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Beau David Case
Ohio State University Libraries

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Approval Plan Evaluation Studies: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, 1969-1996

by **Beau David Case** (Assistant Professor, Language & Area Studies Department,
Ohio State University Libraries, 1858 Neil Avenue Mall, Columbus, OH 43210-1286.
phone: (614) 292-2594; fax (614) 292-7859; <case.42@osu.edu>. <<http://aleph.lib.ohio-state.edu/~bcase>>.

Introduction

Recently a bibliography of vendor evaluation studies appeared in the library literature.¹ Excluded from this article, however, were "citations concerned with approval plans and those with marginal relevancy to the subject." This new bibliography, in part, fills in the gaps left by the earlier article by focusing upon monographic approval plan and vendor evaluations. This bibliography also informs librarians about approval plan and vendor evaluations and provides them with a variety of methodologies, data, and conclusions which may be of use to them in their own evaluative studies. Hopefully it serves as a practical guide for librarians, and as a follow-up to a recently-published essay calling librarians to action.² But librarians are not the only group to benefit from this work, as vendors will find the information it contains useful in their dealings with and understanding of librarians.

There are, of course, a few published bibliographies dedicated to or including sections on approval plans;³ however, none limit their scope to the evaluation of approval plans and vendors, and none are comprehensive. The entries in this thorough bibliography had to meet two criteria in order to be included. First, the works included had to be

concerned in some way with the evaluation of approval plans or their vendors. Second, the sources had to be verified in specific common bibliographic utilities and indexes, such as OCLC, ERIC, *Library Literature*, and *Library & Information Science Abstracts*, in order to ensure that interested readers can easily locate and obtain the materials either in their own library or via interlibrary loan. Finally, a few words about the format of the annotations. In an effort to reduce unnecessary verbiage a few liberties were taken. (1) With only a few exceptions, the

terse annotations contain less than 100 words. (2) Unless otherwise specified, all the approval plans discussed below concern only the acquisition of English-language materials published in Canada, the United Kingdom, or the United States. (3) All percentages reported in the literature have been rounded to the

nearest unit of one, and all dollar amounts to the nearest applicable unit. (4) And, if vendors or institutions are specifically named by the authors in their research, these names were indicated in either the title of the work itself, or in the annotation, and, conversely, if vendors and institutions were not named, the annotations omitted this fact altogether. Finally, since the bibliography is structurally and thematically homogenous, given what has been said above, the citations are simply ordered alphabetically.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aldredge, N.S. "The Symbiotic Relationship of Approval Plans to Collection Development." In *International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Academic Libraries* (4th: 1979: Milwaukee), *Shaping Library Collections for the 1980s*, edited by P. Spyers-Duran and T. Mann, Jr., 174-177. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1980. Surveys were sent to collection development or acquisitions librarians at 44 large and small U.S. university libraries. The answers to five questions were as follows: 50% indicated that approval plans led to the creation of collection development policies; 90% indicated that plans began in response to a need for a broad-based as opposed to a core collection; 90% felt that plans could meet collection needs; 100% felt that plans enhanced collection development; and 85% responded that comprehensive collection development necessitates refinements of plan profiles.

Anderson, L.W. "Internal Systems for Handling Approval Plans: A Case Study." *International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Academic Libraries* (3rd: 1971: West Palm Beach), *Economics of Approval Plans*, edited by P. Spyers-Duran and D. Gore, 58-81. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971. Analysis of data at Colorado State University for 1970 indicated that 88% of books supplied by plan were accepted, and 12% returned. After reprints were excluded from profile, 93% were accepted. Of the rejections, 58% were judged inappropriate, 11% were duplicates, 28% reprints, and 3% serials. Mean searching time related to plan calculated at 46 seconds. Plan judged effective in all areas evaluated. Frequent evaluation of plans stressed, with emphasis upon cost analysis.

