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Getting Our Feet Wet: One Library’s Experience with Transactional Access

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more liberal in their compromises may enjoy short-term savings, but their lack of perpetual access provisions may subject them to peril in the future. In contrast, libraries that are un-compromising in their commitment to securing perpetual access provisions can rest assured that their collections will continue to be accessible by future generations. However, they will be investing in the status quo at a time when everything about libraries is changing.

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Introduction/History:
Murray State University is a mid-sized regional institution located in rural western Kentucky. The university currently has an enrollment of approximately 11,000 and an FTE of 8383 for the fall semester. In 2005, following years of passive-re-allocation of one-time purchase funds to serial holdings funds, Murray State University Libraries was forced to dramatically cut its journal holdings. For years prior, any journal requested by the faculty was purchased with no foresight into the budget growth needed to sustain the subscription. Thus, many of the titles cut in 2005 were used by few, but were relied upon by those who used them. Since 2005, journal prices have continued to increase, bringing Murray State University Libraries to the point of completely exhausting the holdings budget for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. While we are committed to not cutting journal access, we have come to the decision we must re-evaluate the current continuations budget and strategy for providing access to content. We also wanted to tap into the iTunes model of selling items on the unit level rather than the entire entity. Part of this new strategy is the implementation of a transactional access program with Science Direct (Elsevier).

Fall out of Cancellation
Though the 2005 cuts were entirely necessary, they were made with little to no consulta-
tion with the faculty who depended upon them. The administration of the Libraries did little to explain or justify such cuts, which were criticized harshly. These cuts occurred within the same fiscal year as a main floor renovation to the main library, which led some teaching faculty to believe that journals were cut to pay for new carpet and other aesthetic amenities. The administration of the Libraries was somewhat aware of the process. We made initial contact with Unomediated, User-Initiated Pay-

7. See line 80 of Eliot’s poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”
8. See, for example, the pricing model of the University of Chicago Press: http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/user_images/ContentEditor/1252948133675/ 2010catalog.pdf.

Endnotes
7. Patrick L. Carr, “Acquiring Articles through Unmediated, User-Initiated Pay-
8. For the content coverage, ease of use, negotiation ability for price due to the fact we had no online content with Science Direct at the time, and it was a program with which one of the authors had familiarity, as he had helped to investigate and implement at a previous institution and so was somewhat aware of the process.

Negotiation of Contract and Pricing
We made initial contact with Science Direct to clarify the differences between their various programs. From there we worked with our representative to establish which program best met our needs and allowed us to purchase articles at the lowest possible cost. Our decision to opt in to the transactional access program and to move our Elsevier journal subscriptions to print-plus-online allowed us to receive a big reduction in the cost of each article purchased through the program. Our journal costs did go up, but because it was and is our plan to transition as much of our print content to online in the near future, this decision made sense both practically and fiscally. The negotiation process on pricing was very easy and was ac-

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Before deciding on which pay-per-view/transactional access program to implement, we set out to review the literature, send out emails to colleagues and listservs, and search publishers’ sites to find available programs. These inquiries provided us with some information, and the response from listserv inquiries resulted in numerous other entities interested in our findings, as many libraries are in the same situation that we found ourselves.

Based on the information that we were able to acquire, we decided that the best program for us at this point in time. We came to this conclusion for a variety of reasons, including: the content coverage, ease of use, negotiation ability for price due to the fact we had no online content with Science Direct at the time, and it was a program with which one of the authors had familiarity, as he had helped to investigate and implement at a previous institution and so was somewhat aware of the process.

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completing through a handful of emails and phone conversations.

Negotiating the contract was also very easy. The contract we received from Elsevier contained almost all of the items that are musts and did not contain any of the items that we initially red flagged as necessary changes, with the exception of legal jurisdiction. Elsevier made all of the changes that we requested. Elsevier still requires (2) original copies of the contract — one they retain and one they mail back to the university after it is signed at their headquarters. Waiting on the contract to be returned took longer than the entire contact negotiation process.

Implementation

For this first implementation of the transactional access program we decided not to authenticate through IP ranges and open the program to the entire university community. We came to this decision due to the fact we had limited funding available and wanted to make sure the program would be well received before we moved on to a larger, more expensive, program. We also have more control over money used and who can use it in this model. With regard to re-opening access to some of the 2005 journal cuts, it was appealing to us to market the pre-paid articles to his own faculty, given, we decided to leave it up to him to disaffiliates were created for statistical and monitoring purposes, and a simple email would provide them with their login information.

The second part of this implementation was bringing the faculty members on board. We have just started, but it has proved to be an interesting process.

Communicating with Faculty

Once it was determined that a Pay-Per-View model was a better business plan that would open up thousands more titles and allow for money to be spent at the point of need, university libraries’ faculty began “feeling out” the idea first with the Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology. As a scientist, we knew that he would only approve of such a model if the logic was justifiable with supporting research. Once his approval was given, we decided to leave it up to him to distribute the pre-paid articles to his own faculty, and he recommended that there be no disvying at all — merely the monitoring of usage for this initial year. Thus, all Pay-Per-View purchases would come from the same large pool, and the program’s continuance would be determined by how much each department had used.

