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Turning a Crisis Into an Opportunity: DDA and PDA at UTA Libraries

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Abstract

Facing a 72% cut in our monographic acquisitions budget in FY13–14, University of Texas Arlington Libraries turned a crisis into an opportunity. We examined print monographs' circulation data and discovered the hard truth that the "just-in-case" acquisition model is neither sustainable nor serving our users well. Subsequently, our approval plan was put on a virtual mode: no more approval book shipments. We implemented demand-driven acquisition (DDA) programs for both electronic and print books and put broader patron-driven acquisition (PDA) programs in place to meet our users' needs.

The Crisis

University of Texas at Arlington Libraries have operated under a flat materials budget for four years in a row. During this time, however, serial prices steadily increased and, in some cases, increased dramatically (Bosh & Henderson, 2012). For instance, our Stat!Ref subscription through TexShare's "Big Deal" came with a 60% increase for the 2014 renewal. We have shrunk the monographic budget to shore up serials each year. At the beginning of fiscal year 2013, we had to cut 72% of the monographic fund to sustain existing serials.

At the same time, we discovered that close to 100,000 books the libraries purchased through approval plans from January 2004 to January 2014 never circulated. These books account for \$4.4 million direct cost and another \$3.8 million indirect cost based on the \$4.26 per year estimate (Courant & Nielsen, 2010) to keep them on the open shelves. As our shrinking buying power has reached a crisis level, our monographs collection development is in a worse place. The just-in-case-someone-will-use-them-someday model has failed to address our users' needs and is unsustainable. We must change.

Opportunities

That close to 100,000 books we purchased in the past ten years never circulated is a tough truth, but it *is* the truth. It propels us to reexamine our overall collection development paradigm through the lens of "what a collection does rather than what a collection is," (Horava, 2010) and to seek opportunities to reprogram our monograph acquisition to meet our users' needs. As a result,

our service orientation has shifted from collection-centric to engagement-centric, and from librarian-predicting to patron driven. Recently, the library implemented a new liaison program that greatly expanded our outreach effort. There used to be five subject librarians making selections. Now almost 50 librarians and archivists are taking on liaison responsibilities. Requests from faculty and students are now driving our resource selection and acquisition. We have made a paradigm shift to patron-driven acquisition (PDA). Through the expanded liaison program and library's broader outreach efforts, the library formed several partnerships to support library resources. The College of Business, for example, contributed \$113,000 to fund business databases purchases.

Programmatically, several measures have been put in place to facilitate PDA. First of all, approval plan shipments were stopped as soon as logistics permitted in November 2013. The approval plan was put on a virtual mode, which is available as a selection tool but does not generate new shipments and purchases. At the same time, we boosted our interlibrary loan (ILL) book-on-demand program. When ILL requests to borrow newly published books cannot be fulfilled with three attempts, we purchase them. The chance of an ILL borrowing request being fulfilled goes down with each attempt. Most libraries have policies that do not allow ILL lending for newly published books. Rather than hoping a borrowing request is fulfilled and prolonging the wait, we decide to cut the waiting time and meet our users' needs in time. More than enough savings were generated by stopping approval plan purchases. We are able

to support the ILL on-demand purchase program without adding strain to the budget. Furthermore, these purchases have gone a long way for the library. We not only are able to address our users' needs in time, but also generate so much good will from our users. They are glad to have a much longer check-out time for these books than what would otherwise be allowed by ILL arrangements.

Next, based on NISO's best practices for demand-driven acquisition (DDA) of monographs (Kawecki & Levine-Clark, 2013), an electronic DDA program was implemented locally in February 2014. We selected to set up the e-book DDA program through Yankee Book Peddler (YBP) with Ebook Library (EBL). One compelling reason for us to use EBL is the nonlinear lending feature that has no single user restrictions. Three short-term loans (STL) are allotted before a purchase is made. We elected to have the 2014 front list and 2013 back file fitting our profiles in the consideration pool. Each week new consideration records are automatically retrieved, customized, and loaded. Markers are entered in the 590 field of the records for easy reporting and tracking of the title's status. The first STL was triggered a week after the program started. From February 2013 to August 2013, \$158,659.36 was spent on approval books and 18.09% of them had at least one charge by September 8, 2014. In the same period for 2014, \$9,425.14 was spent on the e-book DDA program, and 100% of them were used. Compared to the approval plan, the e-book DDA program saves us over 94% and takes out the guessing game for librarians.

Publishers have not made all books available in electronic format (Besen & Kirby, 2014). It is particularly true for front list titles. Users such as art and humanities faculty also report that certain materials about drawing, painting, and so forth are still desired in print. Driven by our patrons' demands, the library took another step forward. A print book DDA program was set up in September 2014. Consideration titles are limited to the art and humanities and social sciences portions of our profiles. Unlike e-book DDA, print DDA requires staff mediation. We try to minimize the mediation and shorten the turnaround time as much as possible. After considering several options, we

creatively tapped ILLiad as the user authentication mechanism. We gain a couple of advantages by doing so. Rather than handling patron accounts in a separate environment, ILLiad has built-in LDAP that communicates with campus user information. Users who have an ILLiad account do not have to reenter their personal information each time when making a request. ILLiad has built-in email capability. Patron information as well as bibliographic information are supplied automatically. Acquisition staff members do not have to re-enter them. We also take advantage of the OpenURL protocols to automatically populate the DDA request form in ILLiad with bibliographic information. The OpenURL link in each record is generated dynamically when consideration records are customized.

The library's Department of Access and Discovery that administers the DDA programs is a "get it" (Chadwell & Nichols, 2010) type of integrated multifunctional technical service unit. To streamline the workflow and therefore shorten the turn-around time for users, acquisition staff members are cross-trained in ILLiad, shelf preparation, and circulation. An Amazon Prime membership is purchased for alternative purchasing and shipping options when other vendors' pricing and shipping are not competitive. So far, we are able to keep the turnaround time from staff placing an order to delivery to users within five business days.

Conclusion

The library's monographic fund was cut 72% in fiscal year 2013–2014. At the same time, close to 100,000 books purchased in the last ten years through approval plans never circulated. Facing the challenge of a shrinking budget and failing to meet users' needs, the library made a paradigm shift from a librarian predicting what books to buy to patron-driven acquisition. Several programs have been put in place to turn a crisis to an opportunity where we are able to strategically spend our budget to meet our users' needs and, at the same time, make it financially sustainable. By the end of the fiscal year, the monographic fund stayed in the black and created a 28% savings to support the serials fund. Since approval

plan shipments were stopped, the library spent only \$50 on book binding. Savings from that is used to support a bindery for Special Collection items. Staff time has also been freed up from handling tens of thousands of approval books

each year. Staff members now can assist digitization projects for unique local resources. Cross-training of staff in ILLiad, shelf preparation, and circulation enable a streamlined workflow that results in faster turnaround time.

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