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# Transforming Acquisitions and Collection Services: Perspectives on Collaboration Within and Across Libraries

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## Perspectives on Collaboration Within and Across Libraries

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# Introduction

**Chuck Thomas**

A book about contemporary and emerging practices in library acquisitions and collection services could have gone in many different directions. These areas of library operations are differently structured across thousands of organizations, and no single work could possibly convey the full breadth of innovations and collaborations occurring in libraries. Working within these obvious limitations, the editorial team recruited a group of authors and co-authors whose contributions reflect this diversity. The resulting collection of chapters is grouped thematically according to library activities and provides materials of interest to a broad range of readers.

Most chapters explain the local circumstances or problems that led to new collaborations and transformations of acquisitions and collection services. Whether readers are interested in the entire book or in discrete sections dealing with specific activities, it might be beneficial to consider briefly the larger-scale factors driving new innovations and collaborations across most libraries in North America and abroad. A partial list of these influences, in no particular order, includes

- declining library budgets and staffing;
- new library tools and workflows for acquiring, describing, and discovering information;
- libraries aggressively removing physical collections and repurposing space;

- ongoing transitions to electronic information across all domains;
- shifts in library focus away from local collections toward access and services;
- lack of new funding for new services, combined with reluctance to discard older services;
- evolving customer expectations in a networked world of e-commerce and self-service;
- demographic changes in the customer base for libraries;
- growth of distance learning and connected learning;
- emergence of new information services vacuums not being filled adequately by other organizations and entities;
- disruptive technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence;
- competition from publishers, vendors, and others who are now providing integrated information, services, and tools; and
- increasingly affordable and available technologies and tools for traditional library customers to do it themselves.

At first glance, some of these factors may seem redundant or even contradictory, but if asked, most library administrators and staff could provide multiple examples for most items in the list, and the ways they exert internal and external pressure for changes. Because changes and adaptations are so necessary for libraries today, innovation and new collaborations are often the only option available to organizations with limited resources. The old adage about necessity being the mother of invention could not be more true in these circumstances. Collaborations with new partners help organizations distribute both the potential risks and rewards of trying new approaches.

For this reason, from the beginning, collaboration has been the unifying thread for this entire work. Library acquisitions and collection services departments often function at the intersection of multiple library operations (e.g., collection management, e-resources licensing, cataloging, public services, interlibrary borrowing and lending) and are in many ways ideal for collaboration and experimentation. Of course, collaboration can take many forms and frequently entails unique mixtures of partners and interdependencies. As work on this book progressed, the editorial team realized that a loose definition of "collaboration" strengthened the work overall and reinforced the idea that collaborations are always contextual and variable—one size does not fit all. Collaborations in libraries can include many different ways of working with others, both inside and outside library organizations. The same is true of library consortia, which also are featured in this book and are inherently collaborative but in many different ways.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to current library acquisitions and collection services activities. Instead, it is meant to give library directors, technical services managers, and managers handling acquisitions and collections some new ideas and examples of ways collaboration and innovation are transforming these areas of library activity.

An editorial project of this magnitude has been challenging, but it has also proved to be a highly rewarding experience. The depth and breadth of the final collection of contributed chapters is remarkable. Altogether, 57 people contributed to the effort. Beyond writing and editing, they provided thoughtful insights about how to best form this book, making a substantive positive impact on its final form. Thanks to them all. Co-editor Michelle Flinchbaugh managed this project. Thanks to her library, the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery, and her university, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), for granting her research leave for this project. Thanks also to her coworkers, Lynda Aldana, Jennifer Fitch, and Tricia Flester, who covered her work during the project. Thanks to co-editors Vicki Sipe and Rob Tench, whose work went above and beyond. Also, thanks to author and experienced copy editor Lisa Hopkins, who has copy edited and proofread portions of the book and checked every reference for accuracy. Finally, thanks to Katina Strauch for offering the opportunity to create this book and encouraging us to follow our interests, and to Purdue University Press for publishing it.

# PART 1

# *Collaborations Between Acquisitions and Collection Management*

**EDITED BY ROB TENCH**

Collaboration between acquisitions and collection management has a long and symbiotic tradition. If not quite bonded together as closely as love and marriage and horse and carriage, the relationship has been closely intertwined. Yet for decades, especially when print was dominant, the line between the duties of acquisitions and collection management was clear. Collection development librarians and subject bibliographers analyzed their collections, selected materials, and submitted requests. In turn, acquisitions staff placed orders, received materials, and paid invoices. In smaller libraries, one person occasionally wore both hats. But more often than not, the volume of work necessitated some separation into different departments. Yet the workload seemed manageable and fairly straightforward.

However, with the explosion of new formats, assessment tools, and purchase options, those clear lines of demarcation started to blur. The world of collection development and acquisitions quickly evolved into a maze of licensing agreements, e-resources, data sets, purchase accountability, and usage metrics. What had seemed to be a simple and somewhat direct process was now much more complicated and complex. New buzz terms and phrases entered into the vernacular of acquisitions and collection management: the big deal, “just in time” acquisitions, return on investment, patron-driven acquisitions, evidence-based acquisitions, and many others. As a result of these new demands, acquisitions and collection management librarians have found themselves sharing responsibilities, merging tasks, and overlapping duties.

It is within the context of these evolving elements of change and complexity that the authors in part 1 share their experiences and insights on collaboration between acquisitions and collection management. For example, Jennifer Culley addresses the issue of shared responsibilities in her chapter "Case Study at The University of Southern Mississippi: Merging the Acquisitions and Collection Management Positions." Culley details how her institution merged acquisitions and collection management duties to create a new job, collection management and acquisitions librarian, several years after a library restructure eliminated the position of associate dean for collections and scholarly communication. It helped that library administration realized how critical acquisitions and collection management functions were to the library's mission. For library administration, the upside of merging the positions, such as improving communications in the library and across campus, creating a more efficient library operation, and clearly defining acquisitions and collection management roles, far outweighed the challenge of one person having a heavy but manageable workload.

Improving workflows is also a central theme of Del Williams and Christina Mayberry's chapter, "Acquisitions and Collection Management Collaborations: Weathering the Storm With Stagnant Budgets and Unpredictable Vendor Landscapes." The authors outline a number of ways their acquisitions and collection development departments collaborated to improve work processes, all the while dealing with reduced purchasing power, higher costs for resources, and limited purchasing options because of fewer vendors in the marketplace. They focus particularly on the challenge of implementing a new streaming video service and the ways their departments successfully collaborated to make it work.