Arnold, A.E. "Approval Slips and Faculty Participation in Book Selection at a Small University Library." *Collection Management* 18:1-2 (1993): 89-102. BNAm slip plan at **Auburn University** at Montgomery evaluated with five-question survey to faculty selectors. 86% of surveys returned. Majority figures were: 38% ordered 5-10 books per month; reason for not ordering books was that journals were more important for field; 76% selected using slips; 72% stated slips facilitated selection participation; ranked selection sources: publisher announcements and review journals; *Choice* cards; BNAm slips (however, BNAm reported that 60% of firm orders from slips); conferences, workshops and conversations; and bibliographies and core lists. Wide range of responses when results tabulated by faculty discipline.

Atkinson, H.C. "Faculty Reaction to New Approval Plan at The Ohio State University." In *International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Academic Libraries* (1st: 1968: Western Michigan University), *Approval and Gathering Plans in Academic Libraries*, edited by P. Spyers-Duran, 30-42. Littleton: Libraries Unlimited, 1969. Author evaluates plan with Abel one year after creation. Prior to plan faculty selected materials. 50 colleges and departments surveyed. 88% wished to continue with plan; 28% desired modifications. Faculty also asked to review issues of *Publishers Weekly* prior to and after plan establishment, noting titles that the library should have. These were checked against holdings, which showed that plan supplied 81%. Overall failure rate was thus 19%, with failure of vendor 9%, and 10% being outside of

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profile. Author recommends that new plans be evaluated 1-2 years after creation and that librarians communicate effectively with faculty.

Axford, H.W. "The Economics of a Domestic Approval Plan." *College & Research Libraries* 32:5 (1971): 368-375. Five State University of Florida libraries studied, two of which had approval plans. Technical services costs analyzed, savings demonstrated for two libraries, and potential savings illustrated for other three. A sample of titles received on approval at **Florida Atlantic University** then was checked against the holdings of four other university libraries in Florida: one private without plan, one state without, and two state with. Figures given for total, commercial, and university press titles. Plans found to provide better coverage and supply materials faster than other methods.

_____. "The Validity of Book Price Indexes for Budgetary Projections." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 19:1 (1975): 5-12. Average book prices from *Bowker Annual* were compared to average price paid per book on approval over a five-year period at the **University of Nebraska**, **Florida Atlantic University**, and **Arizona State University**. Average price paid was 13-22% less than average book price. Author recommends budgeting on basis of average price paid, not on figures in *Bowker Annual*.

Barker, J.W. "Vendor Studies Redux: Evaluating the Approval Plan Option from Within." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 13:2 (1989): 133-141. Evaluations of the **University of California at Berkeley's** 42 approval plans. Discounts shown to be only 2% greater than firm order discounts. Also, acquisitions staff was reduced 8% over five years, but total volume of acquisitions decreased 24% over same period. So, the approval plans were not bringing about savings. Data also show that approval acquisitions took an increasingly larger part of the budget as opposed to firm orders. Author recommends that librarians be flexible with design and changes in plans, and librarians communicate their needs to vendors.

Brunning, D.R. "Troubleshooting the Approval Plan: A Case Study from the Subject Specialist's Point of View." In *Mountain Plains Library Association Academic Library Section Research Forum* (Bismarck, North Dakota, September 23-26, 1987), *Libraries and the Literacy Challenge: The Frontier of the 90's*, edited by S.V. Hatfield, 93-121. Washington: Educational Resources Information Center, 1987. ED 290494. A sample of monographs published in field of mass media in 1985 were identified through reviewing sources. These were then searched in BNAm fiche and **Arizona State University** library's ordering file and catalog. 66% of items covered by plan. Of these, 87% were acquired, and 13% rejected by profile. Of those not supplied by the plan, 93% should have been. Author alarmed by failure rate of vendor, and warns that librarians cannot assume that a plan is effective in bringing material into the library.

Calhoun, J.C. "Enhancing Notification-Slips Plans." *Arkansas Libraries* 52:4 (1995): 3-5. Book plan once used and two new slip plans implemented at **University of Arkansas at Little Rock** Ottenheimer Library. Book receipts searched in OCLC's monthly review service to determine number of holdings by LC class. Median number of holdings used as a touchstone for evaluation "by appeal." Slips searched one and six months after arrival, revealing few holdings for titles. Slip plans thus judged successful because new titles were supplied quickly. Author hypothesizes that lower and upper values of class holdings can be determined, and classes in the upper value at one month will be in upper classes at six months. These values suggested for use in allocations process.

