How Technology Fee Funding Transformed Collection Decisions at the University of Central Florida

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**Recommended Citation**  
DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6472](http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6472)

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How Technology Fee Funding Transformed Collection Decisions at the University of Central Florida

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Introduction
In 2007, the Florida Legislature addressed the need for technology funding at the eleven state universities. The change permitted each university to collect technology fees from students at the rate of 5% of tuition. The new fees went into effect at the start of the 2009-2010 academic year. Each university is able to determine the process for distribution of the funds. The University of Central Florida made the decision to establish a review committee consisting of sixteen members. A call for proposals is sent out each year that begins a competitive bid process by which university departments are permitted to submit proposals. Submissions must follow a detailed set of guidelines to ensure that the final product will be designed to enhance instructional technology resources for students and faculty. Each year the process becomes more competitive with requests for funding far exceeding the available funds.

The UCF Libraries has received over $1.2M in technology fee funding since 2009 to fund the purchase of library materials. The availability of these funds impacted the acquisitions process in several ways. The Technology Fee process transformed how the library selects online materials, it raised expectations for how content can be acquired and delivered, and resulted in successfully acquiring previously unattainable content at deeply discounted prices.

Overview of the Technology Fee Process at UCF
Revenue generated by the Technology Fee is allocated by the UCF Technology Fee Committee, which consists of sixteen members. The Technology Fee Committee issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the fall of each academic year. Each RFP focuses on projects that enhance instructional technology resources for students and faculty. The committee defines instructional technology as information technology resources, services, or software that directly supports the development and delivery of instruction. UCF administrators decided that the technology fee funds would be awarded through a competitive bid process.

The UCF Libraries has been successful with seven collection based proposals. Most of the successful proposals have shared the same key aspects. The focus has been on e-content that is available 24/7, with unlimited simultaneous access, IP authentication, and perpetual rights. The goal continues to be providing new and exciting content that will enhance the education and research experience. After four years of this process the UCF Libraries has a proven track record developing outstanding proposals. The following list outlines the successful technology fee proposals since the program started in 2009.

Successful Technology Fee Proposals

| 2010-2011 | Oxford Scholarship Online and Oxford Handbooks Online |
| 2010-2011 | Springer Complete Backfiles & Protocols |
| 2011-2012 | Cambridge Books Online |
| 2011-2012 | Sage Backfiles |
| 2012-2013 | Alexander Street Press Streaming Video Collections |
| 2012-2013 | VHS to DVD Transition |

A Transformation at UCF
During the planning for the first proposal, members of the library committee realized the impact that this process was going to have on the future direction of eBook acquisitions at UCF. As late as 2008, the University of Central Florida Libraries did not have a focused approach regarding the migration to eBooks. A few purchases of large collections from NetLibrary (now EBSCO E-books) and Early English Books Online represented the bulk of eBook acquisitions. With the first technology fee award for Springer Complete E-books 2005-2009, the library began to rethink how eBooks fit into the collection development philosophy.

In 2010, the library began to consider the possibility of the technology fee as a long-term benefit. Those on the original committee began to think about what type of product would next benefit. Those on the original committee began to think about what type of product would next benefit. Those on the original committee began to think about what type of product would next benefit.

About the UCF Libraries

- Established in 1963
- Total enrollment 59,767
- Total degree programs 212
- $155 million in research funding
- $1.4 billion operating budget

About the University of Central Florida

- $6,407,206 materials budget in 2011-12
- 39,253 active subscriptions
- 44 Librarians
- Total enrollment 59,767
- Total degree programs 212
- $155 million in research funding
- $1.4 billion operating budget

The Technology Fee has become a center-piece of budget discussions as if it is guaranteed to the library. While success is not guaranteed, it is difficult to imagine not receiving funding after observing the impact the money has had on the library. The funding is necessary to offset continued budgetary shortfalls and the impact of inflation on subscriptions. The technology fee funding has become part of the strategic approach the library is using to continue filling gaps in the collection, explore new technologies for delivery, and provide access to large collections of highly regarded content.

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Gifting, Funding, Innovating: An Acquisitions Transformation

by Tiffany Russell (Collection Management Librarian, North Carolina A&T State University) <tbrussel@ncat.edu>

Introduction

Within the library, Technical Services has long been a hidden segment of the library that handles acquisition, cataloging, and processing of all physical library materials. This mysterious department is considered quiet, locked away, and even unsocial. In fact, I once shared this opinion myself; as a paraprofessional working in public services in the early days I never saw anyone that worked in technical services, let alone had any grasp on what it was they did all day.

Background

When I first embarked upon the role as Head of Technical Services after working in the department for less than two years, I was ill prepared for all that was going to be thrust upon me. As a young librarian I was both excited and apprehensive about the future. A change in the tide was clearly evident.

We all knew that a great transformation was underway in technical services that had been transpiring for years. With the advent of new technologies, the days of the traditional library position was fading. Studies have been done on how technology has changed the way we all use the library and do research. It is my experience that people will use information that is easy to find, even unreliable information, if it requires little effort on their part. And despite all the information literacy classes that librarians instruct at our library, students and other patrons rarely get enough exposure to the library information systems, such as the Web catalog and database collections. Today, instead of using the library, many of our potential users — including myself and my colleagues — often search Google. So it is an uphill battle. (Well, in reality the battle is over.) And in light of this dire situation, our library has come up with a solution that we hope will not be a temporary one to the mire before us.

Changes in Technical Services

The evolution of the library and budget shortfall due to the economic downturn has left our technical services department with little to do and minimal opportunity to showcase our worth. Over the last two academic years our library has experienced a budget reduction that has eliminated our ability to acquire new print materials. Working with a smaller materials budget and no “soft” money (end-of-year funds given to the library which are used to pay the upcoming fiscal year invoices early) from the university has reduced our budget by twenty-eight percent. The normal allocation for print is completely depleted and it became apparent rather quickly that it is gone for good. With no new print materials to select, order, catalog, or process, we were forced to think about the immediate future for our own livelihood.

In an attempt to carve out another niche for ourselves, we have ventured into our dark storage rooms to uncover and evaluate our historic gift collection that over the years had grown to immense proportions.

Our gift collection is stored in specific areas throughout the library. Although valuable because of their age and content, the idea of managing these materials was not met with great enthusiasm. The books are older, dusty, and unattractive. Working in acquisitions during...