The ever-looming threat and reality of budget cuts and reduced allocations has had a profound influence on acquisitions and collection management collaboration. Quite often, it has led directly to collaboration almost out of necessity. Just as frequently, the results of those collaborations in addressing budget issues have been effective and long-lasting. In "Collaborative Forecasting When the Crystal

Ball Shatters: Using Pilot Programs to Frame Strategic Direction," Lynn Wiley and George Gottschalk of the University of Illinois detail their library's push to collaboratively institute a number of pilot initiatives, including new approval plans, e-book and print purchasing programs, and demand-driven models to meet user needs and overcome draconian budget cuts. The takeaways from their efforts have put their library in an excellent place to meet its goals.

Collaboration between acquisitions and collection management often extends into other departments and constituencies across campus. Scott Piepenburg of Brodart Library Services writes about such a multi-departmental collaboration in "Collaborative Collection Development: Leveraging the Skills of Cataloging Staff to Perform Collection Development." In this chapter he describes how cataloging worked collaboratively with acquisitions and collection development in defining criteria for item selection and processing of a large donation of LPs. Acquisitions, cataloging, collection management, and library liaisons worked together to process the donation. Benefits from the collaboration included authority holdings being updated, stronger bonds being established between acquisitions and cataloging, and teaching faculty developing a new awareness about library resources and services.

By and large, several themes emerge from a reading of these enlightening and thought-provoking chapters. First, the spirit of collaboration runs deep between acquisitions and collection management despite the changing landscape of librarianship. Second, acquisitions and collection development librarians still find ways to effectively serve their patrons no matter the challenge—lack of funds, reduced staff, or oversized workloads. Third, the evolutionary nature of acquisitions and collection development does not deter or impede the ongoing tradition of collaboration. In fact, as these essays so capably demonstrate, their tradition of cooperation and collaboration is growing stronger and is more essential than ever in filling the scholarly demands of faculty, students, and researchers.

CHAPTER 1

# Collaborative Forecasting When the Crystal Ball Shatters: Using Pilot Programs to Frame Strategic Directions

**Lynn Wiley and George Gottschalk**

In the old days, the monographic purchase process was a quieter affair. Selectors took their allocated funds and cast them across the universe of printed materials. Gazing into their crystal ball, selectors made their best predictions about which titles might generate circulation and bought as many of those titles as funds would allow. Granted, this paints a simplistic picture rooted in the nostalgia of "just in case" collection models. Forecasting needs and use has never been an exact science or an easy art. Still, it is not a hard argument to sell to suggest that the table has upended and even this imperfect crystal ball has been shattered in the much-complicated landscape of today.

Building an outstanding library collection requires many experts to work together. There is a lot of labor and collaboration involved in covering the research output available globally, combined with the need to prioritize purchases to meet campus demands. Research libraries are also committed to maintaining areas of particular breadth and depth for scholars worldwide. Large university libraries have been hard-pressed to keep up with the cost of resources, especially with monograph purchasing declining worldwide, a trend once again confirmed by the latest ARL (Association of Research Libraries) statistics on library expenditures.[1] Many other factors besides money impact collection work, including staffing issues, technology options, changes in publishing, and purchase models. Scholarly communication initiatives along with regional, state, and local partnerships also play a part. The combined factors often mean unpredictable and unintended consequences. This chapter focuses on acquisition collaborations when fortunes change and crystal balls fail the shatterproof test.

The specific emphasis here is on how collaborative pilot projects provide opportunities to identify and acquire monographic materials as stewarded by acquisitions. Experimental programs help practitioners learn more about user preferences and publisher and vendor options for buying and allow them to gain support to evolve entrenched selection and order models and funding. The chapter presents a brief history of monograph purchasing at a major research library and describes how new purchase models were introduced and then formalized by working with acquisitions, vendors, subject specialists, consortia member libraries, and other stakeholders across all library units. It also covers recent collaborations to buy e-books as well as partnerships with vendors and publishers to assess available e-format availability and user discovery. The proposals have helped to build the framework for redrawing purchase strategies to obtain monograph academic content. All the pilots resulted in data and collaborative input to assist in enhancing partnerships with vendors, publishers, and bibliographers to better guarantee access to new monograph output as preferred by users—all especially needed when a forecasting crystal ball gets cloudy!

## UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA–CHAMPAIGN LIBRARY

The University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign Library (U of I Library) serves over 47,000 students and 10,000 faculty and staff. It houses one of North America's largest collections, with over 24 million tangible items. Forty-five subject bibliographers (aka selectors) are responsible for covering the research and teaching needs of specific disciplines. Acquisitions provides the tools via vendors to help them obtain the best academic research content for their disciplines in the most cost-effective way. If there is anything definitive we can say about the role of acquisitions departments, it is that acquisitions staff fulfill a primary role as facilitators. As such, each purchase option that presents itself to libraries is facilitated through acquisitions staff, who must manage all the day-to-day details of purchase options and field questions about how such purchase options impact vested parties. As purchase options proliferate along with access-based models, acquisitions staff are called upon to take on new responsibilities and support new workflows.

Bibliographers at the U of I Library have allocations for their subject areas that reflect recurring needs. For example, subscriptions as well as one-time funds are typically used for a title-by-title book or a collection purchase. One centralized fund covers core monograph purchases, especially needed when subject funds may be hard-pressed to cover their recurring costs. Recurring and primarily online resources comprise two-thirds of the entire collections budget. The budget stalemate situation in the State of Illinois necessitated cuts to the library operating costs and staffing. No inflation has been available for several years for the recurring resources. Furthermore, central and subject book funds are not routinely increased. However, innovative projects—such as a grant to maximize those funds while expanding access—do have the potential to gain short-term new funding until such time that a reallocation is evidenced. To help readers understand monographic purchase evolution at the U of I, a description of an initial event that kick-started many changes that required and benefited from a collaborative effort in reaction to a crisis is provided below.

