Purdue University

Purdue e-Pubs

EBA in Practice: Facilitating Evidence-Driven E-Book Programs in Both Consortium and Individual Library Settings

John Abresch
University of South Florida, jabresch@usf.edu

Laura Pascual
University of South Florida, lcpascua@usf.edu

Andrea Langhurst Eickholt
Eastern Washington University, alanghurst1@gmail.com

EBA in Practice: Facilitating Evidence-Driven E-Book Programs in Both Consortium and Individual Library Settings

John Abresch, University of South Florida

Laura Pascual, University of South Florida

Andrea Langhurst Eickholt, Eastern Washington University

Abstract

The University of South Florida (USF) Library maintains multiple DDA and EBA e-book programs as the basis for its collection management strategy in an effort to provide the scope of monographic material required by a large metropolitan research university in the most cost-effective manner. A patron-driven acquisitions program replaced the traditional print approval plan. Leveraging this usage data, several evidence-based acquisition programs were established with providers such as Wiley, Project Muse, and Elsevier. The process began with profiling the DDA and was developed combining factors that satisfied our programmatic requirements. Successful implementation at this scale requires collaborative effort from a community of librarians and staff with diverse skill sets.

The Orbis Cascade Alliance piloted an Evidenced-Based Acquisition Approach with Wiley in 2016–2017. Upon completion of the pilot, the alliance's Ebook Working Group made content selection decisions to benefit almost 40 distinct institutions using a three-pronged approach focusing on individual institution usage, broadly used, and overall highly used titles. The alliance's e-book strategies for 2017–2018 include setting up a second EBA pilot, while continuing the first; integrating with GOBI Library Solutions to benefit alliance members; and other plans for cooperative e-book management for the group of member institutions; all while keeping in mind goals for a broad range of content, stable costs, and making titles accessible both to patrons as well as from a technical services perspective.

These two viewpoints provide a comprehensive perspective of managing multiple e-book acquisition models in both consortium and individual institutions.

Introduction

Evidenced-based acquisition programs are increasingly popular methods of building e-book collections and providing access to content. This article discusses the implementation, maintenance, and purchase selection processes in practice at both a very large metropolitan research university and a diverse 39-member alliance.

Evidence-Based Collection Development at the University of South Florida

The University of South Florida is a comprehensive, multicampus research university located in Tampa, Florida. The libraries offer collections and services in support of the research and instruction activities for faculty, staff, and a total student body of over 50,000. Between 2009 and the present, the libraries began a process of acquiring diverse digital resources. Factors prompting the collection practice included new university program initiatives in online education as well as patron requests for electronic resources.

To enhance additional digital collection building, librarians at USF enacted a collection management strategy that has integrated professional librarian practice, institutional collection policies, and some desktop technologies in building a framework to facilitate patron or demand-driven acquisitions. The approach was later used to build an evidence-based acquisitions model with different formats while dealing with a rapidly changing academic environment.

Transforming Library Collections

Beginning in 2009, librarians at USF adopted a collection management strategy of increased investment in digital resources such as journal archives. Fiscal support for the digital content was a combination of library materials funds, grant opportunities, and funds from other USF departments. The investments were prompted by a variety of factors including strategic changes in university academic policies advocating online learning. Library patrons also demonstrated an increased need for access to e-publications. In building the digital content,

librarians at USF mapped collections to university curriculum and research goals.

Building Toward PDA

With a collection strategy in hand, librarians at USF in early 2010 began investing in e-book collections. Investing in e-book collections provided librarians with usage data on how library patrons were interacting with the digital content. Working with e-books helped library acquisitions staff use desktop MS Office applications to create new workflows for e-book management. By the latter part of 2010, and with positive responses from patrons to the new e-book content, it was decided to transform the acquisition of book publications from an approval plan based on print books to supporting patron-driven acquisitions and e-books (see Figure 1). Library staff members also realized that an essential piece of planning for patron-driven acquisitions was in building teams of individuals with diverse skills sets including technical service librarians, librarian subject specialists, and staff with data management skills. In summary, the benchmarks identified by librarians at USF to build a foundation for patron-driven or demand-driven acquisitions as well as evidence-based acquisitions include the following strategies:

- Identify collection strategy: focus on patron needs.

