against the grain

CANCELLATION OF PRINT JOURNALS

Regardless of formats of materials, in recent years, HSTS has played an increasingly important role in supporting collection development and in the management of electronic resources.

Being part of the system of libraries of the University of California, including the California Digital Library, presents the Health Sciences Libraries with a unique situation with regard to conducting cancellation projects. The California Digital Library negotiates licenses for packages of electronic journals that are accessible to UC faculty, staff, and students at all ten campuses of the university. There are also bibliographer groups which form part of the advisory structure for the CDL. The bibliographers at UCD’s Health Sciences Libraries participate in one of these groups: the UC Health and Life Sciences group. This group has negotiated access to electronic resources for those UC campuses that collect materials in the health and life sciences. As a result, electronic materials in CDL packages are accessible to all ten campuses or to some campuses. In considering which journals to be candidates for cancellation, the bibliographers from the CHSL and the MCL needed to review journals in CDL’s electronic packages and consult closely with their colleagues at their sister campuses. This aspect is one part of the profound influence the availability of electronic journals had on the cancellation projects.

DECISION-MAKING

STRATEGIES FOR DECISION-MAKING FOR CANCELLATIONS

The usual factors involved in deciding which print journals to cancel have included price, usage, faculty demand, duplication at other libraries on campus and at the UC, and, at times, impact factors. In the last couple of years, this scenario has changed as the situation has evolved and further complicated the process of decision-making. New factors include the reliance on the electronic versions of journals over the print journals, resulting in the cancellation of the “duplicate” print format of journals that also are available in the electronic format.

RELYING ON ELECTRONIC FORMAT AND CONSIDERING PRINT EQUIVALENTS AS “DUPLICATES” TO CONSIDER FOR CANCELLATION

The access to electronic journals was a primary element in our strategies for making decisions about which journals to cancel. Our main strategy was to support one format of an information resource whenever possible, customarily canceling the print format of journals while retaining the electronic equivalents of those journals. The print journals were considered as “duplicates” of their electronic equivalents, a new construct in our considerations for 2004. Previously, duplicates only had been envisaged as duplicate copies of print journals. Another strategy was the maintenance of unique content whenever possible so that one copy of a print journal on campus was retained and duplicate copies of the print journal were cancelled; this reflected the traditional practice of canceling duplicate copies of a print journal in libraries at UCD.

Print Journals as “Duplicates” of Their Electronic Equivalents

At UC, librarians decided to cancel the print duplicates of those electronic journals to which we had stable access. Because there was relatively stable access to the online journals as a result of their being in a package licensed by the CDL, the librarians reasoned that it would be possible to safely cancel the print journals and rely on their electronic equivalents for those packages. Since the CDL-negotiated electronic journals are in packages by publisher, current information about publishers and the journals in each package was important to consider in our decision-making. At UCD’s Health Sciences Libraries, most print journals in these packages were candidates for cancellation; some print journal “duplicates” were kept because of faculty demand or subject area.

Duplicates of Print Journals at UCD

Most duplicates of print journals in the libraries within UCD’s General Library had been cancelled in past cancellation projects. There were a few remaining duplicates that were cancellation candidates for 2004 and 2005.

Price

Naturally, price was a big factor in determining which print journals to cancel. Numerous electronic journals in packages licensed by CDL were priced at a discount for print. This meant that it was necessary to cancel more journals to achieve a significant cost savings.

Usage Statistics

Usage statistics for both the print journals and their electronic counterparts were gathered and carefully scrutinized. Print journals with low use were viewed as candidates for cancellation.

Demand from Faculty

Comments from faculty were valuable and given weight in the decision-making. We communicated with faculty in response to their comments.

Process for Decision-Making

In view of our decision to consider cancelling print journals in CDL’s packages which provided print archives, we relied on lists of the journals in those packages and focused our attention on the journals within our subject areas. In addition, we relied on lists of print journals duplicated at UCD libraries within the General Library and concentrated on possible duplicates to cancel. We created Excel spreadsheets and Access tables, queries and reports to aid in the decision-making process. The General Library posted lists of cancellation candidates on the Web for faculty to view.

Because the General Library is comprised of several departments and two separate technical services units, it was important to have a mechanism to record cancellation decisions to share among library departments and units. The Serials Department in the Shields (Main) Library placed lists of journals in the packages licensed by the CDL that were under review on the library’s networked drive for library department.

continued on page 20