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Getting Our Feet Wet: One Library’s Experience with Transactional Access

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more liberal in their compromises may enjoy short-term savings, but their lack of perpetual access provisions may subject them to perils in the future. In contrast, libraries that are uncompromising in their commitment to securing perpetual access provisions can rest assured that their collections will continue to be accessible by future generations. However, they will be investing in the status quo at a time when everything about libraries is changing.

Endnotes
7. See line 80 of Eliot’s poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”
8. See, for example, the pricing model of the University of Chicago Press: http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/user_images/ContentEditor/1252948133675/2010catalog.pdf.

Introduction/History:
Murray State University is a mid-sized regional institution located in rural western Kentucky. The university currently has an enrollment of approximately 11,000 and an FTE of 8383 for the fall semester. In 2005, following years of passive-reallocation of one-time purchase funds to serial holdings funds, Murray State University Libraries was forced to dramatically cut its journal holdings. For years prior, any journal requested by the faculty was purchased with no foresight into the budget growth needed to sustain the subscription. Thus, many of the titles cut in 2005 were used by few, but were relied upon by those who used them. Since 2005, journal prices have continued to increase, bringing Murray State University Libraries to the point of completely exhausting the holdings budget for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. While we are committed to not cutting journal access, we have come to the decision we must re-evaluate the current continuations budget and strategy for providing access to content. We also wanted to tap into the iTunes model of selling items on the unit level rather than the entire entity. Part of this new strategy is the implementation of a transactional access program with Science Direct (Elsevier).

Fall out of Cancellations
Though the 2005 cuts were entirely necessary, they were made with little to no consultation with the faculty who depended upon them. The administration of the Libraries did little to explain or justify such cuts, which were criticized harshly. These cuts occurred within the same fiscal year as a main floor renovation to the main library, which led some teaching faculty to believe that journals were cut to pay for new carpet and other aesthetic amenities. Such a dramatic cut with so little explanation left the libraries being viewed negatively and as having poor fiscal management skills. Due to the high cost of scientific materials specifically, items within those disciplines were hardest hit, and the relationship between the university libraries and the departments of the sciences were the most tumultuous.

In the few years since the 2005 journal titles cut, nearly all of the faculty within the university libraries has been replaced. Some of the journals were cut were restored if required for accreditation, or held higher priority over other titles which could be cut. Though the collaborative relationship between the libraries and those academic departments which were hardest hit by the journal cut has improved, there remains a lasting legacy that seems to cloud communication to this day. It is our mission to repair these past issues and to improve upon our relationships with the entire university community. It is also our mission to provide access to as much content as possible to support our students and faculty.

Research of Programs
Before deciding on which pay-per-view/transactional access program to implement, we set out to review the literature, send out emails to colleagues and listservs, and search publishers’ sites to find available programs. These inquiries provided us with some information, and the response from listserv inquiries resulted in numerous other entities interested in our findings, as many libraries are in the same situation that we found ourselves.

Based on the information that we were able to acquire, we decided that Science Direct Transactional Access would be the best program for us at this point in time. We came to this conclusion for a variety of reasons, including: the content coverage, ease of use, negotiation ability for price due to the fact we had no online content with Science Direct at the time, and it was a program with which one of the authors had familiarity, as he had helped to investigate and implement at a previous institution and so was somewhat aware of the process.

Negotiation of Contract and Pricing
We made initial contact with Science Direct to clarify the differences between their various programs. From there we worked with our representative to establish which program best met our needs and allowed us to purchase articles at the lowest possible cost. Our decision to opt in to the transactional access program and to move our Elsevier journal subscriptions to print-plus-online allowed us to receive a big reduction in the cost of each article purchased through the program. Our journal costs did go up, but because it was and is our plan to transition as much of our print content to online in the near future, this decision made sense both practically and fiscally. The negotiation process on pricing was very easy and was ac-

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Negotiating the contract was also very easy. The contract we received from Elsevier contained almost all of the items that are musts and did not contain any of the items that we initially red flagged as necessary changes, with the exception of legal jurisdiction. Elsevier made all of the changes that we requested. Elsevier still requires (2) original copies of the contract — one they retain and one they mail back to the university after it is signed at their headquarters. Waiting on the contract to be returned took longer than the entire contact negotiation process.

Implementation

For this first implementation of the transactional access program we decided not to authenticate through IP ranges and open the program to the entire university community. We came to this decision due to the fact we had limited funding available and wanted to make sure the program would be well received before we moved on to a larger, more expensive, program. We also have more control over money used and who can use it in this model. With regard to re-opening access to some of the 2005 journal cuts, it was appealing to us to market this solely to faculty of relevant departments (specifically, the sciences) first.