- Implement flexible funding options: grant opportunities, student technology feeds, foundation accounts.

- Use technology to assist acquisitions workflows.

- Leverage technical services professional and staff experience in a collaborative team environment.
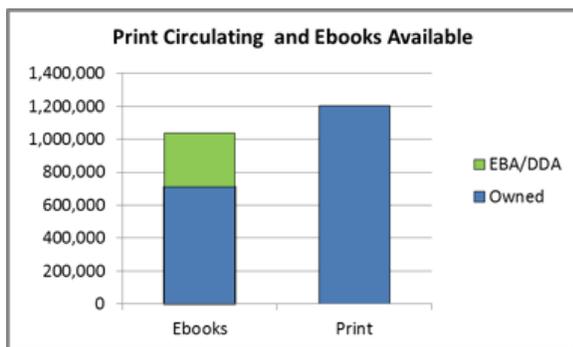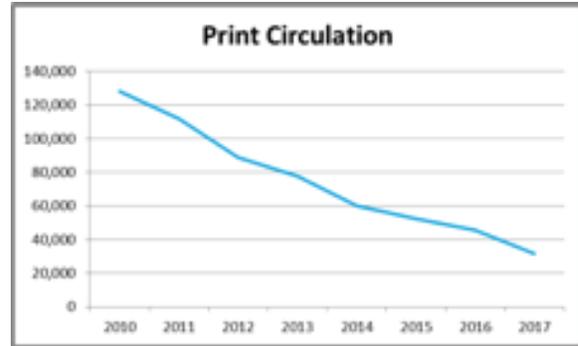

Figure 1. Print and e-book titles available.

Figure 2. Print circulation trend.

Managing Multiple EBA Programs at the University of South Florida

The University of South Florida Libraries currently maintain a large demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) program with ProQuest Ebook Central as well as manage e-book evidence-based acquisition (EBA) programs with Wiley, Project Muse, Elsevier (Freedom Collection), Taylor & Francis, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press. These programs allow USF to provide access to a wide variety of content while at the same time purchasing only those titles of proven value to the patron. This method of collection development facilitated the move from print to electronic, being both a cause and a result of the transition (see Figure 2).

Demand-Driven Acquisition—A First Experience With Evidence-Based Acquisition

USF began with a large-scale DDA program with ProQuest Ebook Central, originally Ebook Library (EBL), in 2010 funded by a student tech fee grant. The program ran without a break until 2015 and was resumed with new fiscal support after a short pause. For most of that time, the DDA pool ranged from 250K to 400K titles. Subsequent to the implementation of several EBA programs and a redefinition of our profile, the total currently averages approximately 170,000 titles. The profile defines and selects which of Ebook Central's available titles will be made accessible to the patrons via the USF Libraries' catalog and the purchase method. Profile parameters include subject selections, upper and lower purchase price boundaries, publisher inclusion list, and restrictions on e-book access models. Staff and librarians combine to review the profile, and facilitate weekly catalog record additions and removals including the deduplication of e-book titles. This work enabled 54,000 unique users to access almost
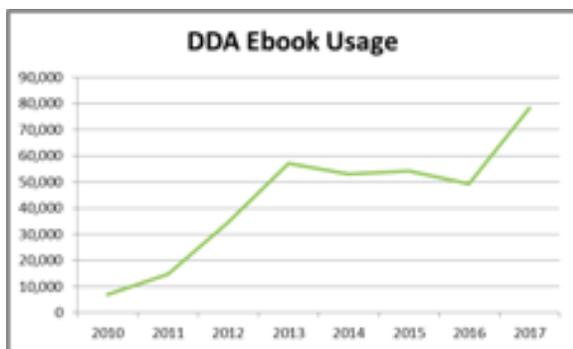
Figure 3. DDA e-book usage trend.

