publishers, both commercial and the university presses, would offer a more comprehensive output of content. Otherwise, selectors are waiting—and waiting—to see whether a title will be published on the publisher platform or even as an e-book at all. For EBA programs, we have learned to be specific about the publication date both in the negotiation with publishers and in the communication with selectors. One issue that we have not resolved is how to more efficiently include selector’s input into the selection process. Librarians still review notifications for titles from the EBA publishers in order to make recommendations for purchase. Instead could this be done at the time of final selection, or not done at all?

It is our hope that as one of many institutions now participating in new models of e-book purchasing that the libraries, publishers, and vendors will come up with solutions to address these issues.
The Odd Couple: Teaming Up to Reduce Textbook Costs for Students

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Abstract

Since 2012, The University of Arizona (UA) Libraries have partnered with the UA BookStores to identify and make available e-book versions of required course materials accessible through the campus course management system and the BookStores' website. These e-books have multi- or unlimited use licenses and are available at no cost to students. In advance of each semester, these two stakeholder groups work in partnership to acquire, make discoverable, and promote this service to faculty and students in a variety of ways.

With the maturity of our partnership and of this service to faculty and students, the UA Libraries are investigating our current environment and working with the UA BookStores to develop a new model that will improve our workflows, processes, and service to our end users, most notably by inserting the libraries at an earlier stage in the textbook adoption process.

This paper focuses on both our current process and how we got to this point as well as on our future strategic plans for developing and implementing a new model in collaboration with campus stakeholders.

Both external considerations and internal library acquisition processes are considered to give a full picture of workflows and collaborations.

The Odd Couple

Academic libraries have a long history of building collections in support of research and preservation of scholarly knowledge, rather than focusing on curricular content. Textbooks, historically, have been excluded from acquisitions and interlibrary loan policies. However, an increase in electronically available titles and the expansion of open educational resource (OER) offerings, coinciding with a steep rise in print textbooks costs, have opened a window of opportunity for academic libraries to align collection policies with course content to the benefit of students (see for example the November 2014 and November 2016 issues of Against the Grain). Surveys show that many times students will not purchase course reading materials because of cost barriers (Redden, 2011). By working with campus partners, such as the bookstore, academic libraries can demonstrate a real impact on mitigating the cost of enrollment for students. Ultimately, these efforts show that campus units are aligned toward the same goal: Supporting student learning and retention by expanding access to low or no-cost alternatives to expensive textbooks.

The UA’s BookStore is university-owned and operated, reporting to Student Affairs. The UA Libraries reports through the Dean of Libraries up to the Provost. When piloting this project, the stakeholders from the BookStore who worked through an initial process were the director and the assistant director of the BookStore. Stakeholders from the libraries included representation from liaison librarians and acquisitions staff. Both the BookStore and the libraries involved their IT departments to collaboratively work together. That representation continues to be the group that does this work presently, with two liaison librarians assigned as co-leads from the Research and Learning Department (R & L). These two librarians act as the main contact points between the libraries and the BookStore. Delivery, Description, and Acquisitions (DDA) handles all acquisitions work, while Technology Strategy and Services (TeSS) is our IT support.
Required Course Materials Workflow

Textbook adoption deadlines are the dates in which campus departments must submit their lists of required course materials to the BookStore. These deadlines occur sometime during the prior semester. For example, at UA, the textbook adoption deadline for the fall semester is March 17. In a perfect world, faculty would meet those deadlines. The reality is that many faculty at UA do not meet those deadlines, and, in fact, the University is not in compliance with federal regulations mandating that students be informed of costs associated with course enrollment before registration. This has been a serious topic of concern for campus leadership. Nevertheless, those textbook adoption submissions are what started the process of the required course materials service.

The BookStore receives textbook adoption information from campus departments and produces a spreadsheet it then shares with the UA Libraries (see Figure 2). The spreadsheet received by the liaison librarians from the Bookstore is not de-duplicated and contains extraneous columns that need cleaning before it is ready to be passed on to the libraries’ acquisitions team.

After the spreadsheet is formatted and cleaned up, it is sent to the librarian overseeing acquisitions who coordinates the work in DDA (see Figure 2). As can be seen, the column headers include course number and section, instructor name, author name, title, and ISBN. The “Act Enr” column, referring to active enrollment, is not accurate since it is a static snapshot of the enrollment at the time of adoption and is not indicative of any subsequent enrollment changes. The instructor e-mail column is blank, as this information is not provided by the BookStore and will need to be filled in later in the process.
Acquisitions staff each take a section of the cleaned-up spreadsheet and batch search by ISBN for e-book matches only. The UA Libraries have agreements with Coutts and Yankee Book Peddler (YBP) for acquiring content. We search Coutts’s OASIS interface first and, if time allows, YBP’s Gobi interface. Though we upload holdings data monthly to both vendors, we still go through the extra step of searching our library catalog to make sure we don’t already own it or subscribe to it as part of a larger e-book package.

A time-consuming piece of the process is to look at licensing terms and make decisions about them. UA Libraries, in the interest of balancing access versus availability, has chosen to work with three types of licenses:

- **Three users:** We will purchase an e-book with a three-concurrent user license. The primary reason is because many titles have this type of license, which allows us to purchase far more titles than we could have otherwise. As expected, it does come with accessibility limitations, which can cause frustration in users. We also must take into consideration class sizes and, at times, confer with liaison librarians.

- **Unlimited:** No limitations on number of concurrent users or loan instances.

- **Nonlinear:** Provides multiple simultaneous access. Each copy allows up to a certain number of loan instances per year. At the end of the lending year, these loan instances renew automatically at no additional cost, or if the library goes over its yearly allotment, there is the option to buy more access slots.

