A Real Challenge: Incorporating Patron-Driven Acquisitions Programs into Collection Development Strategies and Budgets

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A Real Challenge: Incorporating Patron-Driven Acquisitions Programs into Collection Development Strategies and Budgets

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Abstract

Many academic libraries are struggling to revise collection policies and develop improved methods of allocating budgets that integrate Patron or Demand-Driven Acquisitions plans. Two Acquisitions Librarians from the University of Florida will discuss how academic libraries are meeting this challenge and describe how their library has modified collection management policies and approval profiles, and reallocated material budgets to incorporate their ongoing PDA programs.

Introduction

The recent deluge of books,¹ articles,² and conference presentations, such as those given at the 2012 Charleston Conference,³ on the subject of Patron-Driven Acquisitions (PDA), also referred to as Demand-Driven Acquisitions (DDA), illustrate a fast growing development in college and academic libraries that is seemingly here to stay. With so many academic libraries utilizing PDAs, the need for Acquisitions and Collection Management to team up and develop more organized and efficient collection management and budgetary policies is paramount. This is certainly the case at the George A. Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida. Currently the Smathers Libraries are managing three separate PDA plans: (1) a “Books on Demand” (BoD) initiative run in the Interlibrary Loan unit of the main library; (2) a Course Reserves ordering system that centers on acquiring resources direct from faculty requests; and (3) a pilot collaborative

project between the University of Florida (UF) and Florida State University (FSU) that involves both libraries sharing the cost and access of e-books.

The Smathers Libraries are also part of an eleven member library consortium that is engaged in setting up a state-wide PDA plan with Ingram’s Coutts that will share the costs and access of e-books. In addition to these current plans, the Smathers Libraries are partnering with Ebook Library (EBL) to implement an innovative e-books PDA plan that will focus on acquiring access to content in the science, technology, and medicine (STM) disciplines. With three PDA plans ongoing and two more on the horizon, the Smathers Libraries are now facing challenges common to academic libraries employing PDA plans; that being, how to revise collection policies and reallocate funds to balance collections and distribute budgets evenly across subject disciplines.

PDAs at the Smathers Libraries

The first PDA program at the Smathers Libraries, called Books on Demand (BoD), was started in 2006 by the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Librarian (Foss, 2008). The BoD program is now administered by staff from the Acquisitions Department and the Access Support unit working together to purchase, rather than borrow, resources derived from faculty and graduate student loan requests. Items purchased through the BoD program are a mix of print and electronic books and must meet certain established criteria such as year of imprint, cost per item, and type of material. In its first six years

¹ See Swords, D. A. (Ed.). (2011). *Patron-driven acquisitions: History and best practices*. Berlin: De Gruyter Sauer; London: Routledge.

² See Nixon, J. M., Freeman, R. S. & Ward, S. M. (Eds.). (2010). Patron-driven acquisitions: Current successes and future directions. *Collection Management* 35(3–4), 119–259.

³ The authors identified at least 12 presentations in the Charleston Conference schedule as mentioning PDA or DDA in either the title or abstract. Retrieved from <http://2012charlestonconference.sched.org/>

of operation, the Books on Demand program purchased 1,888 titles totaling \$113,992.14 (see Table 1). Annually a team of subject specialists and Acquisitions staff review and update selection parameters as needed. Going into its seventh year, Books on Demand is a permanent collections program and is annually funded by twenty-five thousand dollars from the materials budget.