Chalaron, P. and A. Perault. "Approval Plans: The Multi-Vendor Approach." In *Vendors and Library Acquisitions*, edited by B. Katz, 145-159. New York: Haworth Press, 1991. Return rates for four broad subjects over eleven years reported at **Louisiana State University**. Further analysis of returns over three years revealed high

rates, not among, but within plans due to multiple classifications for titles. Low rates seen for multiple vendors supplying identical title. Some vendors supplied titles not fitting their profile, but fitting another plan, and library thus accepted first receipt. Second study briefly discussed: prior to beginning British imprint social science plan, slips from American and British vendors were examined for six months — British vendor supplied 30% more titles. Multiple plans considered successful.

DeVolder, A.L. "Approval Plans: A Survey." Washington: Educational Resources Information Center, 1972. ED 072810. 25-question survey returned by 24 librarians at ten state universities in the western U.S. to aid **University of New Mexico** in implementing plan. Questions relevant to plan and vendor evaluation summarized: question 4, which vendors were used: Abel (19), B&T (3), and Brodard (1); question 10, did plans meet expectations of receipts: 15 satisfied, two not, four did not answer; question 11 queried timeliness: 13 satisfied, five not, ten did not respond; question 18 asked why plans were not implemented: two responses indicated lack of money and lack of faculty interest; question 19 prompted opinions on contributions of plans: majority of responses indicated speed of acquisition and staff savings; two others lamented "sameness" of national library collections and lack of small press coverage; question 20 queried savings: 15 agreed in terms of staff and supplies; questions 21-23 regarded rejections by percentage: 5-10% (4), 11-20% (5), 25, 31, and 50% (one each); and question 25 allowed for general remarks about plans: overall favorable, with a few problems mentioned. Abel was thus chosen as vendor at New Mexico, and plan judged successful.

Dole, W.V. "Austerity and the Arts: Collection Development in the 1980s." *Drexel Library Quarterly* 19:3 (1983): 28-37. Author reports figures from BNAm analysis of all titles supplied by Abel and BNAm on approval in the subjects of fine arts, art media, auxiliary art, and architecture. From 1971-1982 the number of new titles decreased 30% while price increased 153%, and the number of reprints decreased 88% while price decreased 2%. Author focuses on the changing roles of fine arts librarians and their need for a variety of tools and techniques in collection development.

Eldredge, M. "United Kingdom Approval Plans and United States Academic Libraries: Are they Necessary and Cost Effective?" *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 18:2 (1994): 165-178. 1,455 BHB titles selected by **University of California at Davis** were searched in BIP and BNAm database for U.S. price and availability: 44% less expensive in U.S., 30% less expensive in U.K., 26% available in U.S. \$56,000 annual savings estimated after calculating exchange rates and discounts. After two months 35% of U.K. titles available in U.S., after six 65%, after 12 75%, and after 18 82%. Subjects and publishers of titles not available listed by number and percentage, and searched in Melvyl: 38% held only by U.C. Davis. Author recommends a U.C. system-wide approval plan to ensure comprehensive collecting.

Emery, C.D. "Efficiency and Effectiveness: Approval Plans from a Management Perspective." In *International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Academic Libraries* (4th: 1979: Milwaukee), *Shaping Library Collections for the 1980s*, edited by P. Spyers-Duran and T. Mann, Jr., 185-199. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1980. Study at **University of Waterloo** (Ontario, Canada) presents data on circulation of titles by vendor (BNAm, Coutts, and Harrassowitz), inherent lag time of imprint notification in conventional review sources, rate of delivery of titles acquired on approval and firm order, breakdown of collection development staff time, and salary cost of selectors versus other acquisitions staff. Each of these cases justified use of plans and met the library's objectives.