84,000 titles and resulted in the purchase of about 11,500 titles, excluding merged ebrary content (see Figure 3). The average monthly spend remained relatively steady, with a little more than half of the expenditure going toward the purchase of e-books and a little less than half for STL costs. There exists a long tail of titles used but not purchased, given that 81% of titles with short-term loans were not acquired. A disruption to this stable state occurred when ebrary content was merged into Ebook Central and the DDA pool increased significantly with many out-of-scope titles. Weekly reviews of publishers led to a strict publisher include list and modification of existing profile parameters to streamline content made available to patrons. Although short-term loan (STL) cost percentages have risen and some content has been embargoed for the first year or withdrawn from DDA or entirely, the DDA program provides access to a wide range of e-books not otherwise available.

Establishing and Maintaining EBA Programs

The demand-drive acquisition data, including the publisher and subject preferences of USF's faculty and students, was used to inform purchasing beyond the DDA program. Analysis of this data led to the implementation of evidence-based acquisition programs for selected publishers and content. Beginning with a successful Wiley EBA, now in continuous operation for four years, USF has engaged in six different multiyear e-book EBA initiatives, providing access to over 150,000 titles. All of them are still active, with the exception of one that was temporarily terminated for lack of funding, but which will now be resumed. These programs have become the basis for the monograph collection development strategy at USF. Collections are curated through profiling and

selection prior to exposure to the patrons and subsequently chosen for use and acquisition by the faculty and students.

The USF Libraries now have a standard procedure for setting up and maintaining EBA programs. Once amounts, content, total access period, and selection schedules are agreed upon, establishing administrative access to title lists and MARC records is the next step. USF catalogs the MARC records in a separate sublibrary of the library services platform (LSP or ILS) for ease of separation. Deduping with the DDA program is handled mainly from the DDA side. In the first EBA done at USF, records were loaded for more titles than access allowed, and the distribution process for the MARC records changed a few months after startup. It then became necessary to figure out how to make corrections using KBART files and WorldShare Collections Manager. Generally, in an EBA program titles are added as new content becomes available. While the program is more stable than a DDA, titles are also withdrawn. USF established a monthly schedule for making these updates. Finding a way to determine and secure just the records that need adding, or deleting, and maintaining agreement between the active title list and the content offered can be a challenge. Administrative functions are still being developed and improved by publishers to provide these services.

When the time comes for selection, here again there are a variety of methods. In essence, the usage and the prices for titles in the program should be obtained. A duplication check before selection is advised as you may want to avoid purchasing a title already owned on the platform or elsewhere. Sometimes it is necessary to piece together the usage spreadsheet and the cost spreadsheet. It pays to have good Excel skills. Ideally, you want to select the most used items, with total costs adding up to the agreed upon amount. Considerations other than usage, such as future need or subject matter, may be taken into account if allowed. Once the items are purchased, USF moves the records for the items from the EBA sublibrary with purchase notes.

The University of South Florida Libraries find EBA programs to be a successful compromise of monograph expenditure, investment in administrative effort, and ability to provide access to a large amount of content with good usage on a budget. As funding allows, these evidence-based e-book acquisition programs will continue to be an important collection development tool.

Orbis Cascade Alliance Consortial EBA

The Ebook Working Group (EWG) of the Orbis Cascade Alliance supports and manages the Alliance Ebook Program, an all-in e-book collection development program serving 39 diverse member academic institutions in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Alliance utilizes a shared Primo catalog, taking advantage of Alma network zone functionality for MARC records management for titles accessible as part of the Alliance Ebook Program.

The initial year of the Wiley Usage-Based Collection Management (UBCM) Alliance pilot ran May 1, 2016–April 30, 2017. Of the 39 participating institutions, 12 had previously ordered Wiley content available at the individual institutions. At the end of the first 10 months of year 1, the UBCM discovery pool included 19,652 titles, of which 87% (17,034 titles) were published before 2014 (backlist titles) and 13% (2,618 titles) published in 2015–2017 (frontlist titles). For the access period May 2016–February 2017, 10,166 unique titles in the discovery pool were used 265,381 times.