The third PDA ongoing at the Smathers Libraries is a shared e-books plan, focusing on graduate readership level, that began in December 2011 and is co-operated by the two libraries of the University of Florida (UF) and Florida State University (FSU). This UF-FSU collaborated PDA was established through a joint effort of subject specialists, Acquisitions Librarians, and Deans

Fiscal Years	Spend	Avg. Book Cost	Title count
6 years	\$113,992.14	\$60.38	1,888

Table 1. BoD PDA Statistics

The Smathers Libraries responded to numerous faculty requests for Course Reserves in 2008 by implementing an ordering system that is co-managed by staff in the Acquisitions Department and Access Support unit. As the system works directly from faculty order requests, the Course Reserves program is considered a varying type of PDA. Faculty requests for print and electronic books, DVDs, and steaming video to be acquired for Course Reserves are collected by Access Support staff via the ARES management system then routed to acquisitions staff for ordering. This program was begun as a pilot and seeded with \$15,000 in one-time, carry-forward funding, but it soon proved enormously popular with faculty, and by its second year the program has been funded

from both schools working with representatives from Ingram's Coutts to define a set of profile parameters that determine the type and scope of the e-books offered to users. Once the profiles are matched to publishers willing to take part in a shared e-books PDA, they are matched with the thousands of e-books available on the Ingram's Coutts MyiLibrary platform. The matching bibliographic e-book records are then downloaded simultaneously into both libraries' catalogs for instantaneous access by users at both universities. During the period December 2011 through June 2012, the UF-FSU PDA plan resulted in 2,115 e-book uses and triggered purchases for 185 titles costing a total of \$25,240.48 (see Table 3). To pay for the PDA, both institutions deposited

Fiscal Years	Spend	Avg. item cost*	Title count
4 years	\$80,101.27	\$54.08	1,672
* includes DVD purchases			

Table 2. Course Reserves PDA Statistics

ongoing from the materials budget. In four years, the Course Reserves program has purchased 1,672 items (see Table 2). Due to its continued success and the assistance the program provides with expanding Distance Learning efforts at the university, funding for the Course Reserves PDA has been doubled to \$50,000 this current fiscal year.

\$60,000 into a shared account, totaling \$120,000. The Smathers Libraries used one-time funding for their initial half of the deposit. Although the program is considered a pilot, UF's commitment to the program is expected, and funding will need to become ongoing.

The Smathers Libraries is a partner in the State University Libraries (SUL), a library consortium

December 2011 - July 2012	Spend	Deposit Account	Balance	E-Books purchased	Avg. cost per purchased E-Book
	\$25,240.48	\$120,000.00	\$94,759.52	185	\$136.44
E-Books purchased - uses	E-Books used once	E-Books used twice	Total uses of E-Books	Avg. cost per use of E-Books purchased	Avg. cost per use of all E-Books accessed
1,536	415	82	2,115	\$16.43	\$11.93

Table 3. Course Reserves PDA Statistics

that includes most of the larger public academic libraries in the state of Florida. This group has begun partnering with Ingram's Coutts to develop a consortium-wide shared e-books plan that will focus on providing e-books designated with an undergraduate level readership. Although in the planning stages since 2011, this ambitious PDA was set back by a statewide initiative to merge matching records from all the individual SUL catalogs into one bibliographic record shared by all. The consortial PDA has been rescheduled to begin in 2013. The delay from the one bibliographic record merge is being seen as fortuitous in many ways, as it should create a more efficient method to centralize the loading and updating of thousands of e-book records that match the parameters of the shared PDA.

Yet another Patron-Driven Acquisitions program is in the planning stage at the Smathers Libraries. A team of subject specialists and Acquisitions Librarians are developing and incorporating a PDA that will focus on acquiring and offering access to e-books entirely within the STM disciplines. By loading e-book records that fall into Library of Congress general call number ranges for subject disciplines science (Q), medicine (R), agriculture (S), and technology (T), the hope is this PDA will complement and not duplicate existing PDAs and collection efforts at the Smathers Libraries. However, with so many PDAs concurrent at the Smathers Libraries, the entire scope of collection development and budget management is under review and revision.