We opted for a process that used username/password authentication. The process of setting up this login/password authentication model was difficult at first, but as we have progressed in the start-up process, we have become more familiar with the functions of assigning faculty to their user group and allocating funds to each of the user groups. The administrator can assign faculty to a group using the admin interface and the faculty’s email address. The system automatically creates an email with authentication information and delivers it to the faculty member.

The second part of this implementation was bringing the faculty members on board. We have just started, but it has proved to be an interesting process.

Communicating with Faculty

Once it was determined that a Pay-Per-View model was a better business plan that would open up thousands more titles and allow for money to be spent at the point of need, university libraries’ faculty began “feeling out” the idea first with the Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology. As a scientist, we knew that he would only approve of such a model if the logic was justifiable with supporting research. Once his approval was given, we decided to leave it up to him to distribute the pre-paid articles to his own faculty, and he recommended that there be no divulging at all — merely the monitoring of usage for this initial year. Thus, all Pay-Per-View purchases would come from the same large pool, and the program’s continuance would be determined by how much each department had used.

The program was revealed at a meeting of the Chairs of the departments within the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology just prior to the fall 2009 semester. Information prepared for this meeting included: a list of all the Science Direct journal titles included in the program, listed both by title and by discipline; a list of the titles available that had been cut in 2005; and a list of the titles available that are frequently (e.g., >5 requests per year) Inter-Library Loaned. The program was met with enthusiasm and thanks, as well as reluctance and suspicion. Some of the department chairs deemed this a progressive move, while others were suspect that this was a move to “get rid of” the journal subscriptions entirely, as well as Inter-Library Loan.

The program rolled out to the faculty via an email invitation from Science Direct. The mechanism was fairly quick, as departmental affiliations were created for statistical and monitoring purposes, and a simple email would affiliate the departmental name with the user’s personal email. After logging into Science Direct, all users would simply have to identify that they are using the departmental access, and all articles are simply one click away.

The Future

In the short-term, we will be continuing to communicate with the targeted faculty groups and get as many of them enrolled in the program as possible. Though we realize the first few weeks of school are hectic for everyone, we would have liked to see more faculty respond in a timely manner to the emails that provided them with their login information.

In the longer-term, we have initially committed to a three year program trial that is fully funded for each of the departments involved. We will be gathering statistics monthly on use by department, to inform the Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology to inform the allocation process for next fiscal year. We will also use these statistics to plan for future expansions or cancellations of our pay-per-view/transactional access programs. Alongside the transactional program, we intend to gather statistics on our current journal subscription usage. We will be looking for opportunities to switch individual titles to transactional access if the usage is consistent, but low. We will also be looking at adding subscriptions, if possible, to items that have consistently high usage within the transactional process. Ultimately, we are looking to ensure that the funds have the highest cost benefit, and that we are offering the most content that we can offer with the funds we are allocated.

Statistics can be gathered/received in two different ways. Science Direct sends out

people profile

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BORN & LIVED: Born in Greencastle, IN. Lived in Southern and Central Indiana.

EDUCATION: Attended Indiana State University – B.S. Elementary Education and Special Education (K-12). Attended IUPUI IU SLIS Indianapolis – MLS.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Currently the Serials and Electronic Resources Librarian for Murray State University Libraries. Member of: ALA, KLA, NASIG.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: I have two daughters of my own (2) and a soon to be adopted nephew (2), so I have very little free time, but have a lot of fun with them.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I do most of my reading online or in an e-format.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Overcomplexity and lousy signage and bad spelling.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Achieve tenure at Murray State University and continue to contribute to the profession.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I think it depends on where you are at; the needs of each individual library vary to such a large degree. I think in the next few years we will have to look at striking a balance between traditional subscriptions, open access models, pay-per-view options, and other sources of content. I think there will have to be give and take on both sides of the aisle, (publishers/vendors and libraries).
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monthly use statements; this report shows the number of articles used by each of our de-
partmental groups and the corresponding cost
analysis. Statistics can also be gathered via the
administrative interface. These statistics are
real time and can be accessed at any time by the
administrator. In addition, the administrator
can set up email alerts to send out a notification
email once a certain budgetary threshold is met
within each of the accounts.

If the program proves to be successful, we
will be looking into expanding the Pay-Per-
View model with other, perhaps more special-
ized, publishers.

Conclusion

Transactional access/pay-per-view allows
libraries to offer expanded access to content for
which they cannot afford traditional subscrip-
tions. Murray State University Libraries
sees transactional access as one new tool in
our arsenal. We do not intend for it to be a
replacement for traditional modes of journal
access, but rather a supplement to our existing
collections. This program may also allow us
to reallocate funds for rarely used journals that
are available via transactional access/pay-per-
view to purchase journals that will be used on
a more frequent basis.

While we are in the beginning stages of this
process we believe the experience has proved
to be an exciting and relatively easy process
thus far. We look forward to continuing our
journey into the realm of transactional access/
pay-per-view.

