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Acquisitions Archaeology-What Are Our Obligations (These Days)?

Clifford Lynch
Coalition for Networked Information, cliff@cni.org

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Lee Dirks: An Appreciation

by **Clifford Lynch** (Executive Director, Coalition for Networked Information) <cliff@cni.org>

On August 28, 2012, our community suddenly lost **Lee Dirks** when he and his wife **Judy** were killed in Peru in a tragic auto accident. I was asked if I would write an obituary, which I felt unable to do; while I knew Lee quite well professionally, I knew only that he had two young girls, that he cared passionately about them, and that he struggled to balance not just the demands but the dual calls of career and family. Instead, I offer this brief appreciation of some of Lee's professional contributions, as I knew them.

One of the first things I think of when I think of Lee is his personality: his energy, his enthusiasm, his humor, his easy friendship and generous encouragement, his willingness to help, all in a larger-than-life, force-of-nature package. In remembering this wonderful personality, it's easy to overlook how much Lee actually accomplished. Lee's professional and scholarly interests were broad, deep, and often passionate. Further, he made many of his most important contributions working in various groups, committees and task forces, his individual voice submerged and integrated into the collective reports from these efforts. He also changed our world by making introductions, acting as a catalyst, and launching and enabling collaborations.

He was deeply interested in how we would preserve digital records for future generations, in questions at the various intersections of librarianship, archival practice, computer and information sciences, and society and organizations. One of the first times I met him was through a group he was helping to convene with **Betsy Wilson** (University Librarian at the **University of Washington**) that was looking broadly at challenges in archiving born-digital materials (including business and engineering materials, software, data, etc.), and that was exploring the proposition that business, government, and academia all had ideas and insights to bring to bear on these challenges. This is a theme that ran throughout his work. In more recent times, we worked together for several years on a multi-disciplinary task force funded by the **National Science Foundation**, **JISC** in the UK, the **Andrew Mellon Foundation** and others (see *brtf.sdsc.edu*), dealing with sustainable digital preservation, where the focus was expanded to consider economics, organizational responsibilities, and broader social structures relevant to preserving our digital cultural and intellectual heritage. Lee thought very hard about these challenges, and contributed greatly to the work of this task force.

Lee was fascinated by the ways in which scholarly communication were likely to evolve in the coming decades, and frequently frustrated that this evolution wasn't happening fast enough to suit him — he was always looking for opportunities to accelerate this evolutionary process and to explore the places it might lead. He wanted to know what the scientific article of the future would look like, once we got over the requirement that it be reducible to print on paper, and he understood it to exist in an environment of computational tools, data, and interconnections. Here, he worked at the juncture of scholarly publishing, information technology, libraries, software development, the sociology of science, and cyberinfrastructure, and he became well known and well recognized as one of those very unusual individuals who could constructively convene conversations and bridge across these diverse and unruly communities. I had a chance to work with him on a number of these efforts.

Inextricably linked to his interests in the future of scholarly communication were his interests in the changing practices of scholarship, of information technology and data intensive scholarly work, and to the role that cyberinfrastructure could play in supporting these changing practices. He worked with scientists and scholars in a very wide range of disciplines trying to gain insight and spread understanding about these developments. He played a very important part in the creation of the landmark book of essays *The Fourth Paradigm: Data Intensive Scientific Discovery* published by **Microsoft Research**; I think his role was central in ensuring that the linkages between changes in scholarly communication and scholarly practices, that so fascinated him, were fully represented in this book and in subsequent initiatives.

Cyberinfrastructure to support teaching and learning, as well as research, was an area of growing interest for him in recent years. He and I served together on a **National Science Foundation** task force chaired by **Chris Borgman** of the **University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)**, that looked at Cyberlearning, at how the evolving cyberinfrastructure, "big data" (though the term hadn't come into popular usage at the time of the committee report) and analytics, computer aided instruction, and other developments, could change the way we do teaching and learning at all levels. I think that this is an area to which he would have been drawn back in light of current developments, including massive online courses, which had clearly caught his eye, and which we discussed in one of our last chats.

There were other aspects of education that mattered a great deal to him. He was a graduate of the **University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, School of Information and Library Science**, and that remained an important connection; he was engaged and energized by the questions surrounding both skills and jobs for the current and the next generation of information professionals, about what the libraries of the 21st century would be, and what skills would be needed to create and operate them. One of the many projects that he was involved with at the time of his death was a National Academies study, chaired by **Margaret Hedstrom** of the **University of Michigan** and funded by the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**, to examine workforce issues involved with the emerging emphasis on data management and data curation.