Revising Collection and Budgeting Strategies at UF

Many of the collection and budget decisions made in the past six years at the Smathers Libraries have been centered on Patron-Driven Acquisitions programs that started as pilots and, with subsequent success, became permanent fixtures in collection building and budget planning. With the PDA programs proving to be successful at the Smathers Libraries, two areas of concern became the focus of Acquisitions Librarians and subject specialists. The first issue is complicated as it is a subset of a larger problem facing so many academic libraries: how can libraries budget for new and ongoing PDAs when they are already dealing with restrictive or declining budgets for materials and operations? The second issue is equally crucial: even if libraries can somehow shuffle budgeting to fuel their PDA programs, how can libraries then plan and manage collection building and fund allocations that are balanced when the expenditures from PDAs are a result entirely of user choice? In order for academic libraries to move forward with clear, knowledgeable collection and budget strategies that incorporate PDAs, these two issues must be addressed by each library.

As the Smathers Libraries began its PDA programs, Books on Demand, Course Reserves, and the shared UF-FSU e-books plan, funding was fueled entirely as one-time pilot programs. This one-time funding was received from a variety of sources: provost support, carry-forward monies from

salary savings that fluctuates as positions are left open or filled, and other revenue streams such as grants. Although these funding sources are perfect for applying to pilot PDA programs, the fact is these revenue streams fluctuate and can disappear from one fiscal year to the next making it difficult for planning ongoing initiatives.

As each PDA evolved from a pilot to a permanent collections program, the libraries had to develop methods of reallocating funding to cover the cost of the programs. One significant step taken by the libraries to free up funds involved overhauling the largest approval plan managed by our major domestic book vendor, Ingram's Coutts, into a "PDA-preferred" model. On the surface the switch was simple: a comprehensive list of publishers who regularly issue e-book versions of print titles in a timely manner (within approximately two months) was generated by the vendor; print books issued by any publisher on the list were no longer shipped automatically on approval but instead are held until e-book equivalents are available. When the e-books are issued the bibliographic records are included as part of the files loaded for the UF-FSU shared PDA. The switch to a 'PDA-preferred' approval plan was implemented in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, and because hundreds of print books would no longer to be

shipped on approval, allocations for each subject discipline/profile were reduced significantly. All told, by moving our approvals to a 'PDA-preferred' plan the libraries reduced approximately \$100,000 to its FY 2013 allocation for print approval books.

This substantial savings from the switch to a 'PDA-preferred' approval plan allowed the libraries to pay for other resources, subsequently freeing up collection funds for the Books on Demand (BoD) and Course Reserves (CR) initiatives, as well as to offset a budget reduction the libraries received from the University of Florida due to state-wide budget crisis. Long-term, the annual savings from the 'PDA-preferred' plan should not only subsidize the BoD, CR, and the UF-FSU shared e-books PDAs, it should help to finance both the SUL consortium and STEM e-books PDAs that are to begin operation in 2013.

Yet, funding PDAs is only the first hurdle a library must leap; devising collection strategies and budget allocations that are fair, accurate, and support research and users across disciplines is equally essential. The key to incorporating funding for PDAs with budgets for more traditional acquisitions methods is by determining the purchase and usage patterns within the PDAs. Without a clear idea of usage and purchased

Books on Demand - Subject Discipline Support by LC Class				
Class		Number of Books Rec'd	Expenditure	Cost/Title
A	General Works	4	\$179.59	\$44.90
B	Philo, Psych, Religion	162	\$8,479.33	\$52.34
C	History of Sci, Archaeology	13	\$1,009.38	\$77.64
D-F	History	188	\$10,002.71	\$53.21
G	Geo, Anthro, Rec	93	\$6,777.90	\$72.88
H-HJ	Econ, Business, Finance	98	\$6,465.66	\$65.98
HM-HX	Sociology, Communities	202	\$10,212.58	\$50.56
J-K	Political Sci, Law	90	\$5,774.28	\$64.16
L	Education	49	\$2,631.40	\$53.70
M	Music	36	\$1,744.22	\$48.45
N	Fine Arts	77	\$4,208.33	\$54.65
P	Language, Lit	294	\$16,105.47	\$54.78
Q	Science	163	\$13,362.71	\$81.98
R	Medicine	65	\$3,346.92	\$51.49
S	Agriculture	42	\$2,751.18	\$65.50
T-TP	Technology, Engineering	102	\$8,817.22	\$86.44
TR-Z	Photo, Military Hist, LibSci	42	\$2,359.31	\$56.17
		1,720	\$104,228.19	\$60.60

