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Thinking Outside the Building


by Rob Withers (Assistant to the Dean & University Librarian, King Library 225, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056)

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Column Editor’s Note: The April ATG, edited by Rosann Bazirian, examined issues related to the retention of print titles. In this article, Rob Withers, Assistant to the Dean & University Librarian, Miami University Libraries, expands the topic by reporting library practices as discovered in a survey of OhioLINK libraries to find out their actual practices in regards to the retention of print journals in-house.

In ancient and not-so-ancient times, libraries were conceived of as physical spaces where materials were collected so that people could come and use them on site. Limited amounts of space within libraries and money for supporting overlapping print and electronic subscriptions confront libraries with difficult decisions about how to best provide access to periodicals. In the past, journals have been discarded, stored in microfiche formats or housed in compact shelving. With the advent of electronic journals and the growth of storage facilities, libraries have new options, although decisions about when, why, and how to take advantage of these resources are by no means easy or without prospective drawbacks. This study will examine responses to a survey from academic libraries in the state of Ohio to determine how libraries are providing access to periodicals.

The survey used for this article was emailed to librarians at eighty-three institutions in OhioLINK, a statewide consortium consisting primarily of academic libraries. The survey was emailed to librarians with responsibility for collection development or to the director of the library. Responses were received from twenty-six institutions. Close to half of the responses (46%) came from public institutions. Three quarters (77%) reported offering year degrees, half (50%) offered graduate degrees, and slightly more than two thirds (68%) had a graduate enrollment exceeding 10% of the undergraduate enrollment. A variety of institution sizes were represented, with sizes of less than 2,000 students (29%) 2,000 – 5,000 students (46%), 5,000 – 10,000 students (4%), and more than 10,000 enrolled students (19%). Institutions with less than 5,000 students included a mix of those offering two-year, four-year, and graduate degrees; approximately one third (33%) were state-assisted institutions. Only one institution with 5,000-10,000 students responded to the survey; and institutions with more than 10,000 students include a mix of two-year institutions and institutions granting bachelors and advanced degrees; all of these institutions were state-assisted.

Challenges in Providing Access to Journals

The idea of paying a slight surcharge for providing access to electronic and print formats has become less attractive in light of budget cuts, and budget constraints may have caused many libraries to re-examine the desirability of maintaining overlapping subscriptions to print and electronic versions of the same journal title. Eliminating overlapping subscriptions can free up money which can be used for other title—or for maintaining existing subscriptions. However, libraries must consider risks inherent in relying exclusively on electronic versions of journals. Some electronic packages do not include all advertising, letters to the editor, graphics, and charts contained in the print version. Moreover, in some instances, graphics or charts may be difficult to read when printed from the electronic version, either because of the quality of the file or because color graphics are replaced with black-and-white copies. In addition, electronic versions may be published later than the print version, either because of unintentional publication delays or embargoes of one or more of the most recent issues included in the licensing agreement for the electronic version.

Assessing these prospective challenges is a daunting task, as reviewing the contents and timelines of individual publications entails a substantial investment of time and energy.

Placing materials in storage also has prospective benefits and drawbacks. Advantages of using storage can include the ability to protect materials from vandalism, to preserve older or deteriorating materials, and to provide storage space for journals which are unavailable in existing library facilities. Delivery time for journal articles has typically been swift, and the development of services for delivering articles in electronic format may further increase the speed with which materials can be made available. Arguments against moving journal titles into storage remain, however. Titles in facilities can’t be browsed, and no matter how rapid delivery systems are, some users will be deterred by any delay in accessing articles. Moreover, some studies suggest that older issues of journals may be used regularly in the scholarly process. An additional obstacle can be that users have become attached to traditional locations within the library. Some studies have indicated a decrease in usage of titles in storage facilities.

Local Environment

Libraries in Ohio benefit from membership in OhioLINK, a statewide consortium which includes most academic libraries and some special libraries such as the Cleveland Clinic. Continued on page 93.

Questions & Answers

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copied from a source but was really an original work compiled from a variety of sources. Citing the original source for these terms is not necessary unless the library is trying to be absolutely accurate and indicate the origin of terms as in the OED and other reference works. Another consideration might be the purpose of the glossary. For example, if it is aimed at students, they are less likely to be concerned with the origin of the term than if the audience is librarians, faculty or scholars. Question: A faculty member has received thirty-six microfilm reels containing the Papers of Charles Sumner, 1811-1874, through interlibrary loan to use for research for a work he is writing. How much may he copy under fair use?

Answer: If these papers were unpublished, they are now in the public domain. Works that existed as of January 1, 1978, but which never were published, passed into the public domain at the end of 2002 or life of the author plus seventy years, whichever is greater. For these papers, it would be the end of 2002, and they would now be public domain. If the papers were published, however, it is the publication date which would determine whether the work is still under copyright.