Evans, G.E. "Book Selection and Book Collection Usage in Academic Libraries." *The Library Quarterly* 40:3 (1970): 297-308. Four Ph.D.-granting universities employing three methods of materials selection (librarian, faculty, and approval plan) were examined to determine which method acquired the most-circulated items. Statistically significant data revealed that 80% of the materials selected by

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- librarians circulated within the first year, 70% by faculty, and 62% by approval plan. Author argues for more studies to determine if a national pattern exists, and criticizes notion that approval plans are economical, given that libraries will eventually be filled with little-used material, which will lead to weeding and storage costs.
- _____ and C.W. Argyres. "Approval Plans and Collection Development in Academic Libraries." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 18:1 (1974): 35-50. This follow-up of an earlier study by Evans (see above), analyzed data for nine college and university libraries in terms of the number and percentage of circulated titles selected by librarians, faculty, and approval plans both overall and for the broad subject areas of humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Results indicate that significant differences exist for circulation and method of selection. Again, librarian-selected material circulated most and approval plan material circulated least.
- Franklin, H.L. "Engineering Books on Approval: A Selector's Viewpoint." *Technicalities* 9:3 (1989): 12-15. BNA^m plan at **Oregon State University** Kerr Library evaluated over three years. 70% of purchases for engineering acquired through plan. 99% of approval titles had imprint dates within one year. Six hours per week of selector's and staff's time saved due to plan (e.g. reviewing literature, typing requests). Relevant slips from Midwest were held six months, then compared to library's holdings: BNA^m supplied 67%. Checks were also made in review literature: BNA^m supplied 74%. Plan judged successful. Author recommends uniform profiles for disciplines and interdisciplinary fields in order to ensure good coverage and efficiency.
- _____. "Sci/Tech Approval Plans Can Be Effective." *Collection Management* 19:1-2 (1994): 135-145. Study evaluates **Oregon State University** Kerr Library's approval plans with Midwest, BNA^m, and BHB. CIP data compared to slips sent by the three vendors. 95% of titles supplied. 55% of titles received in two months, 85% in four, and 96% in six. Author concludes that plans are successful, and advocates a change from book to slip plans during budget crises.
- Grant, J. and S. Perlmutter. "Vendor Performance Evaluation." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 4:5 (1978): 366-367. **University of Louisville** Library's three potential vendors were evaluated. Vendors supplied slips, and date received was recorded. Ballen provided slips fastest, followed by B&T, then BNA^m. Slips then compared to OCLC for bibliographic accuracy. Most accurate was B&T, followed by BNA^m, then Ballen. 53% of variation in author field, 23% in title, 15% in series, and 9% elsewhere. Discounts also ranked: B&T, Ballen, then BNA^m. Author concludes that because rankings varied, libraries selecting vendors must set priorities.
- Gregor, J. and W.C. Fraser. "A University of Windsor Experience with an Approval Plan in Three Subjects and Three Vendors." *Canadian Library Journal* 38:4 (1981): 227-231. Library evaluated vendors in subject areas of political science, psychology, and economics. Vendors supplied 39, 58, and 50% of estimated total publishing output. Average approval price was higher than stated publisher price in all cases. Discounts were 2, 3, and 13%. Shipments arrived in 10-18, 20-40, and 16-50 days. Subject rejections were 10, 10, and 9%. Overall objectives of evaluation were met.
- Hall, B. *Collection Assessment Manual for College and University Libraries*. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1985, 81-85. Author recommends evaluating subject profiles by means of vendor management reports. B&T used as an example. Two reports, plan activity and returned books, both provide breakdowns of total shipped, total ordered from slips, titles ordered by L.C. and B&T subjects, list prices, net prices, reasons for return, and so on. Author suggests that this information can be compared with other acquisitions data, such as subject expenditures for approval material to subject expenditures for material acquired by other means.