Lee also believed very strongly in building alliances and collaborations between corporations like **Microsoft** and academic researchers, librarians, cultural heritage organizations, publishers, educators, citizen-scientists and other groups that shared common interests. Rather than just speculating about the possibilities, or complaining about the lack of progress, he actually did something about it, working with like-minded colleagues like **Tony Hey** at **Microsoft**. Lee was amazingly successful at building these bridges and connections to a depth and breadth that I've never seen done by any other major corporation. This was certainly an important theme of his work and his career, and one in which he genuinely led the way to an extraordinary degree; indeed, I think he changed the way that many people think about what is possible in this area. In the course of this work he did an unbelievable amount of good, some of it in very modest settings, and some in very high-visibility and high-impact ways, for our communities as a whole, but also for **Microsoft** specifically, though I suspect that it will take some years for the scope of his contributions, and the number of important conversations that he initiated, to be fully understand and appreciated.

Thanks Lee, for all that you did for us. You will be greatly missed.

Editor's Note:** See more about **Lee Dirks** in **Greg Tananbaum's** column **I Hear the Train A Comin' — Remembering Lee Dirks, ATG v.24#5**, November 2012, p. 85. — **KS

Acquisitions Archaeology — What Are Our Obligations (These Days)?

Column Editor: **Jesse Holden** (Head, Acquisitions, USC Libraries, University of Southern California) <jholden@usc.edu>

Joyce Ogburn, looking at the controversy of hardcover vs. paperback purchasing by libraries, posed a basic question in November 1993: "What are our obligations?"[1] In searching for an answer to this seemingly simple question, **Ogburn** lays out some of the complex but "subtle expectations" at work within the book market, paraphrased as follows:

- Publishers rely on library purchases of hardcover to support the paperback market.
- Libraries are expected to subsidize scholarly communication, perhaps at the expense of local user population.
- Librarians are expected to expend their content budgets wisely.
- There is a precedent for pricing differentials between hardcover/paperback books established by individual vs. institutional subscriptions.

These expectations generate three further questions about our obligations. Though posed somewhat rhetorically, any answers have implications for determining a library's obligations in the book marketplace. These questions can be generalized from **Ogburn's** discussion as follows:

- Should librarians be concerned about long-term effects of change on vendors?
- Should publishers sell differently formatted and priced versions of a work?

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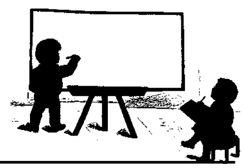
Notes from Mosier — In the House of Wind and Rain



Column Editor: **Scott A. Smith** (Library Director, Langlois Public Library, P.O. Box 127, Langlois, OR 97450) <scott.alan.smith@comcast.net>

"In praise and support of the (very) small." Well, readers, I've just taken up my duties as Library Director of the **Langlois Public Library**, located in Langlois, Oregon. We're the westernmost library in the lower 48, on the south Oregon coast, about halfway between Bandon and Port Orford. (My friend **Dan Masoni**, director at the **Unalaska Public Library** in the Aleutians, reminds me his is THE westernmost library in the U.S.).

Langlois is a very small town blessed with a very good library. It's testimony to how devoted and supportive the patron base is that we have an excellent collection, a strong and active Friends group, an engaged and dedicated board, a fairly new and quite functional building, a great consortium with other libraries in the county, and a great staff. It's a spectacular place in which to live (although in the last week we've had 100-mph winds and parts of Highway 101 have been under water; it's also a tsunami risk zone).

So I'm entering the next phase of my career, directing a library that serves as library, community center, and an almost daily base for a core of patrons who rely on us for books, internet access, DVDs, and more. It's a challenge I very much look forward to.

We're so far south on the coast we're beyond day trippers from Portland or even Eugene, and we're too far north for most Californians. We have a lot of local businesses devoted to sustainable agriculture, grass-fed beef, and life off the grid. Today one of my patrons brought me a huge bag of Matsutake mushrooms (this part of the coast is mushroom — and oyster — heaven); I tried to pay him, but he wouldn't hear of it. These things sell for $25 a pound here and over $100 in Japan.

The dynamics of small public libraries are very different from the academy; it'll be a steep learning curve. Little in library school teaches you about special districts, dealing with boards and patron groups, and the sometimes gritty aspects of managing a small library. That said, the other directors have been enormously gracious (including **Buzzy Nielsen**, now director at the **Hood River Public Library District**, who began his career here); I look forward to working with them.

My work in Holmes County back in Ohio well served to prepare me for this job, and I'm very grateful to the staff there for all their help. After nearly thirty years as a book vendor, it's a refreshing and compelling position to find one in as a library director. I'll keep you posted!