Even if the papers were still under copyright, making copies for scholarship would be covered under fair use applying the four fair use factors. Amount and substantiality used is one of those factors, but there is no absolute in number of words, reels or percents that qualifies as fair use. A court applies all four factors to determine whether a particular use is fair use.

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<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
Announcing...
Alibris Collection Award

The Alibris Collection Award is an annual grant of up to $3,000 worth of books to an academic, public, special, or K-12 library supporting specific collection development projects that advance the mission, priority areas, and goals of the selected library.

The purpose of the Award is to help provide materials for libraries with replacement projects, retrospective collection development projects, or routine collection building needs.

Procedures and Deadline for Award Applications

Each applying library must provide:

- A statement of not more than 300 words concerning the general nature of the desired collection, and the particular need for grant support.
- A list (in electronic format) of the desired titles, ideally cross-checked against the Alibris in-stock inventory.

Award applications should be submitted via email (to libraries@alibris.com), and must be received by December 1, 2003, so that the winning library can be selected and the award announced at the ALA Midwinter 2004 Meeting.

Administration of the Award

The Award is to be administered by the Alibris Collection Award Review Committee, appointed by Alibris, and currently including Michael Keller, University Librarian, Stanford University; Mark Sandler, Collection Development Librarian, University of Michigan; Richard Weatherford, Chairman and Founder of Alibris; and Jack Walsdorf.

For More Information

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BORN & LIVED: Columbus, OH; Wooster, OH; Chapel Hill, NC; Baltimore, MD; Cincinnati, OH.
FAMILY: Two parents, one sister, four nephews and nieces.
FIRST JOB: Circulation Desk Supervisor, UNC Academic Affairs Library.
PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: (in chronological order) Order/Receipts Coordinator, Acquisitions Department, UNC-Chapel Hill; Technical Support Manager, Acquisitions Department UNC-Chapel Hill; Systems/Technical Services Librarian, Western Maryland College; Electronic Information Services Librarian, Miami University, Assistant to the Dean & University Librarian, Miami University.
IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, cook, listen to music.
FAVORITE BOOKS: Never met a book I didn't like.
GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To continue to find new challenges to improving library service and find creative ways of overcoming them.
HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I tell my students that ten years ago, I couldn't have imagined that libraries and the businesses that support them would have changed. I'm not sure what/how things will evolve in the future, only that they will evolve, and in ways which may surprise many people.

Libraries which dropped print subscriptions noted that many students seemed comfortable (or even preoccupied with electronic titles. One respondent observed "print journal access is rapidly becoming a non-issue... we currently have ca. 5x the number of online journals. Electronic delivery is expected." Another respondent observed that her library received "little comment on the print titles. Most users (students in particular) prefer online journals and are pleased that we have so many—although it's NEVER enough." One institution explicitly noted that they viewed the cancellation of print titles duplicated electronically as an opportunity to provide funds for additional titles.

Some libraries surveyed believed that few significant changes in providing print titles are likely to occur in the near future (11.5%). One community college stated that although they believed that there would be fewer print titles, maintaining browseable access to core titles was so important that remaining print titles would need to be even more prominently featured. Others noted both that they did not believe that they would be increasing the number of print titles available (20%), and that print copies would be as prominently located (11.5%). One third (34.6%) indicated that online delivery would become even more popular.

Off-site Storage
Like eliminating print subscriptions to titles available in electronic format, the use of storage facilities provides an opportunity to free up storage space, if not funds for new subscriptions. Approximately 40% of libraries responding to the survey had access to off-site storage, with several others mentioning on-site storage facilities or locations for older/less heavily-used titles separate from the main journals area. Individuals with the power to determine transfer to storage include librarians or librarians working together with faculty members (20% of responses each). Factors which contributed to decisions to transfer titles to off-site storage facilities include the date of publication for the volume (36.4%), usage (18.2%), availability of space for print volumes (18.2%) and availability of online versions of periodicals (18.2%).

Policy for Transferring to Storage

Evaluate based on criteria 79%

Always 7%
Do not cancel 14%

Date 37%

Space issues 18%
Usage 18%
Online availability 18%
Biz of Acq
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Two-thirds of libraries with off-site storage report that hard copies of either individual articles or the entire volume requested by the patron are delivered. One institution noted that people were appreciative of this opportunity because bound journals housed within the library did not circulate. Several institutions (8.8%) reported that articles could be faxes and several (8.8%) also indicated that electronic delivery had been implemented. One institution also expressed interest in adding electronic delivery of information.

Some branch campuses of larger institutions who had access to off-site storage indicated that they did not use these facilities because they did not have sufficient space for journals within their library. Institutions which did use off-site storage noted that people were generally pleased with the service. Advantages cited for relying on off-site storage include more effective use of space within libraries (10%) and increased ability to protect collections (5%). Several institutions noted that patrons were generally satisfied, in some cases noting feedback from the LibQUAL+ study recently conducted at OhioLINK institutions or surveys administered to first-year or graduating students.