- Harr, J. M. "Paperbacks on Approval." *Against the Grain* 7:3 (1995): 16. Study at **Vanderbilt University** Central and Science/Engineering Libraries analyzes cost savings of acquiring paper over cloth titles on approval for those titles simultaneously published in both formats. Three weekly shipments from BNA^m were analyzed: 24% of titles available in both paper and cloth; cloth titles increased cost by 19%; average cost difference between formats was \$28. Author calculates potential annual savings of acquiring paper titles, taking into account added commercial binding, at 9% of the total cost of the plan, or \$22,000. Plan subsequently changed. Author recommends querying vendors about supplying titles in paper.
- Hodge, S.P. "Duplicates, Delivery Times, and Claims: Three Related Factors in Approval Plan Effectiveness." In *International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Academic Libraries* (4th: 1979: Milwaukee), *Shaping Library Collections for the 1980s*, edited by P. Spyers-Duran and T. Mann, Jr., 74-78. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1980. Study at **Texas A&M University** outlines reasons for approval items duplicating collection: acquired by standing orders (1%), other plans (4%), firm orders (2%), or already in collection (7%). To reduce the duplication as a result of firm orders, the library claimed needed items from the approval vendor after the item's OCLC record had three holdings. 65% of these claims were delivered within 87 days, and 10% of the items arrived prior to claiming. Author also suggests a number of managerial means to reduce duplication.
- _____. "Evaluating the Role and Effectiveness of Approval Plans for Library Collection Development." In *Issues in Acquisitions: Programs & Evaluation*, edited by S.H. Lee, 33-53. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1984. Five studies at **Texas A&M** briefly discussed. (1) A sample of relevant titles from ABPR indicated that four plans (including Elsevier and Springer-Verlag) supplied 42%. Author felt this percentage to be low, and so recommends that librarians continue to browse review literature for important titles despite plan profiles. (2) An analysis of interlibrary loan requests justified plan profiles, but author recommended strengthening current imprint acquisitions. (3) 80% of university press titles acquired. As a result, some subjects changed from slip to book provision, and then 100% of titles were received. (4) 57% of published conference proceedings acquired by library, 10-20% of which arrived on approval. Although this confirmed librarians' impressions, a profile change was thought to be incapable of increasing acquisition rate. (5) Approval plans require 3 FTE, and firm orders 9 FTE. Thus, the majority of acquisitions should be on approval.
- Hulbert, L.A. and D.S. Curry. "Evaluation of an Approval Plan." *College & Research Libraries* 39:6 (1978): 485-491. Paper determines whether or not the **University of Iowa Health Sciences Library** received on approval material for which otherwise it would have had to place firm orders. 32 review journals and publisher fliers were monitored. These accounted for only 7% of total orders. Of all books received by library, 57% were on approval, 25% by review sources, 10% by patron request, and 8% on standing order. 89% of approval books accepted. Results led to the elimination of 17 journals as review sources. Author concludes that plan is successful and reduces selection work.
- Kaatrude, P.B. "Approval Plan Versus Conventional Selection: Determining the Overlap." *Collection Management* 11:1-2 (1989): 145-150. Study at the **UCLA Management Library** evaluated one approval plan. First, an examination of firm order invoices over one year yielded a list of 190 publishers, 62 of which were covered by the plan. Furthermore, 43% of firm order expenditures were for publishers covered by the plan. Second, 37 selection tools identified 210 titles over three months that met the library's collecting profile. 88% fit the plan's publisher and subject profiles, and the remaining 12% met the subject profile. No conclusions drawn, but the benefits of the plan to the library are briefly discussed.
- Loreck, Richard. "Approval Plans Can Be Successful." In *International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Libraries* (1st: 1968: Western Michigan University), *Approval and Gathering Plans in Academic Libraries*, edited by P.