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- Should vendors protect themselves by discouraging a particular format (or formats) in standing orders and approval plans?

Today, a dichotomy between hardcover and paperback seems like relatively simple way to structure the problem of content formats. Of course, a choice between paperback and hardcover is still frequently available for print books. But by posing **Ogburn's** question in the present day and re-contextualizing both the subtle expectations and attendant questions, things become more complicated.

- With the ascension of eBooks to "mainstream" status, do we all have new expectations about the role of libraries in the information marketplace and their underwriting of scholarly communication? If the tension between paperback and hardcover versions was already complicated, what happens when an e-version is sometimes published, made available through a variety of aggregators, and sold in not only traditional ways (librarian-selected, approval plan-supplied) but also via demand- or patron-driven models?
- The question "Should we be concerned about long-term effects of change on vendors" is somewhat moot, as long-term change in publishing is a foregone conclusion. A more productive line of questioning is "Can we determine what the long-term effects of these changes will be, and can we work with vendors to support our libraries' respective missions and users in both the long- and short-term?"
- The question about selling different versions of a work is likewise moot. Not only are different versions published, demand for options in the available versions remains high. Again, the questions we need to ask are completely different. For example: is an eBook embargo really necessary and, if so, how long should the embargo really be? How many simultaneous users are the right number and, if we need more than one, how is the content being used? What kind of technology are users accessing e-text on? Do we really need to put up with restrictive DRM?
- Vendors cannot protect themselves by limiting formats; rather, vendors can only enhance their relevance by making multiple formats available. Flexibility is essential in a market that is changing constantly.

Finally, **Ogburn's** suggestion that obligations may exist that are "neither ethical nor moral, and that perhaps transcend any other responsibilities" puts a problematic spin on the question of obligation, both within its original context as well as in the expanding information universe. Obligations derived from any subtle expectations may well transcend our local situation (i.e., professional obligations) and may well be out of the realm of the moral (i.e., a given obligation may not be easily judged "good" or "bad"). However, as complicated as these questions have been (and continue to be), it is impossible to take our questions out of the realm of ethics (i.e., decisions that are right or wrong). The fact that a given question is difficult (or impossible) to answer *definitively* (therefore making it difficult, if not impossible to judge as good or bad) does not mean solutions cannot be attempted in an ethical way.

What is needed is not a transcendent moral answer to the question of meeting obligations, but rather a fluid and ethical engagement with the vari-

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Out of the Shadows ...
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Spitzform, Peter. "Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Collecting as If Money and Space Mean Something." ***Against the Grain*** v.23#3 (June 2011): 20, 22, 24.

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2. **Spitzform**, "Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Collecting as If Money and Space Mean Something."
3. **Hussong-Christian** and **Goergen-Doll**, "We're Listening: Using Patron Feedback to Assess and Enhance Purchase on Demand."
4. **van Duinkerken**, "Bringing Public Services Experience to Technical Services: Improvements In Practice."
5. **Hussong-Christian** and **Goergen-Doll**, "We're Listening: Using Patron Feedback to Assess and Enhance Purchase on Demand."
6. **Barnhart**, "Want Buy-In? Let Your Students Do the Buying! A Case Study of Course-Integrated Collection Development."

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ous expectations generated among members of our information ecosystem. Keeping in mind both the emerging options (and also restrictions) in content formats and use "rights," as well as the specific mission of each respective library, ethical engagement with our community must account for the variables that go into decisions about content acquisition. Recognizing the mutual dependence of all the stakeholders in the ecosystem (and the expectations that such dependence, in turn, conditions) is a critical starting point for determining our obligations. However, expectations born of mutual dependence do not always imply that a rigid or preset structure of ethical obligations can be imposed. Balancing the library's mission and resource limitations with the shifting economic, legal, and social context in which it functions creates a challenge to universalizing obligations.

