Group Therapy-CDs with Periodicals

Rosann Bazirjian
Penn State University, rvb9@psulias.psu.edu

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GROUP: (Submitted by Marilyn Gaye, Head, Periodicals Department, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI)

We are currently in the process of reviewing our policies and procedures for dealing with the myriad of CDs that now seem to accompany many of the periodicals we subscribe to and I want to know what others of you do. Do you catalog them all, or selected CDs such as conference proceedings, indexes/abstracts/full text of the periodical itself? Do you discard them? Do you keep them with the journals? etc.

RESPONSE: (Submitted by Eleanore Cook, Serials Coordinator, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC)

Back in 1998, Appalachian State University librarians decided to develop some practical policies for handling CD-ROMs and physical software (floppies, etc.) that come with print materials. We devised procedures that would allow for as much access for patrons as possible, without promising a lot of technical support to go with it. In my opinion, publishers are producing these add-ons to prove that they can, and perhaps with the exception of music CDs they are rarely used.

For our circulating collection, all accompanying electronic pieces are cataloged with the main item. They are shelved next to the main item, carrying the same call number and a material designation (such as "CD-ROM"). These items may be checked out with the print item, or not, depending on the circulation rules for the main item.

At the time of ordering, "if" it is evident that software comes with the printed material (it often is not evident) we strive to determine if there is a choice of platform. Our university supports PC-based software far better than it does Macintosh-based software and if there is a choice we choose the PC option. Bibliographers are supposed to consult with our systems staff if they have any question about accompanying software; we are not supposed to purchase materials that do not support the curriculum or are not compatible with support on campus. Selection guidelines also note that we generally only buy software that has supplementary content that complements a text, not programs that support activities such as spreadsheet creation or word processing. (Such activities are supported through networked licenses to which everyone on campus has access.)

As for periodicals, they are alphabetically arranged in a separate shelving area from the rest of the collection and are not classified. CDs and other accompanying software are simply noted during check-in. They do not need to be sent to Cataloging. Instead, they are routed to the Serials Coordinator who lets them pile up in her office for about six months and then when the pile is about to tip over, she sits down and reviews the materials and sends them on to the Processing. Processing staff then has to pull out their procedures to review how to handle them because it's been six months since they've seen any. This is the ugly truth of the matter and frankly, I do not need to have these materials sitting in my office; they need to routinely go to Processing. In the future, I think I will encourage this to happen!

Processing puts the software in an appropriate plastic jewel case, slightly larger than the one it comes in, tattle-tapes the product and the case as appropriate, labels the case, assigns a barcode and creates an item record in the online system.

Once processed, software/CD-ROMs accompanying periodicals are housed behind the Periodicals Desk, where they can be accessed if asked for; although they never are, from what I've been told. There is also a label on the front cover of the periodical issue if the software accompanies a specific issue that says "Includes CD-ROM; ask at Periodicals Desk." In many cases CD-ROMs cover an entire year of a journal so the CD-ROM is not tied to a specific issue, but rather a duplicate of a volume or a year. All software get their own item record in the catalog, regardless of their relation to the main title, since they are discrete pieces that need circulation control. Print journals at Appalachian do not generally circulate, although faculty have limited checkout privileges and if they wanted to checkout a CD-ROM that came with a journal that would be allowed as well.

Basically, the philosophy has been to try to mimic the circulation of the parent material. Concerns about damage to the software, viruses, etc. have not been realized. Systems staff, worried about the drain on their time, would not promise huge amounts of individual attention to support.

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porting these products. But frankly, it has not been a problem since many patrons ignore the material or don’t know it exists, have little need for help, or else try to use the products and can’t but give up and do not ask for help. It’s hard to know exactly how much use is going on, but periodicals service staff report that the accompanying materials are not requested by patrons.

In my opinion, such accompanying materials are often not so useful, but serve as “bridge” products to Web-based materials. More and more publishers are finding that Web-based materials are easier to control and update, and are not so platform-dependent. I would encourage publishers to focus on Web-ready supplements and forget the CD-ROMs. I think this discussion will be moot sooner rather than later.

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A View from Africa

by Digby Sales (Collection Development Manager, Chancellor Oppenheimer Library, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, South Africa) <digby@uctlib.uct.ac.za>

At the end of last year I returned full of enthusiasm from my second Charleston Conference (the first one being in 1993). It remains an important forum for discussion on acquisition issues despite the increase in its size. However, I am very worried about how we in Africa (and many other parts of the Third World) are going to keep up with the trends in scholarly publishing. Having also attended ALA in San Francisco this June, my concern has only increased.

The push, especially on the STM front, is for journal publishing to appear in only the electronic format, as this will reduce the publishing costs. The change may be welcomed by First World countries, but lack of access to the Internet will sideline many African academics.