## OUT WITH THE OLD: IN WITH THE NEW

Until 2005, domestic book buying at the U of I Library was accomplished with a traditional approval plan. Here, the library received new print monographs from a core group of trade and university press publishers from one vendor on a weekly basis. A profile defined the academic content, which was matched to output as it was released by publishers. The disciplines covered were comprehensive. Certain types of monographs were not included, such as odd sizes or bindings, and price per book was capped. Many thousands of titles were acquired annually with a centrally managed pool covering the costs. Over time, publishing output grew with no changes to the profile or increases to the central pool. Despite the intent to do so, few titles received on approval were returned. Bibliographers reviewed titles on approval shelves weekly and kept 99%. Every selection made was recorded with its price, suballocation fund (of the central pool), and permanent location. By 2005, the plan was costing twice the amount allocated, with funds to cover the annual expends taken from year-end unspent monies. Unfortunately, those funds could no longer be relied upon in subsequent years.

The new unit head who began in 2005 was tasked to fix the problem. The selection records provided good data to devise a new allocation formula to match subjects to actual funds available. This required drastic reductions and a new selection and order process. The vendor was instructed to reduce deliveries immediately. A task force convened under the Collection Development Committee (CDC), a representative body covering all subjects as defined by the library divisions. The divisions covered technical and central public services, life sciences, physical sciences and engineering, humanities, social sciences, and special collections. The committee's charge was to develop a long-range plan to help ensure good communication library-wide about monograph purchases. Bibliographers worked together to make sure interdisciplinary fields were covered and areas studies were folded into the plan to choose books in English for their respective areas. Talking with all the bibliographers allowed for conversations about the whole collection and not just one discipline. This resulted in more awareness of the needs of the entire collection and a mandate to be more selective. To paraphrase one librarian: "I did love the ability to see all those books and review them. And as they were here already, I was like a kid in a candy store and wanted all of it. But a selective process is best for users." This process brought all bibliographers together to find a solution and had the added benefit of generating a shared vision of how to steward the collection.

## THE "NEW" GETS BETTER

The aftermath of the cutbacks was difficult as new acquisitions processes had to be set up due to the profile changes and the ensuing high level of returns needed to stay within each subject allocation. It was difficult to see what critical titles were missed and proved to be very staff-intensive to return books that were rejected along with removing their records. Therefore, within one year all weekly autoships (books sent automatically when they match an approval profile) were dropped in favor of title ordering based on online records supplied by the vendor. Acquisitions worked with the task force to set up a temporary Excel-based online solution to facilitate selection, ordering, fund tracking, and bibliographic record management. It was hoped that the current vendor would release a new system soon, but with time short for an integrated solution to meet all the stakeholders' needs, the task force elected to put out a competitive bid for vendors. Working with that temporary procedure gave all bibliographers a good grounding in what was needed for a more comprehensive book-buying solution. A cross-functional team was appointed that included some of the original task force bibliographers as well as acquisitions, purchasing, and contract staff to develop and post a competitive bid for a better system.

It is worth noting that monograph access at the U of I (when print was dominant) was greatly facilitated by CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois). A majority of public and private libraries in Illinois are members of this consortium (86 currently). Many are also part of the I-Share system, which allows central access to bibliographic records, holdings, item status, and patron records as well as unmediated book borrowing. (In 2017 I-Share held 3 million bibliographic records with 36.7 million items.) That service was backed by a daily pickup and delivery service subsidized by the State (see https://www.carli.illinois.edu/). Public libraries may request loans on behalf of their users. An analysis of five years of buying history within that I-Share membership had just been completed to look at overlaps and unique titles as well as use. The data revealed good trends in sharing resources but also evidence that a large number of titles were being duplicated multiple times across the membership. The question was posed: how do we reduce that overlap and broaden purchasing to share across larger sets of titles? CARLI members recommended a new five-copy limit guideline for the shared collection to discourage redundancy and instead encourage diversified buying. The study results may be found in a 2011 article by Wiley, Chrzastowski, and Baker.[2]

This recommendation is pertinent not only as a logical outcome of the collaborative study but also because the request for proposal (RFP) afforded an opportunity to ask vendors to facilitate this. They were asked to describe a service that allows for a quick review of partner holdings at the purchase point to enhance adherence to the guideline. This feature was added to the RFP requirements. CARLI member libraries were invited to participate in the RFP open sessions to select a new vendor. The RFP process resulted in a contract awarded to YBP Library Services in 2008, and the terms were also offered to CARLI member libraries to switch to YBP services if desired. System implementation transitioning to YBP monograph ordering went extremely well thanks to the shared goals of all the stakeholders, with a primary one being to get it operating quickly!

The bibliographers worked together to profile their subject parameters. YBP provided hands-on, in-depth, on-site help to accomplish this in one week with agreement on a publisher list, non-subject parameters, and a comprehensive plan to cover all subjects. Training followed. It was with great relief that the temporary solution was replaced with a much-improved discovery and order platform from YBP that included weekly slips easily retrieved for selection. Few bibliographers opted for autoships rather than a slip to order that book. Instead, they preferred to do title ordering and prioritize purchasing, leaving wish list items for later as funds allowed. The profile matched many more titles than could be afforded, but the records and platform provided good information to allow for judicious selections. The entire workflow was seamless, with immediate relief in saved labor. The platform provided easy access to orders, funds used, and tracking of each order status. Additionally, the platform provided immediate information about consortia holdings to reduce overlaps.

The collaboration that happened due to both cutbacks and the holdings study resulted in more focused book selections and a better use of resources locally and across the state. For a little time, the U of I had one integrated system for purchasing domestic monographs. However, a proliferation of new purchase models, along with an acceleration in e-book offerings and new vendors, provided opportunities and complications, made even more interesting as the Great Recession was in full swing. Demand-driven programs was one new model trending.

## PURCHASE ON DEMAND ACQUISITIONS (PDA) PILOTS

### CARLI I-Share Pilot to Buy Unique Titles to Share Statewide

CARLI already had a long-standing program for patron-initiated borrowing that worked extremely well for many years with print books and when member libraries were able to buy books to share. The millions of holdings in I-Share fulfilled hundreds of thousands of patron-initiated requests over many years. Figure 1.1 illustrates the level of sharing at this time (2008). These user-initiated services were routine for the CARLI membership and were made possible because of a long history of collaboration in sharing resources across the state. The pilots summarized below are fully described in a 2011 article by Clarage and Wiley.[3] Summaries describe the collaboration, results, lessons learned, and impact on acquisitions.