The "question" of obligations in terms of ethical decision-making is not really a single question to be answered definitively. Rather, it is more a question of how to think about expectations and related obligations. Beyond some basic, foundational obligations (e.g., ordering selected content, paying invoices, etc.), subtle expectations are just that: expectations. We are more likely (and most productively) to address competing expectations through an approach that favors negotiation to pronouncement. We should frame our approach to ethics as a way of thinking that

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Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Integrating Print Books with eBooks

by **Andrew Welch** (Integrated Systems Project Librarian, Drake University's Cowles Library) <andrew.welch@drake.edu>

and **Teri Koch** (Collection Development Librarian, Drake University's Cowles Library) <teri.koch@drake.edu

Introduction and Background

Cowles Library at **Drake University** has had a successful eBook patron-driven acquisitions program in place — using **E-Book Library (EBL)** — since fall 2009. We are a small, private, academic library with 4623 FTE, and we're one of the first academic libraries in the Midwest to employ PDA. We deem the program to be successful because we have broadened access to materials (with 124,000+ titles available via our catalog) at the point of need at a minimal cost. Because the value of eBooks available to our users is over $10 million, it would obviously not be feasible to purchase these titles "just-in-case." Between short-term loans and purchases, we have spent a total of $37k over the last three years on this project, which averages slightly over $12k per year.

The reasons we decided to expand PDA into print were the same as for the **EBL** program: expanding access to more materials and more effective utilization of the monograph budget. We undertook a study to examine usage of books purchased on our approval plan with Blackwell from 2007-2009. We defined usage to be a checkout or in-house use. During that time we spent $238k on 5858 books. Of those, 1970 (34%) were used at least once, and 3888 (66%) were not used. We consider a "use" to be the measure of success, and given that measure, our approval plan has been less than successful. We are aware that this closely mirrors other studies (Kent, 1979; Task Force on Print Collection Usage, 2010).

Selecting a Vendor

We initiated the **EBL** program as a pilot and have since dedicated a permanent budget line to this form of access. Since we had been successful with PDA eBooks, we sought to determine the feasibility of adding print to the mix. We were looking to avoid duplication between the formats, and we decided early on that we preferred a vendor that could provide an integrated print and electronic book profile. In 2011 we began evaluating a handful of vendors for the integrated PDA pilot, and while most vendors offer both electronic and print formats, we ultimately decided on **Ingram-Coutts** because of their ability to integrate PDA formats the way we desired. We did not previously have a relationship with **Ingram** but had seen their system in operation at **ALA** 2011 in New Orleans and thought it could work for us. The final deciding factor was **Ingram's** ability to meet the technical objectives we had outlined for the request process.

Technical Objectives

We had two technical objectives we hoped to accomplish with the pilot. First, we wanted to make the request process as convenient for the patron as possible. One convenience is the ability to view book availability information before filling out the request form, and the **Ingram** stock-check API allowed us to provide that. Another convenience is the option to rush books when needed; we realized that if the service could make PDA books available to patrons in a few days, rather than a few weeks, it would be an attractive option.

Second, we wanted to provide our Acquisitions Department with the necessary information about both the book (e.g., fund code) and the requester (e.g., patron status) without requiring extra work of either the patron or the Acquisitions Associate. We accomplished this by customizing the URL in the 856|u MARC field and creating the necessary fields in the request form. For example, the fund code is provided by **Ingram** as a parameter of the URL (see the "Customization and APIs" section below for an example), so when the user clicks on the URL to arrive at the request form, the fund code is stored in the form as a hidden field value. Upon form submission, the fund code is then included with the rest of the field values that are emailed to Acquisitions.

Building Profiles with Faculty Involvement

We decided on a pilot project with our four professional programs as subject areas: Business, Journalism, Education, and Pharmacy. We have exceptionally-engaged liaisons from these programs and had already garnered their agreement to work with us on developing profiles for this project. These departments agreed to divert their library monograph allocation to fund the pilot; rather than submit monograph (print or electronic) orders for "just-in-case" purchasing, they would instead let users and faculty in their areas find and purchase materials at the point of need.

Our profiling sessions included representatives from Ingram, the Collection Development Coordinator, the Acquisitions Manager, the

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The technical requirements of **information sharing** present another obstacle. One of the most frequent questions we receive when developing consortial PDA is, "How can I tell whether an eBook is part of the PDA so I don't accidentally order it?" Each vendor database is unique, but at Ingram we developed a way to display PDA activity for each title record in OASIS. When OASIS users access the database with their existing, institution-specific credentials, they can easily identify unpurchased and purchased eBooks from the shared PDA plan. This clear display of consortial PDA activity at the local level can and should affect local ordering practices, and allows librarians to view the kinds of titles being selected for PDA.

Another challenge that must be faced when planning consortial PDA is how to prepare effective **usage data** for each institution involved. Usage data is priceless among academic librarians, who are increasingly forced to justify the relevance and worth of their collections. At **Ingram** and **MyiLibrary**, this feature is dictated by customer need, and our set of reports can be tailored to each consortium's requests. These reports include the amount invoiced each month, and lists of purchased titles including title, subject range (LC, Dewey, NLM), month of purchase, number of unique uses, ISBN, etc. We also provide institutional usage, by IP range and date, for each unique use as well as how many pages were viewed in each user session.