A Note to Publishers, Vendors
and Librarians

After attending/presenting at the Electronic
Resources Interest group meeting at the 2009
American Libraries Association Conference
in Chicago, IL, we have gained further valuable
insight into the pay-per-view options that are
available. We will be using this information to
inform further program allocations.

After talking with librarians from all over
the country, we also have a better grasp on the
need and interest in such programs. In the
future we can see the need for a vendor such as
EBSCO or SWETS once again providing a
pay-per-view/transactional access model
cross publisher lines, or, rather, an iTunes
model for journals.

We would like to take this closing op-
portunity to challenge a vendor to roll out an
inter-publisher pay-per-view service within the
next few years and ask that fellow librarians
contact their ven-
dors to encourage
them to move toward
offering this type
of service. We in
the academic com-
unity want, but
even more, need a
service like this! If
you build it we will
come! 🎉

Pay-Per-Use Article Delivery at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

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Introduction

Do your users really care about which sub-
scriptions your library holds? Of course not,
they just want the information they need and
they want it quickly. Sure, there are those old
hold-outs who want to know that their favorite
pricey journal is just a walk across campus to
the library, purchased just in case it may one
day be needed. But, for most college libraries
low-use, high-priced journal subscriptions are
no longer sustainable and don’t make much
sense to continue. Many of these high-priced
journal titles don’t even belong in most col-
lege libraries to begin with. An institution that
grants doctorates in chemical engineering can
justify subscribing to The Journal of Polymer
Science. But what about an institution like
UW-Stevens Point that doesn’t grant doctorates
and only offers four master’s degrees (none of
which are in the hard sciences)? Yet, we still
kept that subscription running and the money
flowing — that is until we adopted our pay-per-use program.

Pay-Per-Use

While many journal subscriptions are
pricy, but worth keeping due to high use, there
are an alarming number of journal titles that are
rarely used and cost a fortune. This is where
pay-per-use comes in handy. Pay-per-use is
the practice of purchasing individual journal
articles directly from the publisher instead of
carrying subscriptions. The user becomes a
stronger participant in collection development
by telling us exactly what is needed. The
requested content is delivered to the user just
in time, rather than the library guessing what
might be needed and paying for costly subscrip-
tions just in case they are needed. Of course,
pay-per-use is not the answer for every journal
subscription. There are definite advantages
and disadvantages to consider before moving
forward. See Figure 1 (page 24).

Background

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens
Point is an undergraduate college with only
a handful of graduate-level programs. UW-
Stevens Point is part of the greater University
of Wisconsin System and is one of 13 compre-
hensive (primarily un-
dergraduate) campuses
in the UW System. The
Council of University of
Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL) provides a forum and structure for
library and information planning within the
University of Wisconsin System.

In June 2007, CUWL began pursuing the
idea of pay-per-use article delivery in response
to complaints from a group of faculty mem-
bers from across the various comprehensive
campuses demanding access to “the same
resources Madison has” — referring, in part, to
the Elsevier Science Direct and Wiley Inter-
science subscriptions held by UW-Madison.
The comprehensive UW campuses could not
afford the hefty subscription fees for these
databases, either collectively or individually.
The faculty group also commented that while
interlibrary loan services are highly regarded,
there are many times when article delivery is
too slow through traditional interlibrary loan
services; particularly when faculty are com-
peting for time-sensitive patents or scholarly
publications. These factors made pay-per-use
the best, perhaps the only, option to satisfy
those research demands.

A CUWL committee, in conjunction with
a statewide cooperative library support organiza-
tion (WILS), was able to negotiate discounts
with Wiley and Elsevier for articles purchased
directly from those publishers. CUWL set
aside a pot of money to help the comprehensive
campuses fund this new concept of pay-per-use,
although individual campus libraries were still
responsible for funding a portion of the service.
WILS also developed a simplified workflow to
aid in ease of article ordering. A special queue
was set up in the interlibrary loan system (Il-
LiA) so that any Wiley or Elsevier article
requested via interlibrary loan would automati-
cally be flagged, and library staff could then
easily determine whether or not to provide the
article via the pay-per-use method.

Reason for Implementing at
UW-Stevens Point

For political reasons (or perhaps pure
nostalgia) UW-Stevens Point continued to
subscribe to a number of high-cost, low-use
print-only titles that gathered gobs of dust on
our shelves. While our serials budget remained
stagnant, journal subscription costs continued
to balloon. Unable (and unwilling) to keep
these subscriptions (or switch to electronic)
we had little choice but to cancel several titles.
Journal cancellations are always bad PR for an
academic library — even if we are canceling
subscriptions nobody is reading. This situation
gave us the idea: why not cancel a long list of
high-cost, low-use print journals and offer fast
article delivery (via pay-per-use) in place of the
subscriptions?

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