One other outcome of the CARLI holdings analysis was that it showed what members were not buying. YBP provided data on publishing output to match the years of the study to reveal the gap in academic content not acquired. Fresh from a recommendation to support more diversified purchasing, discussion ensued on purchasing options and whether users wanted that material. The implementation of YBP and its batch load process to add records to the Voyager catalog resulted in some innovative thinking about user access to titles not owned.

Was it possible to use I-Share to help purchase materials utilizing services at YBP and the Voyager requesting utilities? In

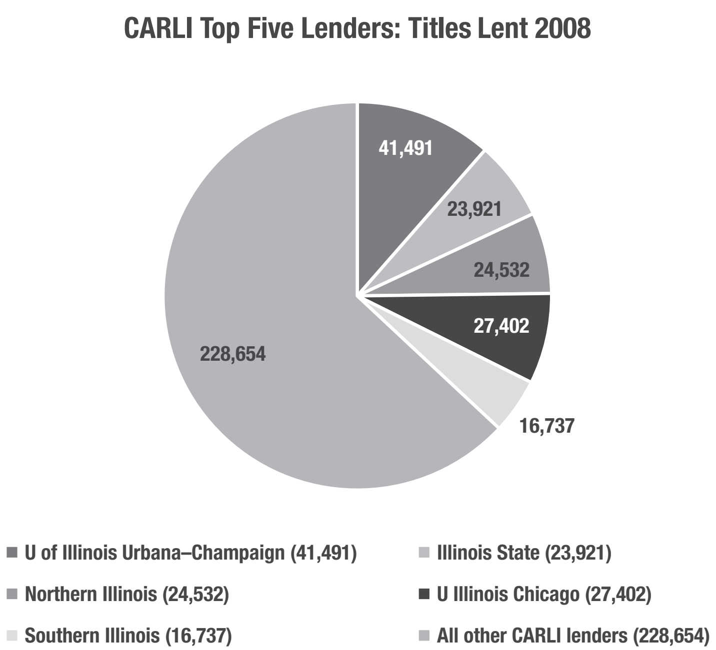


**Figure 1.1** CARLI top five Lenders: Titles lent 2008.

early 2009, the U of I Library submitted a proposal to the CARLI Products and Services Vetting Committee to test a PDA service for book purchasing. The proposal, “Building on Our Shared I-Share Success: Extending User Requesting to Support New User Initiated Book Purchases,” was approved in 2009, and a CARLI task force was formed to develop and implement the pilot. CARLI and U of I provided matching funds for a total of $10,000 to test a demand purchase program using YBP’s assistance to select unique titles and load them into I-Share for access by all member library users. With records selected, they were imported into I-Share with special purchase on demand text to allow users to request them for purchase to an approved CARLI hold location of their choice. Each request was vetted by staff before any title was purchased. The funds were used quickly, with 190 titles made available via delivery to users statewide. Staff searched every request and did not fill an order if a CARLI copy was available. These were simply forwarded on to a holding library to fulfill. Some titles were either not suitable in readership level for an academic library or too expensive to add, pointing to the need to tighten the title selections. Recipients of the requested titles and the U of I staff were surveyed about the pilot via different mechanisms, the former by anonymous paper surveys sent with their requested book and the latter by an online form that had an option for name input. Users who returned the survey (50 from the 190 whose requests were filled) unanimously supported the service. Staff provided feedback on how to improve the service, with excellent suggestions on how to edit the request to purchase text in each record to best explain the program to users requesting a title on demand. CARLI and U of I Acquisitions partnered well with YBP to make the program happen. It provided excellent proof of concept as well as very useful information on profiling and record loading to best meet the project goals.

The proof of concept PDA program done by CARLI was an early portent for a new trend soon to be adopted by many libraries. The Association of College and Research Libraries’ 2010 top 10 trends in academic libraries listed PDA as a new force in collection development, explaining, “Academic library collection growth is driven by patron demand and will include new resource types.”[4] Three additional and different patron-driven programs followed at the U of I.

The U of I Library elected to capitalize on the success of the CARLI program as well as the lessons learned to offer a similar program for patron-initiated purchases in 2011, but only for local users. Since the approval cutbacks, funds to cover disciplines with large publishing outputs were hard-pressed to cover annual output. A PDA program is attractive as it can help close the gap experienced by users needing recently published titles. Supplementing high publishing output areas with user-driven purchases would provide more information on how to extend the allocations based on need. A committee of librarians representing the disciplines of arts and humanities, social sciences, and the sciences developed an integrated PDA and approval plan that would allow subject specialists first access to newly published titles every week with PDA records loaded less frequently. The new PDA profile mirrored the existing approval plan in almost all areas, except that books had to be available as rush stock (i.e., in a warehouse and on the shelf for expedited delivery). Both profiles identified newly published output from the YBP database. PDA records were loaded later and less often than the bibliographer's GOBI slips (notifications sent to selectors of new materials available in their profiled subject areas that are used to place an order or request that Acquisitions place an order). This time lag allowed selectors a head start to purchase material from their slip matches loaded weekly. The program was initially funded by seed money for one year, with most of the funding coming from the central pool suballocations. The seed money was utilized only when the central pool expends were exhausted. The PDA bibliographic record notes to guide users in making their requests were updated based on staff recommendations from the first program.

There was fear expressed by several bibliographers that this service would result in subpar purchases, could negatively impact the collection, and would waste scant resources. They were invited to tighten profiles to restrict material to academic content from approved subjects. The program has been very successful, receiving many endorsements by researchers and librarians alike. An unanticipated consequence was the stress relief PDA provided to at least one bibliographer, who found it hard to keep up with ordering during peak teaching times or when called away for professional committee work. If a user needed a book, that librarian knew there was a very fast option to obtain it, as most of the orders arrived within two days. Another issue impacting title availability of new books from CARLI members was the limitation put on I-Share borrowing for new books. Individual libraries place new books on review shelves and only loan them to their immediate constituency. High-demand new books were never available as they were either checked out or on reserve.

The PDA program was seamless for users because they were used to requesting titles to be loaned by a CARLI library or receiving locally owned materials that were pulled and mailed to them or rushed through cataloging. This new purchase program seemed very logical to faculty and students alike. The timing was excellent to begin this, as the economic recession was now impacting libraries' materials budgets. Monograph budgets were nonexistent for some CARLI members, resulting in higher requests for book copies in short supply.