Flexibility is key when embarking on a new project such as consortial PDA. Librarians and vendors must be open to changes in existing policies and procedures, and must approach the process with the understanding that this is not a one-time fix, but an investment in future potential. Challenges and obstacles can be expected but should not be insurmountable.

V. Considerations and Best Practices

The planning and implementation of a consortial PDA program is not (and may never be) an exact science, but there are some common considerations that each library should address early in the process in order to alleviate some of the challenges outlined above.

How will the vendor and profile handle format duplication across the consortium?

Each library will need to determine whether print and eBook duplication should be allowed and, if duplication is to be avoided, how the consortial eBook PDA profile will interact with print approval coverage already in place at individual institutions. Since the number of academic monographs available in electronic format is still relatively low, the consortial PDA profile will most likely have to work in tandem with existing print approval profiles. Librarians will want to decide early on whether they will give precedence to the shared eBook PDA matches, whether they want to delay a print purchase to wait for an eBook to become available, or whether the vendor should cancel an eBook match if one or more institutions already own the print. Some of these decisions are easier to make and manage on an ongoing basis if the shared PDA profile covers very specific subject areas, book types, or publishers.

How will individual libraries handle duplication?

Librarians among all institutions in the consortium should discuss how to handle the challenge of duplication control early in the planning process, and should come to a final decision once the PDA is active. Will librarians be allowed to firm order eBooks for their institution that duplicate consortial PDA records? Will duplication be allowed between eBooks and print books at the local level? Will duplication decisions be handled centrally, or will those decisions be left up to each subject selector? This can take some time to analyze among multiple institutions, so start the discussions early.

Which publishers will be included in the consortial PDA profile?

The vendor must negotiate with publishers at the start of each new consortial PDA plan. Our experience at **Ingram** has shown that this process can take at least three months. A list of desirable publishers should be generated early on in planning, so that they can be contacted well before the target "go live" date. Publisher negotiations also help to dictate pricing models, so the earlier the publishers are involved, the better. Librarians can also assist in this process by demonstrating past eBook usage at their institutions, and by concretely defining their goals for the shared PDA plan — how long do they plan to keep PDA records active? Will they also buy the titles in print? Is the goal to provide more access opportunities to patrons, or is it to build a targeted and permanent collection?

Who will facilitate communication?

Whatever decisions are made regarding consortial PDA practices, they should be communicated clearly to all members of the planning committee, as well as to the librarians at each institution. Effective communication can go a long way toward building trust among members of the consortium and can prevent missteps and potential fiascos along the way.[6] Each person involved in ordering needs to be aware of the repercussions resulting from consortial PDA, as their local collection development and acquisitions practices will most likely be affected.

VI. Conclusion

Consortial PDA can seem like a massive tree of complex roots and branches, but partnering with a vendor can ease some of the stresses and perplexities involved. Not only do vendors have a wealth of historical and current industry knowledge, they also offer added-value services, such as the free MARC records and customized usage reports offered by **Ingram** and **MyiLibrary**. When working with a vendor, the support does not end when the consortial PDA begins. Knowledgeable experts will provide profile maintenance and adjustment, as well as ongoing loads of PDA MARC records, and will continue to acquire content from new publishers as the plan progresses.

Is consortial PDA a viable contender in the future of collection development? Most likely. This model supports collaboration and best use of decreased funding, and from our position in the vendor universe, interest is rapidly rising. Our growing experience at **Ingram** has proven that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to consortial PDA. It will continue to evolve and be dictated by customer demand and publisher negotiation (and re-negotiation). We should be prepared to confront new challenges and barriers along the way, and to cultivate a shifting set of best practices to share with our colleagues. Each new trial will add to our growing knowledge base, allowing us to navigate the forest with growing confidence and ease.

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translates into "right" action. But in considering what is right, we should avoid both the automatic jump to moral absolutism (pronouncement) or a fall back to a transcendent universal (formula): the variables at play are such that we cannot always foresee or predetermine what a "good" or "best" outcome would look like. We do not have either the tools to structure such an outcome nor the consensus to build that outcome even when we can envision it. However, we must operationalize and *conversationalize* our ethics locally and within the broader community to foster decisions that allow us to meet obligations in the present while creating the conditions for a future where we meet unforeseen obligations impacted by myriad variables outside of our control.

Endnotes

Joyce Ogburn. "Acquiring Minds Want to Know: What Are Our Obligations?" ***Against the Grain***, v.5#5, Nov 1993, p. 46.