Observations of the Wiley UBCM Pilot

The initial usage period for year 1 title selection was 10 months: May 2016–February 2017. As part of the initial expectations of the pilot, UBCM title selection decisions were due to Wiley by April 30, 2017. At the time of the pilot, no consortial-level dashboard or administration module was available to pull UBCM statistics at an Alliance parent level. The Wiley statistics team took four weeks to pull, prepare, and provide usage data to the EWG, and then the EWG worked on behalf of Alliance for four weeks to determine and communicate title selection decisions. Although individual institutions could look at institution usage data through their institutional administrative log-ins on the Wiley platform, there was no way for the individual institution to isolate or exclude UBCM e-book usage.

Recognizing the diversity of Alliance members (community colleges to research institutions), the goal of the EWG group tasked with reviewing UBCM statistics was to ensure every participating institution benefited from titles selected through Wiley UBCM. With this in mind, the result was a three-pronged selection approach: (1) top used titles by each individual institution, (2) broadest used titles across high number of member institutions, and (3) overall highly used titles. This three-pronged approach served to balance broad goals of consortial acquisition with the varied needs of diverse individual institutions.

After running a number of scenarios with the three categories of the multipronged approach, the final selection model resulted in the following title selections:

- 248 titles selected as the top seven titles used by each institution, approximately 46% of the available selection budget.

- 234 titles selected with use by six or more institutions, approximately 42% of the budget.

- 54 titles where the combined overall use was more than 164 uses in the 10-month period, about 12% of the budget.

Once selected in the first prong, titles were removed from the selection pool to aid in calculations of the second and third categories of selection. As multiple selection scenarios were considered, in all options the scenarios resulted in an approximate 20% frontlist/80% backlist publication year distribution for selected titles. The selection spreadsheet permitted sorting by a variety of columns, including Title, Subject, Publication Year, Price, Number of Libraries Using the Title, Combined Overall Use, and a column of title usage by each of the 39 institutions (to sort by individual institution usage). Included in the final version was a selection code for each title. The spreadsheet also used a subtotal formula at the top of the document to adjust the count of total titles selected and total dollar amount spent, to aid in agile running of scenarios (Figure 4).

Observations of 2017–2018 E-Book Programs

Preparing for 2017–2018, the EWG completed a survey of members to determine priorities for new e-book offerings. A top priority for Alliance members was e-book offerings integrated with GOBI to aid member institutions in seeing title availability both individually and consortially, as well as to use acquisition tools already adopted by members. An April 2017 survey of members identified the following priorities for consortial e-book collection development: cost predictability, title stability, ease of records management, DRM-free, frontlist titles, as well as a broad range of content that would meet the needs of diverse member institutions. Selected for 2017–2018

Figure 4. Alliance Wiley UBCM title selections.

Title	Main Subject Category	Print Publication Year	Orbis Price	Count of Libraries Using Title	Combined Use	Code	Central OR CC	Central WA	Chemeketa CC	Clackamas CC	Clark	Concordia	Eastern OR
Genetic Modification and Food Quality - A Do	Agriculture, Aq	2015	####	16	254	B-7	0	54	1	0	15	0	0
A Companion to Women in the Ancient World	Humanities	2012	####	16	111	B-7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology	Psychology	2009	####	15	375	B-7	0	0	0	0	28	0	0
A Guide to Academia: Getting Into and Survivi	Life Sciences	2012	####	15	119	B-7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lead Generation - Methods, Strategies and C	Chemistry	2016	####	14	1400	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Schizophrenia 3e	Medicine	2011	####	14	382	7	0	2	0	0	2	87	0
Handbook of Sport Psychology, Third Edition	Psychology	2007	####	14	299	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
A Companion to Gender History	Humanities	2004	####	14	242	B-7	1	3	0	0	0	0	7
Ciba Foundation Symposium 115 - Abortion -	Medicine	1991	####	14	98	B-7	0	3	1	0	2	0	2
Gregory's Pediatric Anesthesia 5e	Medicine	2012	####	13	102	B-7	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
A Room of One's Own	Humanities	2015	####	12	209	B-7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Protocols for High-Risk Pregnancies 5e	Medicine	2010	####	12	198	7	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Urban Transit Systems and Technology	Physical Scienc	2007	####	11	318	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Mindfulnes	Psychology	2014	####	11	211	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan	Social & Behav	2005	####	11	151	B-7	36	0	31	0	0	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	Medicine	2015	####	11	128	B-7	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
A Quick Guide to Clinical Trials	Medicine	2009	####	11	96	B-7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
ACA Casebook for Counseling Lesbian, Gay, Bi	Psychology	2015	####	11	87	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Handbook of Language and Gender	Humanities	2003	####	11	60	B-7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