The pilot is now a regular acquisitions purchase model and is still practiced. Acquisitions had been collaborating with interlibrary loan staff already to allow them to initiate rush orders for brand new books not available as a loan from another library, including any CARLI member. Once the PDA program illustrated the labor saved and revealed books that were used, the Interlibrary Loan unit permanently transferred funds to support PDA rather than spend funds and staff time to borrow books frequently requested. This collaborative and evidence-based decision literally put the money where the need was. See figure 1.2 for PDA use data; the average use per title was 2.83, compared to 1.47 for those titles purchased by librarians (where titles were from the same profile for publishers and content). Figure 1.3 shows how stable and predictable the program has been with a consistently similar number of requests, average cost per book, and annual costs over five years and counting.

### CARLI-Funded PDA for State

With the recovery from the recession still ongoing, many CARLI members could not purchase monographs and lacked the ability to purchase or lease e-books not shareable with the membership. The I-Share collection was hard-pressed to serve member needs for new loanable books. The CARLI Board funded another larger PDA project for fiscal year 2012 based on the success of the first pilot. The goal of the project was to purchase newly published core academic titles in

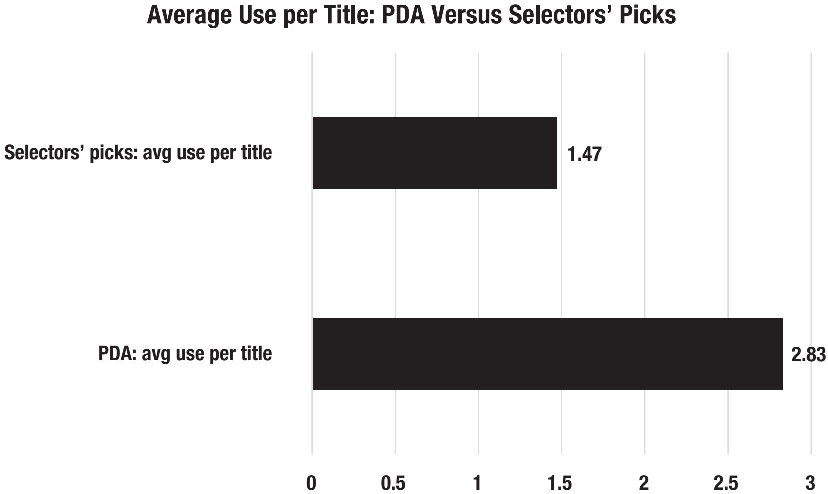


**Figure 1.2** Average use per title: PDA versus selectors' picks.

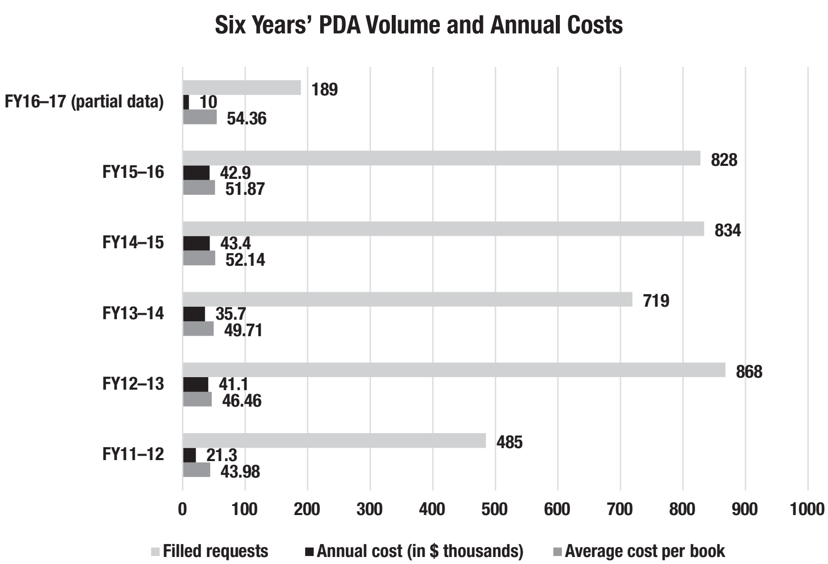


**Figure 1.3** Six years' PDA volume and annual costs.

print to share. YBP assisted in the profile and record loading with changes made as informed by the last program. Full bibliographic records were added to the shared catalog weekly where users could find them easily. Records were loaded for books that matched similar criteria as the first project, though it only covered monographs in the humanities or the social sciences published within the past two years. The U of I was asked to host the service to rush order, catalog, and process the items for delivery since the items were housed at the U of I Library. The program purchased 2,500 titles for patrons from 86 libraries statewide. CARLI also reviewed each request to confirm that a majority were not available as e-books and those that were online were not available for a consortial purchase. This confirmed that a print copy for a new book title was the best option for this CARLI-funded resource sharing.

Unfortunately this program, which showed much promise to alleviate the lack of access to new book content, was canceled in 2014. Yet another budget problem has been ongoing in Illinois: no state budget was passed for consecutive years, resulting in debilitating cuts to higher education. Funding was eliminated for the shared PDA program. However, PDA models are still one piece of the local monograph acquisitions puzzle. The advent of additional e-books was both an opportunity and challenge that made the puzzle more complicated, with extra pieces to play with.

## E-BOOKS

Changes in book purchase models, especially in format and all the consequences thereof, could not be completely anticipated. E-book collection purchasing began some years earlier for older titles at the U of I and accelerated by 2009, when large science collections and book series became available. Table 1.1 shows the growth of e-book buying at the U of I made largely possible with buying whole publisher collections with no user limits and pdf downloads similar to journal articles. With frontline (i.e., prepurchase of new titles annually by publisher output), the major science imprints were blocked from the YBP print title selections in favor of the online-only copy (a well-established and accepted model with the journal subscriptions). Purchase by collection was much less labor-intensive, but as the U of I bought books from many hundreds of publishers, the library never bought all the output they offered. It was not necessary and not budgetarily feasible in any case.