The program was revealed at a meeting of the Chairs of the departments within the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology just prior to the fall 2009 semester. Information prepared for this meeting included: a list of all the Science Direct journal titles included in the program, listed both by title and by discipline; a list of the titles available that had been cut in 2005; and a list of the titles available that are frequently (>5 requests per year) Inter-Library Loaned. The program was met with enthusiasm and thanks, as well as reluctance and suspicion. Some of the department chairs deemed this a progressive move, while others were suspect that this was a move to “get rid of” the journal subscriptions entirely, as well as Inter-Library Loan.

The program rolled out to the faculty via an email invitation from Science Direct. The mechanism was fairly quick, as departmental affiliations were created for statistical and monitoring purposes, and a simple email would affiliate the departmental name with the user’s personal email. After logging into Science Direct, all users would simply have to identify that they are using the departmental access, and all articles are simply one click away.

The Future

In the short-term, we will be continuing to communicate with the targeted faculty groups and get as many of them enrolled in the program as possible. Though we realize the first few weeks of school are hectic for everyone, we would have liked to see more faculty respond in a timely manner to the emails that provided them with their login information.

In the longer-term, we have initially committed to a three year program trial that is fully funded for each of the departments involved. We will be gathering statistics monthly on use by department, to inform the Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology to inform the allocation process for next fiscal year. We will also use these statistics to plan for future expansions or cancellations of our pay-per-view/transactional access programs. Alongside the transactional program, we intend to gather statistics on our current journal subscription usage. We will be looking for opportunities to switch individual titles to transactional access if the usage is consistent, but low. We will also be looking at adding subscriptions, if possible, to items that have consistently high usage within the transactional process. Ultimately, we are looking to ensure that the funds have the highest cost benefit, and that we are offering the most content that we can offer with the funds we are allocated.

Statistics can be gathered/received in two different ways. Science Direct sends out
Pay-Per-Use Article Delivery at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

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Introduction
Do your users really care about which subscriptions your library holds? Of course not, they just want the information they need and they want it quickly. Sure, there are those old hold-outs who want to know that their favorite pricey journal is just a walk across campus to the library, purchased just in case it may one day be needed. But, for most college libraries low-use, high-priced journal subscriptions are no longer sustainable and don’t make much sense to continue. Many of these high-priced journal titles don’t even belong in most college libraries to begin with. An institution that grants doctorates in chemical engineering can justify subscribing to The Journal of Polymer Science. But what about an institution like UW-Stevens Point that doesn’t grant doctorates and only offers four master’s degrees (none of which are in the hard sciences)? Yet, we still kept that subscription running and the money flowing — that is until we adopted our pay-per-use program.

Pay-Per-Use
While many journal subscriptions are pricey, but worth keeping due to high use, there are an alarming number of journal titles that are rarely used and cost a fortune. This is where pay-per-use comes in handy. Pay-per-use is the practice of purchasing individual journal articles directly from the publisher instead of carrying subscriptions. The user becomes a stronger participant in collection development by telling us exactly what is needed. The requested content is delivered to the user just in time, rather than the library guessing what might be needed and paying for costly subscriptions just in case they are needed. Of course, pay-per-use is not the answer for every journal subscription. There are definite advantages and disadvantages to consider before moving forward. See Figure 1 (page 24).

Background
The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is an undergraduate college with only a handful of graduate-level programs. UW-Stevens Point is part of the greater University of Wisconsin System and is one of 13 comprehensive (primarily undergraduate) campuses in the UW System. The Council of University Libraries (CUWL) provides a forum and structure for library and information planning within the University of Wisconsin System.

In June 2007, CUWL began pursuing the idea of pay-per-use article delivery in response to complaints from a group of faculty members from across the various comprehensive campuses demanding access to “the same resources Madison has” — referring, in part, to the Elsevier Science Direct and Wiley InterScience subscriptions held by UW-Madison. The comprehensive UW campuses could not afford the hefty subscription fees for these databases, either collectively or individually. The faculty group also commented that while interlibrary loan services are highly regarded, there are many times when article delivery is too slow through traditional interlibrary loan services; particularly when faculty are competing for time-sensitive patents or scholarly publications. These factors made pay-per-use the best, perhaps the only, option to satisfy those research demands.

A CUWL committee, in conjunction with a statewide cooperative library support organization (WiLS), was able to negotiate discounts with Wiley and Elsevier for articles purchased directly from those publishers. CUWL set aside a pot of money to help the comprehensive campuses fund this new concept of pay-per-use, although individual campus libraries were still responsible for funding a portion of the service. WiLS also developed a simplified workflow to aid in ease of article ordering. A special queue was set up in the interlibrary loan system (IL- LIAD) so that any Wiley or Elsevier article requested via interlibrary loan would automatically be flagged, and library staff could then easily determine whether or not to provide the article via the pay-per-use method.

Reason for Implementing at UW-Stevens Point
For political reasons (or perhaps pure nostalgia) UW-Stevens Point continued to subscribe to a number of high-cost, low-use print-only titles that gathered gobs of dust on our shelves. While our serials budget remained stagnant, journal subscription costs continued to balloon. Unable (and unwilling) to keep these subscriptions (or switch to electronic) we had little choice but to cancel several titles. Journal cancellations are always bad PR for an academic library — even if we are canceling subscriptions nobody is reading. This situation gave us the idea: why not cancel a long list of high-cost, low-use print journals and offer fast article delivery (via pay-per-use) in place of subscription?