were new e-book pilot programs with Taylor and Francis/CRC Press (T&F/CRC) Evidence Based Selection (EBS) and Oxford University Press (OUP) with University of California (UC) Press frontlist purchase.

From mid-spring to November 2017, Alliance staff were in a period of transition. The longtime shared content and technical services program manager (SCTS PM), who was very familiar with the needs, goals, and history of Alliance in terms of consortial collection development, left, and two interim program managers filled in over the following six months—one involved in the negotiation for new programs and the other in new program implementation. While all parties were intentional in passing along information and documenting expectations, it was difficult to transfer fully knowledge and expectations regarding the new programs.

Clarity around title expectations was an ongoing issue. Communication with members (technical services librarians, student and faculty users, librarian subject liaisons, and others) about the specifics of the programs grew more complex as new programs were added. With the Taylor & Francis/CRC Press EBS pilot program, there was ongoing confusion and inconsistency experienced by participating members in terms of which titles and how many titles were available at individual institutions. Whether related to a concurrent effort by T&F/CRC to roll out an updated combined platform in November 2017 or to a lack of T&F technical resources in responding

to the issues reported by Alliance was unknown. In early months, delays related to loading of T&F/CRC MARC records into Alliance's Network Zone of Alma further caused difficulty in terms of user access to titles. Increased conversations at the time of pilot program negotiation by Alliance could have benefited program success, especially regarding advantages and expectations for streamlined workflows afforded by WorldShare Collections Manager and Alma Network Zone for shared records management—as opposed to batchloading of records by each individual institution.

Unrelated to specific access issues or platforms, the addition of two new programs impacted communication efforts and have indicated a potential need for greater consistency in Alma Network Zone targets and the Public Note field (Figure 5)—something the EWG can think about more in the future. Determining discovery pool identity standards would provide opportunity for best practice and aid the ability of both internal library staff and wider institution users (faculty/students) in recognizing expectations for e-books—especially in cases where perpetual access selection decisions happen at the end of a use period.

Potential Improvements

There are a few aspects of the past year, and especially the 5 months of July–Nov 2017, that in hindsight could have benefitted from different approaches. Since the Alliance SCTS PM was not

Figure 5. Public note field display.

an employee of one of the participating academic institutions or located at one of those sites, they were unable to directly verify access issues or "see" what users were seeing. Second, understanding the potential for success when faced with major changes in terms of platform upgrades was something under-considered. Third, working to turn on two new programs (especially with a vendor that hadn't worked with a shared network zone and streamlined catalog management expectations), while exciting at the time, turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. Finally, related to these examples, the concerns of overusing EWG volunteers and considering the human resources and specialized skills of volunteers should be an ongoing consideration in a project like this. The EWG includes two catalogers as well as two individuals interested in statistics. In the example of bringing new programs up and running, the demand on the catalogers has been heavy, demand that cannot be evened out over a 12-month period. Thinking about specialists and timing is critical to the success of a program that is volunteer supported.

Moving forward, the EWG will be working on updating documentation for members on the e-book programs; working with a new, permanent Alliance SCTS PM; and preparing for review of usage statistics in preparation for usage-influenced selection. The EWG will need to begin preparing for Wiley UBCM title selection around March 2018 and work to determine if changes or adjustments need to be discussed with vendors in anticipation of the coming year.