The science division bibliographers were early adopters of e-books, with those collections also including content serving the humanities

**TABLE 1.1** Overall E-Book Growth at U of I for FY 2008–2015

| Fiscal Year | Number of E-Books Added per Year | Cumulative E-Book Total | Percentage Increase per Year (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2007 | NA | 292,002 | NA |
| 2008 | 27,531 | 345,186 | 9 |
| 2009 | 66,178 | 411,364 | 19 |
| 2010 | 73,404 | 484,768 | 18 |
| 2011 | 129,435 | 614,203 | 27 |
| 2012 | 57,735 | 671,938 | 9 |
| 2013 | 164,284 | 836,222 | 24 |
| 2014 | 78,711 | 914,933 | 9 |
| 2015 | 91,213 | 1,006,146 | 10 |

and social sciences, though to a much lesser degree. These disciplines also benefited from large collections of older books, but new core content in those areas was problematic to obtain across the board. These areas rely on many more publishers making entire collection buying less feasible. Title-by-title e-book offerings were not prevalent, though a few vendors were offering content covering titles from many publishers and copyright years.

As library users in non-science disciplines were not exposed to many new books, a demand-driven program was set up early on to test a platform that offered e-book content from many publishers.

The e-book demand-driven program in 2010 was funded by an internal innovation grant. Acquisitions worked with YBP and ebrary, an e-book vendor, to select e-books available for DDA and then load them into the catalog. Ebrary had established agreements with publishers to sell its online titles on one platform. Publishers favored this model as it provided for digital rights management (DRM) that restricted users from copying content and limited the potential for sharing across users. The U of I Library had no prior experience with third-party vendors and platforms that limited access and use of content. A total of 6,000 ebrary records were loaded into the local catalog. Titles had to meet the following criteria: they were not already owned, fell under a $200 per title cap, were in English, and were identified as an academic book with copyright dates within five years. The purpose of the study was to determine user satisfaction with ebrary titles and how the DRMs set by publishers might impact use of these titles. The e-book model allowed for one user, restricted printing, and prohibited downloading. Title-by-title purchase options for e-books were almost nonexistent at the time, so it was hoped the results of this pilot program would inform library selectors on how the addition of DRM third-party e-book records to the approval plans could work.

The PDA e-book pilot study, like the print PDA study with CARLI, was successful in that it provided data on title-by-title e-book orders. It helped the library measure demand for e-book content and established a baseline cost per e-book. One result was the bibliographers' approval to add e-book formats as offered by the aggregator vendors to the approval plan for selectors' title orders. Another result was that it provided good data on the content and copyright years of material publishers made available to third-party vendors. Titles were triggered for purchase by transactional use that offered information on the pages viewed or printed by a user. Triggered purchases also meant that costs were difficult to control and impossible to project over time, making a DDA program labor-intensive to manage. The ease of access and convenience were much appreciated by users; however, they were frustrated by the inability to download a book or even a chapter, an option they were used to for the e-book collections bought directly from publishers. The title offerings also made clear that publishers were selectively offering their output in e-formats to the vendors as newer titles and comprehensive output varied widely.

Access to e-book order options was complicated. The one-stop shopping platform for buying core titles (YBP GOBI) could not reflect the U of I holdings for titles the library was already getting direct from publishers as an e-collection or from PDA programs. In addition, it was starting to get difficult to know what was coming as an e-book due to prepurchase as a collection (where there may be titles exempted by imprint) versus what was not ever an option to buy by a library in an online format or what may be released by a publisher as an e-copy years after the print was published.

Cataloging routines also changed, with subsequent impacts on ordering. In buying at the collection level, the majority of e-book records are not added to the catalog using traditional order routines. Title-by-title ordering via vendor platforms still relies upon EOD/EDI (electronic) processes and requires a cataloger to add proxy server prepends and links to the catalog. Collection buying requires that large volumes of records be added to the catalog through a batch process of records downloaded from vendor and publisher sites, edited in bulk via MarcEdit, and then imported into the catalog in volume. These records often are acquired after the titles were purchased and activated, which was problematic for any bibliographer ordering titles. Acquisitions had asked YBP to mark those titles in GOBI as owned but relied on ISBN matches. Those provided by vendor or publisher were inconsistent and led to mismatches. Moreover, it is hard to keep up with these file updates in order to provide real-time help to selectors who simply want to know not to order a title already on order. Training staff and catalogers within Acquisitions and Cataloging and on the public services side so they understood how these records were being generated was necessary to enable informed ordering and to assist in troubleshooting and patron service inquiries. With so many bibliographers and publishers exploring new ways to sell old and new content, our crystal ball was useless. It was time for more assessments to plot a new course.

## EVIDENCE-BASED PURCHASING

By 2015 the U of I Library had bought over one million e-books. The approval plan central pool was funding science and some social science frontline e-book collections while continuing to support title selections via GOBI for both print and e-books across all disciplines. By this time, Acquisitions had enabled e-book title ordering with all the best options YBP could offer except those from the publishers the library was buying from directly. Several DRM-based third-party offerings were enabled for ordering, as well as a few publishers where the library did not buy whole collections as not all were pertinent.

Acquisitions experimented with more DDA models, including short-term loans (STLS) for large archival collections in the humanities. Here users were also surveyed about e-book preferences. Results were published by Chrsastowski and Wiley in 2015.[5] They found that humanities researchers liked both formats and wanted both but disliked having to use the titles on a DRM platform due to the constraints they experienced while attempting to print, download, or navigate content. The study also showed that STLs are not sustainable for publishers as most content gets little use and generates no use fees for publishers. The U of I Library did not elect to implement a firm DDA program. A predictable outcome was higher fees or less content to browse, as indeed happened in subsequent years.

The publishers generating the most orders on GOBI now include major trade and a majority of the university press publishers but not the major scientific, technical, and medical (STM) publishers. Print still dominates because a majority of university press new titles were largely not available as e-books due to the lack of simultaneous e-format and print publication. New fiction and literature titles are not available to libraries for purchase in an online format as that erodes publishers' sales revenue to individuals. Titles were also pulled from online offerings to libraries if adopted for courses to help guarantee student sales and revenue for the publisher. Large collections of the press titles were available as an archival purchase and some frontline purchase but were prohibitively expensive and still not comprehensive as titles were held back. JSTOR and Project Muse e-book ordering was enabled in YBP as soon as they offered the service. These vendors provide sales options to their publisher clientele who make the decisions on how titles may be offered. The titles available to be sold on YBP were slow to grow, but once enabled on YBP, bibliographers selected them for purchase immediately.