However, many of these institutions (19%) expressed concerns about the staff hours required to shift, maintain, and deliver titles transferred to storage and 15% were concerned about delays inherent in shipping titles to patrons. One respondent observed, "Generally patrons know we can get pretty much whatever they want within a day; however, I am sure they would welcome delivery of articles."

In addition to these efforts, libraries also have made efforts to optimize space needed to store journals one site, with nearly all institutions reporting at least some use of microforms, usually for newspapers or older, little-used titles. Although not specifically asked about compact shelving, two institutions mentioned its use. Once institution noted that older, pre-1980 volumes were housed on another floor of the library, separately from more recent volumes. Although this freed up valuable space elsewhere in the library, the survey respondent noted that some patrons were unaware of the more remote location and simply concluded that the titles were not available.

Relocation of older or less frequently used titles need not impede the usefulness of the journal collection to patrons. One community college responding to the survey noted that "few students do extensive research requiring long runs of titles. Most 'research' done by students depends on currency rather than quality/quantity." Interestingly, similar comments were made at a recent statewide conference for colleges and universities.

Conclusion
Scarcity of space and funding are challenging libraries to explore alternative mechanisms for providing access to print copies of journals. Canceling print versions of journals available in electronic format, reducing storage space by using compact shelving or microformed journals, or storing journals all provide opportunities for saving time and/ or space in libraries. Academic libraries in Ohio have ample access to electronic versions of journals, and in many cases, to off-site storage facilities as well. Both of these resources are the product of collaborative efforts among libraries. Reaction to using these resources is predictably mixed, although most institutions, particularly medium- to large-sized ones, have taken advantage of canceling print titles and storing journals. Primary concerns about these strategies include the ability

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RISKY BUSINESS
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)
Japanese entrepreneur Masayoshi Son lost most of his multi-billion dollar fortune when the dot.com bubble burst, but going bust has not diminished his eagerness to pursue risky visions. He spent more than $2 billion building an Ethernet network that offers high speed (12 megabits a second) DSL access to ordinary consumers in Japan at very low cost. Along with internet access, he offers voice-over-IP (in direct competition to telephone companies) and is poised to deliver TV and video-over-IP services. Already deeply in debt, Softbank (Son’s main holding company) has had recourse to some suspiciously creative accounting and been forced to sell off some of its more lucrative holdings. Son may be setting the pace in this game, but there is doubt as to whether he can stay the course.

LAVA LAMP LOTTERY
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)
Lotteries, polling, simulation, encryption—all make use of the mathematical phenomena known as random numbers. Generating a sequence of numbers with no recognizable pattern may sound easy—and indeed it can be done with a pair of dice—but skyrocketing demand in the twentieth & twenty-first centuries has fueled the search for ever more efficient random number generators (RNGs). Currently many RNGs use some source of white noise as the base for their sequences. In 1996 Landon Noll, a cryptographer at Silicon Graphics, introduced a system based on Lava Lites (lava lamps). This year Noll and fellow expert Simon Cooper came up with an even more sophisticated RNG called LavaRaid, which employs a Webcam with its lens cap on, and which they are giving away at www.lavaraid.org.

EIGHT YEAR CAVE QUEST
by Pamela M. Rose (University at Buffalo)
It took eight years to overcome floods, drought and bush fires, but Paul Tacon and colleagues at the Australian Museum in Sydney finally reached Eagles Reach at Wollemi National Park in New South Wales to document 4000-year-old cave drawings first discovered by a bush walker. Accessible only on foot over mountainous terrain, the 203 images include charcoal drawings of kangaroos and lizards, and depictions of half-human, half-animal creatures.

STOP THE STRUGGLE
by Sandra Beehler (Lewis & Clark College)
The coming to power in 1989 of Liberia’s Charles Taylor marked the beginning of fighting that has spread from Liberia to surrounding West African countries of Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Guinea. The French stepped in to maintain a fragile peace in Ivory Coast, likewise the British intervened in Sierra Leone; Guinea’s government managed to sustain itself. The article presents a strong argument for U.S. intervention to get rid of Taylor before the continuing bloodshed in Liberia again spreads to the entire region. In fact, Taylor and Liberian forces loyal to him have been the instigators of much of West Africa’s recent struggles; it is time for him to face the consequences of his deeds.

Endnotes
4. Ackerman, L.G. “Is Age an Appropriate Criterion for Moving Journals to Storage?” Collection Management 26:3 (Fall 2001) 176-177, 180.
5. Ackerman, J; Also discussed in Alexander, Julie S. “Highlights of the ALCTS CMDS Collection Management Issues for Offsite Storage Discussion Group.” Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services v. 23 no.1 (Spring 1999) 129.
8. Hill, 32.