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PERIODICAL ACQUISITION IN THE CENTRAL LIBRARY OF THE VESZPRÉM UNIVERSITY OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

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In these days, librarians face a difficult situation. Improving bibliographic service, SDI and on-line bibliographies increased the need for original documents, including periodicals. However, price increases severly limit the acquisition possibilities. Apparently, there are two ways out of this dilemma: good acquisition policy and cooperation. The 8th IATUL conference in 1979 was devoted to cooperation. Let us now discuss acquisition policy.

In the Central Library of the Veszprém University of Chemical Engineering, the computerized chemical bibliographic system - based on the data base on magnetic tape of the Chemical Abstract Service - was instituted in 1971. In 1982, the Library established its on-line link with Lockheed. These services provide a complete overview of the world literature of chemistry. However, the duty of libraries does not end with the delivery of bibliographic services. Rather, the libraries have to provide the required documents for their users. Therefore, the objective of our acquisition policy is to secure the most important and the most frequently used periodicals of chemistry and chemical engineering, and to cover as much of the users' requests from our own collection as possible.

Which are the main aids of acquisiton policy? These are

- the various journal evaluation systems
- the statistical reports of the library which deal with its own work.

From among the international journal evaluation systems, the most important one for our library is the Chemical Abstract's list of the 1000 most important periodicals. It is known that the Chemical

Abstracts Service reviews 14000 periodicals, yet over 75% of its abstracts come from 1000 periodicals. From time to time, the CAS reviews the abstract yields of the various journals and updates its list on the first 1000 periodicals. An alphabetic list of the 1000 most important periodicals is also published. This list indicates the ranking order of the respective periodicals. No doubt, this list, with its 1000 periodicals, represents the core of the chemical literature. For a library, which has based its bibliographic service on the magnetic tape form of the CA, it is of paramount importance that as many periodicals of this list be on its stock as possible. In 1982, the Central Library of the Veszprém University of Chemical Engineering subscribed to 888 periodicals. 199 of these belonged to the CAS's list of the 1000 most important periodicals. This list also aids the librarian in decisions on the acquisition of new periodicals. He can check, whether the periodical is included in this list, and what is its ranking.

The other journal - evaluation system is the ISI Journal Citation Reports. Along with the periodicals of chemistry and chemical engineering, this journal includes all the periodicals referred in the Science Citation Index, and ranks them according to different principles. With regard to the collection field of the Central Library of the Veszprém University of Chemical Engineering, this aid is not quite as important as the previous one, yet, occasionally, this is also consulted.

The most important aid in the formulation of periodical acquisition policy is the users' requests statistics which is compiled by the library itself. Periodicals, which are often requested should be included in the collection of the library. It is interesting to note that the most frequently used periodicals in our library - the ones which satisfy the largest number of xerox requests - are not always on the list of the 1000 most important periodicals compiled by the Chemical Abstracts. This is the consequence of the special position of the Veszprém University of Chemical Engineering. The University has specialty-branches, such as the Silicate Technology Department or the Oil and Coal Department, whose periodicals don't feature high on the list of CA. It is more economic to terminate the subscription to periodicals which are only seldom requested, and to obtain the

requested papers as xerox copies. Economics aside, long series of periodicals should not be terminated either, because a large circle of users counts on its existence.

How can one measure the success or the efficacy of acquisition policy? The ratio of the number of xerox copies supplied from the collection of the library and the number of xerox copies obtained by interlibrary loan indicates the efficiency of the acquisition policy of the library. Each year, our library determines the percentage of requests supplied from its own stock. In 1982, the Central Library of the Veszprém University of Chemical Engineering supplied 13337 xerox copies. 9130 of these came from its own periodicals collection, while 4207 came from other libraries. The number of xerox copies obtained by the interlibrary service increased significantly over the past 10 years /89 %/, more rapidly than the number of copies supplied from the library's own stock /53 %/. Nevertheless, the major portion of our users' requests could be supplied from the collection of our library.

Acquisition has three possible forms. The most important form is purchase. When deciding about the purchase of a certain periodical, the librarian can consider all the previously discussed points. From among the 888 periodicals supplied to the Central Library of the Veszprém University of Chemical Engineering, 745 were purchased. A sad fact should be noted here.

This is the prices increase in subscription rates, which last year, amounted to approximately 15 % annually. This increase forces - even the most well-to-do libraries - to reduce the number of their periodicals. However, which periodicals should be discontinued? This is perhaps an even more difficult question than the decision about new acquisitions. Here, we cannot neglect the topic of cooperation. When the discontinuation of a periodical is considered, then we have to examine the number of xerox copies made from it, its ranking in importance, the availability of the same periodical in other Hungarian libraries, and whether or not xerox copies can be obtained from this library within a reasonable period of time. There are four different chemical research institutions in Veszprém. Their libraries carefully check their acquisitions and when cutback is mandated by financial reasons, periodicals already available at the other institutions are considered first for dicontinuation.

A less active form of acquisition is exchange. While the purchase of a periodical depends on the sole discretation of the library, this is not the case with exchange periodicals. Periodicals received in the exchange program are the choice of our partners. In 1982, 143 periodicals /out of the 888/ were obtained as exchange copies. Our exchange program is based on the Hungarian Journal of Industrial Chemistry, a joint publication of the four chemical research institutes located in Veszprém. Financially, our exchange program is balanced; periodicals sent out and received equal in value. While the non-commercial documents obtained in the exchange program are important, there are a few very valuable chemical journals which we obtain in this exchange program: journals like the American Laboratory, Bunseki Kagaku, Crystal Research and Technology, etc.

Another important aspect of acquisition policy is the purchase of missing numbers of existing volumes. The surplus lists of other libraries are consulted first. This activity has proved quite successful over the years. In 1982, 84 volumes were obtained from the collections of other libraries.

The evaluation of the acquisition policy of the Central Library of the Veszprém University for Chemical Engineering, we cannot omit a brief overview of the present situation of periodical acquisition in Hungary. In 1983, financial difficulties mandated a substantial reduction in periodical acquisition. A special committee reduced the subscription requests of each Hungarian library. Though the committee attempted to maintain the present diversity of the Hungarian periodical acquisition, and tried to protect the collections of the main national libraries, the cutbacks hurt most of the libraries quite badly. This led to the proposed solution for 1984: the libraries decide about their acquisitions, but they have to manage their subscriptions from a considerably reduced budget. This might mean that the subscription of some periodicals is simultaneously terminated by all of the libraries involved, and the periodical will not be available in Hungary any longer.

We can only hope that interlibrary cooperation and good acquisition policy preserves the information-level of the Hungarian periodical stock.