The non-DRM and user-friendly platforms were enticing. This change and the fact that the U of I Library was buying a large number of titles in print based on lack of format choice and user preferences prompted an assessment of print book purchase history. Both vendors offered the library lists of titles in their archives that were matched locally to U of I purchases. It was determined that the library collection held 56% of all Project Muse offered and 58% of JSTOR. System reports for historical charges showed that both collections had substantial use, with 67% to 73% of the print titles purchased from those collections having one or more historical charges. When Project Muse invited discussion about testing an evidence-based acquisition (EBA) model for a majority of its content, it was a logical decision to participate. At the same time, JSTOR was testing a DDA model that all three U of I campuses tried. Given that the title offerings for both had seen high use, these initiatives were of great interest. Both pilots began in fiscal year 2016. Table 1.2 provides an overview of the fiscal year 2016 results.

The collaboration with three campuses and JSTOR provided discounts in titles purchased and a good sense of overlaps in title use that would provide direction for future collaborations. It also provided better insights into the JSTOR platform and how well users explored that content. The DDA model presented issues, however, in managing costs and labor. Use can be unpredictable, and a trigger model will result in anxiety when funds are tight, as was the case with the sister campus program. With all JSTOR titles activated on its platform, the potential that users may trigger titles already owned in an e-format was problematic. The DDA model could have worked if content had been limited to better control costs. However, that was counterproductive to the shared campuses' goals to see how the three campuses used such broad content. JSTOR delivered detailed reports that were very useful in providing subjects, logs of use, and prices to help manage the program.

The Project Muse program was very easy to set up as it ran on its own. The library paid a one-time fee to join the program, agreeing to select titles after 12 months of use to match the amount paid. Project Muse then activated use for all the EBA titles for the campus. The full year of access provided a better opportunity to gauge use, as it covered two academic semesters. Librarians chose the titles to purchase, served on a task force to represent those disciplines used in

**TABLE 1.2** DRM Free Demand-Driven E-Books—Programs FY 2016

| | JSTOR—DDA 4 Months | PMUSE—EBA 9 Months |
|---|---|---|
| *Titles activated* | 36,000 | 30,000 |
| *Unique BK titles both by pdf downloads* only | 3,456 | 2,589 |
| *Chapter downloads* | 9,580 | 28,035 |
| *Average price per book* | $103.55 | $110.00 |
| *Purchase title totals* | 263 but 3 copies each | 457 |
| *Highest download for any title* | 337 | 1,197 |
| *% of total not used (downloaded)* | 94% | 91% |
| *% titles from last 10 copyright years for titles used 5+* | 677 titles, or 60% | 287 titles, or 72% recent |

the EBA, and looked at use and fit to make their informed selection decisions. As all titles were activated, the high-use titles had to be checked for ownership to remove those already owned as an e-book. Some were purchased via the JSTOR trigger and others from DRM vendors via the GOBI selections or previous DDA programs. The EBA model provides for the ability to remove the duplicates as purchase candidates. Project Muse EBA use reports as offered initially had to be merged with information about prices and subjects to be useful for the final selection stage. The staff from both vendors were very helpful, and everyone gained insights into program improvement as results and issues were discussed via email, over the phone, and at meetings. Vendors work to resolve issues, not just for the libraries who buy titles but also for the publishers whose content they sell. Both vendors helped to explain the publishers' perspective on offering content, not knowing if use would generate revenue or when that revenue would be forthcoming if generated. These vendors would like to have more of their publisher clients offer their titles to DDA or EBA programs, but it can be a hard sell. Figure 1.4 illustrates the varying levels of titles publishers offered to an EBA program as seen in the Project Muse fiscal year 2016 program. Many offered all of their titles via Project Muse for their EBA pilot (38%), with 46% of those allowing for the majority of their output to be included (50%–99%) and 25% of the publishers holding back all or a majority of their titles.

Use data showed that selections and triggered content covered more recent copyright years, and both showed that less than 10% of whole title lists had use of any type but that the time periods of use need to be longer before user interest can be gauged accurately. The EBA definitely came out a winner in terms of predictable costs, management and control, and the collaborative input allowed for selection decisions. The U of I Library has seen continued and sustained use of the Project Muse EBA titles and is now in the third year of the program and sharing data with that vendor as the pilot evolves. Publishers sell their titles via many distributors and cannot always know the recipient. Libraries can offer information to vendors about titles that overlap as bought elsewhere when publishers see high use but no purchase from an EBA program. Vendors can explain this to their publisher clients. JSTOR now is offering an EBA pilot that the U of I Urbana–Champaign is experimenting with, as well as the Chicago campus, and

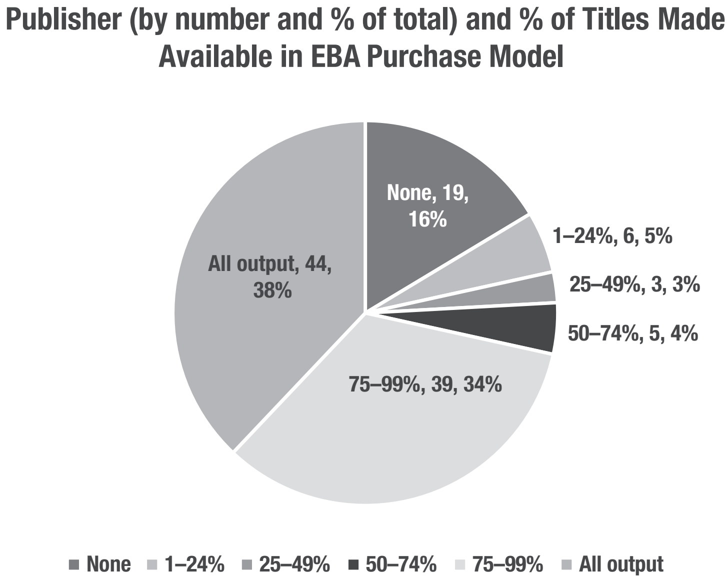


**Figure 1.4** Publisher (by number and % of total) and % of titles made available in EBA purchase model.

both campuses were offered title discounts with joint participation. JSTOR was very up front about the publisher title offerings where a high number of their publisher clients are not participating yet at any level and, for those who do, there is a need to support publishers' requests limiting content to the titles with copyright dates of at least three years and older. This works well, as Acquisitions left JSTOR enabled on the YBP GOBI selections since those match to only the recent content.

Project Muse titles were enabled again on GOBI as more of that content is sold title-by-title rather than as EBA offers, and if there was overlap, a title purchase would not be selected on the EBA list. Selectors also can purchase a Project Muse title offered only on a DRM platform but are asked to select the multiple user option even if it is more expensive. They should also check to see if a title can be downloaded via a fairly recent preview option offered through GOBI. Both non-DRM vendors load new content at least once a year to the EBA programs under agreements they negotiate with their publishers.