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- Spyers-Duran, 4-7. Littleton: Libraries Unlimited, 1969. Figures reported for titles received (4,000, 15,000, 14,000, 14,000), percentage rejected (25, 28, 14, 9), total dollars spent, and average price and discounts for four years at **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**. Plan evaluated by holding current year faculty firm orders for six months, then checking against holdings: plan supplied 99%. 20% of receipts already cataloged by LC, and 65% after eight weeks. Remaining 35% held for one year, then cataloged in house. Plan saved staff time and led to their reallocation to O.P. orders, which doubled. Author stresses design of plan based on, and no firm orders for, current year imprints.
- McCullough, K. "Evaluation of an Approval Plan: Vendor and Publisher Performance." Washington: Educational Resources Information Center, 1974. ED 088461. Study at **Purdue University** designed to identify possible adjustments to the profiles of two new plans and vendors. Data included: publishers ranked by number of books received and method used to acquire; subjects ranked by number of titles received; list of commercial and university presses; number of titles received; number claimed due to exclusions; and turnaround time for claims.
- _____, E.D. Posey, and D.C. Pickett. *Approval Plans and Academic Libraries: An Interpretive Survey*. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1977. College and university members of ARL and other four-year institutions surveyed. 57 questions in seven sections covered: general characteristics of institutions and their approval plans; accounting practices; organization of collections and personnel; book-selection and location processes; publishing coverage and reliance on plans; service to users and general academic areas; and additional general comments. Following the extensive data are responses from three viewpoints: acquisitions, collection development, and vendor. General conclusions drawn are that approval plans must be tailored to individual libraries and that norms may not exist in many cases.
- McDonald, D.R., M.W. Maxfield, and V.G.F. Friesner. "Sequential Analysis: A Methodology for Monitoring Approval Plans." *College & Research Libraries* 40:4 (1978): 329-334. Method used at **Kansas State University** to determine if plan supplied titles which bibliographers expected. Results led to the rejection of the hypothesis. As a result, differences in opinion between librarians and vendors were identified, and the profile altered. Authors recommend test be run again after 6-12 months. Advantages of method are that sampling reduces amount of work involved in evaluation, and that clear conclusions can be drawn.
- Moline, G. *An Evaluation of Approval Plan Performance: The Acquisition of Titles in Political Science*. San Jose: Department of Librarianship, San Jose State University, 1975. Study evaluates performance of seven vendors at **SJSU**: Abel, Abrams, B&T, Brodard — Stacey, Collier Macmillan, Prentice-Hall, and Scarecrow Press. Sample of LC proof slips meeting appropriateness criteria were compared to arrivals on approval. 61% total, 86% of academic press, and 53% of commercial titles arrived. Includes tables for percentage received by publisher (0-100%) and by LC class (42-69%). Author demonstrates that plans cannot provide recent material quickly (within 16 months), and advocates careful monitoring of all plans, as well as close communication with vendors.
- Pasterczyk, C.E. "A Quantitative Methodology for Evaluating Approval Plan Performance." *Collection Management* 10:1-2 (1988): 25-38. BNA evaluated at **University of New Mexico** General Library in areas of computer science, mathematics, and geology. Data on BNA and LC subject headings gathered for accepted and rejected books. Return rate for BNA subject areas was 5, 5, and 5%, and for LC was 13, 8, and 0%. Author concludes that vendor subject codes are unreliable in eliminating unwanted titles. Conversely, a careful study of vendor's thesaurus is necessary to ensure adequate coverage.
- Reidelbach, J.H. and G.M. Shirk. "Selecting an Approval Plan Vendor II: Comparative Vendor Data." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 8:3 (1984): 157-202. Survey of 40 questions was sent to eight vendors: Academic Book Center, Scholarly Book Center, Taylor-Carlisle, Ambassador Book Service, B&T, Ballen, BNA, Coutts, Midwest, and Yankee. Data analyzed for nine areas: company background; employee background; customer service; profile and title selection; profile maintenance; materials forms/slips/returns handling; financial practices; statistical reporting; and miscellaneous. Authors advise that data cannot replace direct inquiry with vendors.
- _____. "Selecting an Approval Plan Vendor III: Academic Librarians' Evaluations of Eight United States Approval Plan Vendors." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 9:3 (1985): 177-260. 652 questionnaires mailed to libraries in the U.S. Areas analyzed include: institutional data; approval plan background; profile establishment/maintenance; plan coverage; notification/selection/profile exclusions forms; shipments/returns; management reports; vendor contract satisfaction; vendor/library communications; miscellaneous; and overall vendor ranking. The eight vendors of part II (see above) are ranked for each area. Authors advise that the data be used only as one aid in vendor selection.
- Rouzer, S.M. "Acquiring Monographic Series by Approval Plan: Is the Standing Order Obsolete?" *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 19:4 (1995): 395-401. Evaluation at **Johns Hopkins University** Eisenhower Library for 216 series titles for two years. Library would have saved \$17 per foreign series book had they been received on approval rather than on standing order (discounts equal), and would have saved \$7 per domestic book (discount only on approval). Estimated annual savings at \$10,000. However, approval books on average arrived 84 days after standing orders. Nonetheless, library canceled these standing orders and received series on approval.
- St. Clair, G. and J. Treadwell. "Science and Technology Approval Plans Compared." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 33:4 (1989): 382-392. Two major and two specialty vendors were evaluated at **Texas A&M University** Evans Library. Vendors provided lists of titles supplied under the profile. Results indicated that 49% of the items supplied by one vendor, 30% by two, 17% by three, and 4% by four. Vendors supplied 30-66% of total publishing output by LC classes. Data on university and commercial presses and distribution by press also reported, with wide-ranging results. Authors conclude that vendors must be carefully selected, profiles must be carefully constructed, and plan must be constantly monitored.
- Schmidt, K.A. "Capturing the Mainstream: Publisher-Based and Subject-Based Approval Plans in Academic Libraries." *College & Research Libraries* 47:4 (1986): 365-369. Article discusses change from subject- to publisher-based domestic plan at the **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**. Publisher catalogs were checked against library holdings, revealing that the library owned at least 90% of the titles, most of which were acquired on firm order. As a result, plan was changed. Author argues against this change for foreign plans due to the nature of publishing abroad, which is better served by subject-based plans.
- Somers, S.W. "A Comparison of Two Approval Plan Profiles: A Study in Success and Failure." In *Vendors and Library Acquisitions*, edited by B. Katz, 161-169. New York: Haworth Press, 1991. Article examines a single vendor at both the **University of Georgia** and **Tulane University**. The former had a "wide-open" plan with no subject exclusions, and non-subject exclusions restricted to textbooks, reprints, and books with other media. The latter had a "detailed and complex" plan with carefully chosen subjects, excluding by format and price. Plan failed and was canceled at Georgia, but plan succeeded and rated highly at Tulane. Conclusion is that amount of time spent in developing plan correlates to success, but does not correlate to expectation for success.
- Walters, M. D. "Approval Program Timing Study: Baker & Taylor vs. Blackwell North America." *Collection Building* 7:1 (1985): 14-18.