UA Libraries does not limit to digital rights management (DRM)-free titles, although these are certainly the most preferred type of e-books.

If we find that we do already own or subscribe to the e-book, but it was purchased under a different license, such as a single use, we will attempt to purchase it with one of the three approved types of licenses. Occasionally, we will purchase multiple three-user licenses if that is the only option and the class size is substantial.

After many hours of searching, the list is completed with all the new titles that could be found and that fit our license criteria ordered and received. Additional information added to the original spreadsheet includes information about ownership (did we already own it?), e-book platform, license information, permanent URL to catalog record, and any pertinent notes (see Figure 3). At this point, the list is returned to the liaison librarians in the R & L department.

The final two steps in working with the spreadsheet are to locate the liaison librarian assigned to the campus department in which the course is offered and to search for instructor e-mail addresses. Both tasks are performed by student employees with the R & L department. Instructor e-mails are obtained by searching the UA phonebook and matching the instructor’s name while ascertaining liaison librarians is done by looking at existing liaison assignments and conferring with librarians within the R & L department.

Once we’ve identified and purchased available e-books, we generate three outputs: (1) e-books are linked on the BookStore’s website at the point of purchase, (2) e-books are embedded in the campus course management system (D2L) for relevant courses, and (3) e-mails are generated that notify faculty about the availability of the e-books. These automated outputs are the work of TeSS, our technology team.
Figure 3. Spreadsheet including information about ownership, e-book platform, license information, permanent URL to catalog record, and any pertinent notes.

Thanks again to our partnership with the BookStore, technology staff on both units could work together to place access to library-available e-books on the student view portal of the BookStore website’s textbook listing for each required text. This link is listed alongside other options for obtaining the text, including purchasing new or used print or renting. The BookStore Linker, as we call it, is one way we can make students aware of the availability of a library e-book that can be used in lieu of the required print text.

Our second output is the embedding of course e-books in D2L. Several years ago, the UA Libraries developed a point of integration in D2L, called the Library Tools Tab, that populates each course page in D2L with discipline-specific library resources and services. Placing the links to the e-books in the Library Tools Tab in relevant D2L course pages allows students to access the e-book alongside other course content.

Finally, if time allows, our technology team, TeSS, generates auto-populated e-mails to individual faculty for whom we can make a library e-book available that include specific information about the course, title, and licensing information for each e-book. Data for the e-mail template is pulled from the spreadsheet listing textbook adoption requests. These e-mails are then sent by liaison librarians to departmental faculty alerting them to the e-book option. If there is not enough time to generate the e-mails before the beginning of the semester, liaison librarians send out generic e-mails to faculty letting them know that a course-specific e-book is linked in their D2L page and is freely available to students.

Bottlenecks/Problems

Since 2012, when this project began, we’ve learned many things and have continued to make refinements to our process along the way. Nonetheless, the challenges associated with our current workflow reduce the potential impact of this service while also placing substantial pressures on staff time and resources. Timing is the greatest obstacle. Manually searching the lists of 2,000 titles can take up to 4 weeks, bottlenecking the project, and once it is handed off to TeSS, there is often (at most) only 2 weeks left before the beginning of the semester. Moreover, because faculty continue to submit requests long after the deadline, there are many titles that do not appear on the lists we search. Balancing the desire to be as comprehensive as possible with a cutoff date that allows us to complete the work in time has been difficult.

Workload leveling is also very challenging, since acquisitions staff is already burdened with other work commitments ahead of a new semester, and this adds a tremendous amount of work to be completed in a short amount of time. Due to the “all hands on deck” call, other work can suffer. Other issues to address or improve include:

- Licensing issues: Because we don’t limit to DRM-free, there are inevitable frustrations with some titles that do not allow for chapter or full-book downloading capabilities. Also, the three-user license, though it allows us to get many more titles, can lead to frustration with turnaways.
- As mentioned, though we upload new holdings information monthly, it is an inexact process, relying on an ISBN match, so we still find ourselves needing to check our library catalog for holdings information.
- Though we get many more titles, we are not choosy about e-book platforms and will utilize ebrary, EBSCO, EBL, and MyiLibrary. Also, we have e-books purchased or subscribed to in packages such as Wiley, Springer, or ScienceDirect. This creates complexity for not only our users but also for staff that support troubleshooting of information resources access.
Data

As a current example, Fall 2016 numbers are provided to give context to the scope of work:

- Total number of titles contained in the spreadsheet from the BookStore: 3,266
- Total number of unduplicated titles: 2,081
- Date the libraries received the list from the BookStore: June 27, 2016
- Number of titles searched and found in the Libraries' catalog: 293
- Number of new titles purchased: 183
- Percentage of found and purchased titles:
  - Found: 14%
  - Purchased: 9%
- Approximate cost for Fall 2016: $15,000
- Cost for calendar year 2016: $32,348 (The libraries uses student fee funds for these purchases and reports out to undergraduate and graduate student governance groups on the spend.)

Future Plans

As we enter our fifth year working on this project, we are progressing with several goals in mind. First, we’re working with the BookStore to explore the feasibility of a more coordinated approach to fulfilling textbook adoption requests. One possibility would be to integrate our systems so that library staff would be able to see textbook requests from faculty as they come in, thereby avoiding the bottleneck that occurs when having to process the lengthy list in a short period of time. Spreading out the workflow in this way would also allow for more communication with faculty as they’re planning for their course.

Assessment is also a goal. Currently, assessing the value of this program is based on calculating the estimated savings and potential impact—we do not yet have clear data on how many students use a library e-book in lieu of purchasing a print textbook.

Finally, we’d like to work more closely in conjunction with our expanding OER efforts at the UA, toward the shared strategic goal of providing students with access to low or no-cost alternatives to traditional textbooks.

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