Table 4. Books on Demand Title and Cost Statistics by Subject

items derived from patron-driven programs, libraries are flying blind in developing balanced budgets. This dilemma led Acquisitions Librarians at the Smathers Libraries to develop a method of analyzing their PDA programs by compiling titles usage from each plan and sorting by call number classifications using Library of Congress (LC) schedules (Library of Congress, n.d.). The titles with call numbers are then matched and divided into subject disciplines. A July 2012 report that exemplifies this type of analysis using cost and titles received through the Books on Demand program is shown in Table 4. This type of analysis is broad-based and does not always include alternative classifications, subject headings, or cross-disciplines found in the cataloging records for many titles, but the methodology does offer an effective overview of the primary subject disciplines being supported by a PDA.

This simple method of using LC call number ranges to analyze titles received provides a consistent set of statistics for e-books and materials purchased or used across all the PDA plans. For PDAs that offer e-books, usage can also be included in the analysis (Carrico & Leonard, 2011). What we determined from the call number sorting and classifying of titles and usage was that all the PDAs at the Smathers Libraries were supporting users in the humanities and social science disciplines more than users in the sciences, technology, and medicine (STM) disciplines. Whether users triggered a purchase from ILL requests (Books on Demand), faculty inputted title requests (Course Reserves), or through the direct usage of e-books loaded into the catalog (UF-FSU shared e-books plan), patrons in the humanities and social sciences were doing the bulk of the use in all three PDAs. This information has eased concerns of subject specialists afraid that using PDAs at a large research library where so many patrons and researchers are science and medicine based would result in STM dominated use and expenditures. It has also balanced the budgets to a certain extent since much of the materials budget focuses on e-resources for STM disciplines. Consequently, the Smathers Libraries are keeping monograph budgets status quo across disciplines, but will review allocations annually to adjust the balance as needed.

Conclusion

Revising collection policies and developing a balanced budget allocation methodology that incorporates Patron-Driven Acquisitions plans while supporting a multitude of subject disciplines is proving to be a real juggling act for academic libraries. This paper was the focus of a Lively Lunch session at the 2012 Charleston Conference (Charleston Conference). The session was intended to spur discussion amongst participants concerning how academic libraries can best establish, maintain, and balance PDAs within the landscape of multiple and varied programs already in existence, all while funded with shrinking materials budgets. A few of the major takeaways from the group discussion and our own experiences operating PDAs at the Smathers Libraries include the following:

- Many, if not most, PDAs start as pilots with one-time funds.
 - If a PDA is successful, the library will have to determine methods of ongoing funding that can be secured through a variety of methods:
 - Continued special funding from library budget or the institution
 - Reduce monograph approval funding by switching to “PDA-preferred”
 - Reduce and transfer monograph firm order funding to the PDA
 - Reallocation funding from other materials budget areas (print serials, binding, etc.)
- As a PDA program is implemented, each library must determine the subject areas of coverage and costs, but should also continually review and reallocate budgets and collection efforts.
 - Doing analyses of PDA purchases and usage by subject area can help to determine which areas are being supported
- Working with other institutions or library consortia can result in a better return on investment.

- Balancing multiple PDA/DDA initiatives can be complicated, but can also result in more cost-effective application of funds and can be tweaked to support multiple subject areas.
- It is vital for libraries and vendors to work together to build PDA profiles, criteria, and budget strategies that complement each other while avoiding duplication.

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