To encourage more participation, JSTOR is experimenting with a model that guarantees all publisher participants some revenue for allowing access to their titles even when not used. It is built into the library prepaid fee to join the pilot. This is an innovative idea that hopefully will see more titles in the pool. It is incumbent on libraries to understand that prices and participation levels set by publishers are going to change as models evolve and to take care not to rely on any one model as most certainly these models will change again in the near future.

## PUTTING THE DATA-DRIVEN PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER

The approval plan changes, user surveys, e-book purchase history, and demand-driven programs have informed decisions on e-book and print purchases and provided lessons learned about e-book DRM, user preferences, and e-book availability by collection, by subject slices, by title offering via YBP, or through demand-driven programs. Data are available on print as well. In recent discussions about monograph purchases held in routine acquisitions forums and open hour drop-in sessions, bibliographers volunteered that they wanted to know how to plan for e-books as well as how to manage their selection time. The profiles on GOBI were garnering a lot of content, and they were hoping to manage that better. Some wanted more autoships for print, others less content to review, some more evidence of use to inform selections, and others the potential to move to e-book preferred options. Six years of print purchases were analyzed in spring 2017. Orders funded by the central fund for new monographic output were analyzed by publisher and subject. Bibliographic data, purchase information, and cumulative circulation data were also pulled from the integrated library system (ILS).

The results of the analysis have now provided hard data to inform profile changes as hoped. The data allowed publishers to be categorized as Tier 1, 2, or 3. Tier 1 included those publishers with high output and continued high purchase rate with strong use. These were candidates for autoships or EBA purchases if they also participated in EBA. Tier 2 publishers had large title offerings (i.e., high output and a low to high purchase rate) but had less use and especially high rates of no use across the titles. These were candidates for limited autoships if matched with subject parameters, and all were candidates for regular slip generation title-by-title orders and for PDA record importing to fulfill a user need if a bibliographer could not or had not yet made the selection. Tier 3 publishers comprised a long comet tail of publishers with low purchase rates and mostly low use, though some were high use and reflected titles needed for reserves or research projects and therefore require title-level ordering. Figure 1.5 shows the relative value for each tier percentage of the whole for purchases, circulations, zero circulations, and the percentage of publisher per tier to best illustrate how they rated their respective tier assignment. These data were made available to a task force charged with deciding how to create custom profiles with YBP to provide for autoships and to recommend publishers matched to subject areas for title selection or patron-driven record loads for users to request if needed.

The subject analysis illustrates by publisher the disciplines covered that will help to qualify what content per publisher may be an autoship versus a title order or PDA candidate. Decisions will be made soon

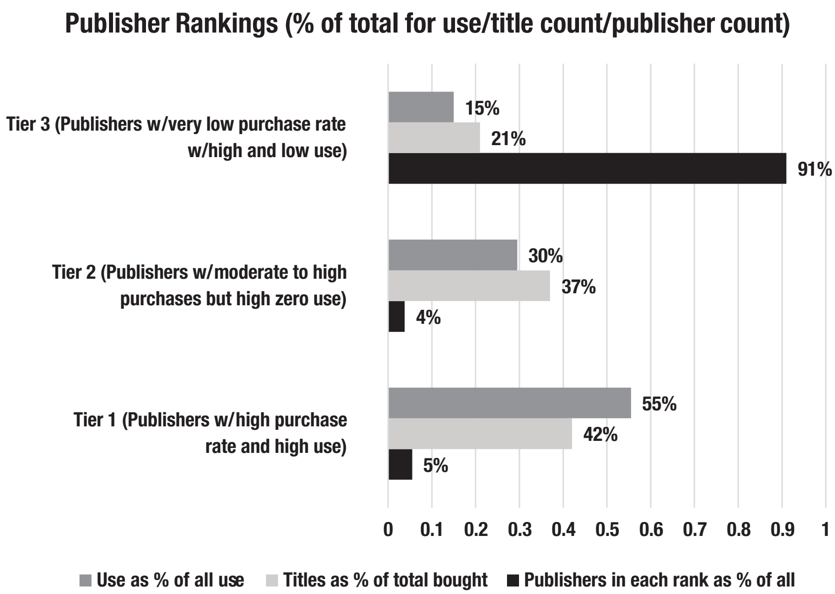


**Figure 1.5** Publisher rankings (% of total for use/title count/publisher count).

on those profile changes with these new plans expected to save the bibliographers' time in making selections as well as order and vendor work done by acquisitions staff. Autoships from top-tier publishers mean those titles will require minimal tracking as they will be orders matched upon title availability. Delivery should be distributed over the calendar year for timely processing. Knowing the EBA publisher participation rate will also help bibliographers decide whether to get print and pick the same e-book title if use warrants or skip print in favor of an EBA selection for a Tier 2 publisher if user downloads indicate that preference. Those are just a few options, and there will be decisions made collaboratively with input from bibliographers, acquisitions staff, and users.

Collaborations can happen in reaction to a crisis. They may be inherent in the organizational culture or opportunistic when new funding is available or a new innovative process is implemented. With data available to reveal trends and patterns and with new initiatives illustrating trends and changes, collaboration is strategic. Acquisitions will continue to engage in a sustained, iterative communications and outreach strategy backed by good data. As models and demands increasingly compete for either the same amount or even dwindling funds, bibliographers must have input and buy-in into library-wide initiatives that govern fund management. The overarching goal and message have been that Acquisitions seeks to assist bibliographers in maximizing funds, saving their time from the more mundane selection considerations, and expanding their ability to pursue strategic acquisitions for more unique and specialized collection needs.

A key takeaway from this process of reviewing fund strategies is that it is incumbent upon Acquisitions to engage in direct liaison work with subject bibliographers. It is not sufficient to await passive receipt and fulfillment of orders. As acquisitions staff are mandated with continued awareness and investigation of emergent purchase models, the only way to capitalize on new developments is through continual exchange of information between bibliographers and our established vendor and publisher partners. As the marketplace continues to diversify and evolve and as publishing output continues to challenge the availability of existing funds, acquisitions staff can contribute to the appropriate stewardship of fiscal resources and fulfillment of patron needs through increased focus on discourse and communication.

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