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plan should lead to faculty trust in the process and to their willingness to step back from constant scrutiny of the new arrivals — except to look for that special book reviewed in Sunday's *New York Times*.

The implementation of an approval review and rejection process also brings to the fore the issue of building a "general" collection which includes appropriate materials to anticipate future needs (solid general works in Southeast Asian history in a college library where there is no current course being offered) and to satisfy student demand which may not be immediately evident to faculty. (We're all aware that the collection viewed from the Chemistry chair's office and the collection viewed from the reference desk are very different beasts.) Deliberating about the use of approval plans can be an interesting exercise simply because it raises the issues of shared responsibility and the general collection. For libraries operating in situations where funds have always been allocated to teaching faculty, the approval plan can also be a useful tool to shift the control of library resources.

It is clear that approval plans need not be all or nothing propositions — select bits and pieces of approvals — including the delivery of new titles announcement slips — may be the most appropriate strategy for the college library. It is not realistic to envision a college plan as a university arrangement except — somehow — smaller. There are features of approval plans which are especially appropriate to the smaller library environment and as vendor and library experience grows I expect that a variety of models will evolve.

A college library plan can begin with one or several departments who have bought the concept. The best case result of this strategy is the "Tom Sawyer effect" — the evident satisfaction of the first participants with early and easy access to new titles will draw others into the approval fold. A highly satisfactory college plan can be grown gradually as departments can be convinced to play the game. Confidence is imparted to the startup faculty by offering them involvement in the creation of the approval profile. They should particularly be approached as the experts in

"An examination of the possibilities for growing approval plans in college libraries needs to begin with consideration of the politics of the situation."

"It is clear that approval plans need not be all or nothing propositions."

identifying core publishers for their discipline. Given the huge universe of scholarly publishing and the limited means of the college library, it is inevitable that a publisher-based profiling strategy will be adopted. The adding and deleting of publishers from the core to be covered is also a way to trim/expand the profile to meet the resources available that is understandable and intellectually credible. (The acquisitions librarian

can contribute to this process by identifying for the faculty the publishers who appear most frequently in the department's firm orders.) It is obvious that this core of publishers will be different for every department; it is difficult to build a plan in Education without Jossey Bass, or in History without Princeton University Press.

The issue of "undergraduate" versus "research level" materials is not one to be resolved simply and universally, and certainly not one to be resolved by the bookseller. College programs will differ dramatically in their intellectual ambition and bibliographic requirements. Teaching faculty and librarians together can identify a huge range of discriminations within a vendor profiling system that will add up to a satisfying implicit definition of what constitutes an "undergraduate book." The college library may not ordinarily collect proceedings, but if there is a department which requires them as part of a commitment to approvals that decision can be implemented for just one discipline or one publisher or one segment of a subject profile. The geographic scope of a teaching department's interests is another dimension to be made specific to curricular demands and local interest.

Serious investment in the initial profile and the clear expectation that adjustments will need to be made until the review shelf contains the right quantity and character of materials are the keys to success in building a small approval plan. The college environment is a first class test of the flexibility inherent in any approval system.

I expect that more and more college and small university libraries will choose to experiment with approvals to realize the cost and service benefits which are taken for granted by the largest academic libraries. As experience with the startup process is shared by librarians and their approval vendors, the sophistication and serviceability of the "college plan" should grow apace.

Approval Plan Evaluation Studies from page 21

Study evaluated two vendors at California State University, Los Angeles. BNA sent slips and B&T sent books in 14 science subjects. Data collected and compared on timeliness of notification and delivery, subject profiling, discounts, and coverage. Although seemingly equal, findings illustrate strengths and weaknesses of the vendors. Other libraries using the vendors were also interviewed. Author concludes that plans must be regularly evaluated in order to prevent misleading assumptions, and suggests that bidding process results with greater discounts.

Warzala, M. "Acquisition of Monographic Series: Approval Plan Versus Standing Order." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 15:3 (1991): 313-327. Author performed six title keyword searches in B&T database for irregular monographic series over ten years: (1) "science" for domestic, commercial publishers; (2) "Latin America" for U.K. publishers; (3) political science, history, and social issues for domestic think tanks; (4) "adulthood" and "aging" for domestic medical/professional publishers; (5) "solid-state" and "physics" for European scientific, technical, and medical (STM) publishers; and (6) "molecular biology" for domestic STM's. Data presented for all cases for frequency of titles, and average and total prices by year in three tables: generically, by LC class, and by intended readership

level. Cases 1 and 4 were diverse in L.C. class and readership and thus recommended for approval; cases 5 and 6 were limited in each and thus recommended for standing order.

Footnotes

¹The Vendor Study Group. "Vendor Evaluation: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, 1955-1987." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 12:1 (1988): 17-28.

²Case, B.D. "Seeking Your Approval: Your Approval Plan Vendor Evaluation." *Against the Grain* 7:4 (1995): 30.

³Godden, I.P., K.W. Fachan, and P.A. Smith. *Collection Development and Acquisitions, 1970-80: An Annotated, Critical Bibliography*. Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1982; Kohl, D.F. *Acquisitions, Collection Development, and Collection Use: A Handbook for Library Management*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Information Services, 1985; Library Administration and Management Association, American Library Association. *Statistical Applications in Library Technical Services: An Annotated Bibliography*, edited by S.A. Burkholder. Chicago: Library Administration and Management Association, American Library Association, 1987; Rossi, G. J. "Library Approval Plans: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography." *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 11:1 (1987): 3-34.