April 2001

Issues in Vendor/Library Relations-Report on the OhioLINK-YBP relationship

Bob Nardini
Yankee Book Peddler, Inc., rnardini@YBP.com

David Swords
Yankee Book Peddler, Inc.

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3471

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
3. How reliable is the vendor overall? Baker and Taylor is very reliable. The company is providing us with a three-to-four day turnaround for items ordered on TSII, unmatched by any other vendor used by the Library District. GRADE = A.

4. Does the vendor charge a fee for access to the system? The fee, at the time of this writing, is $1750 for account setup and the first login, and $250 for each additional login. This is just a bit steep. GRADE = C.

5. Does the vendor provide alternative methods of access? This is irrelevant because TSII is internet-based. GRADE = not applicable.

6. Is the hardware available? Consistently slow Internet connections would make this system taxing on staff. However, with the upgrade of the network at the North Las Vegas Library District in the beginning of FY2000, speed is not usually a problem. GRADE = B+.

Subscribing to TSII has been one of the best technological investments the Library District has ever made. The convenience, accuracy, and speed of delivery of TSII far outweigh the cost.

Issues in Vendor/Library Relations—Report on the OhioLINK-YBP Relationship:

Serendipitous Advantages of Buying Monographs as a Consortium

Column Editor: Bob Nardini (Senior Vice President & Head Bibliographer, YBP Library Services, 999 Maple Street, Contoocook, NH 03229; Ph: 800-258-3774 x3251, Fax: 603-746-5628) <mardini@YBP.com>

by David Swords (Director Consortia Market Development, YBP Library Services)

It is becoming common for vendors to grouch about library consortia as buying clubs whose effect will be to put us out of business. And surely, many consortia exist only to improve discounts for their members. On the other hand, we now see that consortia are like cholesterol: some are bad but others are extremely good.

When YBP became the monographs vendor for OhioLINK more than two years ago, we were nervous about the discounts and service requirements. As it turns out, however, the contract has been good for us, good, we think, for the consortium and for individual libraries, good for a spirit of partnership, and good for experiments in cooperative collection.

Why so good? OhioLINK achieved excellent discounts and favorable terms for its members, of course. By and large, for individual libraries, the direct savings through discounts are significant, and across the consortium, the direct savings have been considerable. Before the OhioLINK contract YBP was principal monographs vendor to a handful of schools in Ohio. Now, because of the contract, we are the major vendor to every large university in the State, save one, and to a total of more than sixty libraries. Without: the consortial contract we might never have gained so many customers.

The advantages, however, go deeper than

<http://www.against-the-grain.com> 75
From the Other Side of the Street — University Presses: making progress or roadblocks?

by Thomas Bacher (Director, Purdue Press, 1207 SCC-E, W. Lafayette, IN 47907-1207; Phone: 765-494-2038; Fax: 765-496-2442) <bacher@purdue.edu> www.theypress.purdue.edu

Currently, the Association of American University Presses and its member organizations are going through a process of introspection. The idea is to define why presses are so important to the process of scholarly interchange and development. Reinvestment is not the key issue, unfortunately, and looking at the University Press, in most cases, at the end of the millennium is probably not much different than looking at the University Press at the beginning of the 1900s except for the expansion in the number of titles produced by UPs and the number of UPs that have been chartered. But don’t take my word on this point, listen to the presses on their own terms.

The University of Texas Press was founded in 1950 to show that “books matter; books educate; and publishing good books is a public responsibility and a valuable component of the state’s system of higher education.” But fifty years later, the University of Texas Press indicates in its mantra that they are still a book publisher (even though they do journals, too) and a focal point where the life experiences, insights, and specialized knowledge of writers converge to be disseminated in print.” Unfortunately, this might be taking the UT Press’s mission very literally. Yet of all organizations, presses, with their daily routine of getting words right, must be taken at their word. No?

The University of Texas is not out of step in the university press publication march. If you were to ask most directors, they would say that indeed their press’s primary aim is to publish books, scholarly books. The University of Alberta Press publishes strong scholarly works. The University of Arizona Press, founded in 1959, is a nonprofit publisher of scholarly and regional books. The University of Hawaii Press is recognized as a leading publisher of books and journals in Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Studies. Howard University Press’s mission is to publish “discerning non-fiction books and journals that analyze developments and is-

continued on page 77

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
of Cincinnati and Michael Zeoli of YBP, we have developed a process that goes as follows:

- Six months after books are profiled by YBP, we run a report that gathers up all of those bought by no library in Ohio. Thus, in March 2001, we look at titles profiled in September 2000 that no library in Ohio has bought from YBP.
- OhioLINK takes our list and uses a program to run it against the statewide catalogue to eliminate books that libraries have bought from vendors other than YBP.
- We put the pared list on GOBI, in an account established for this project. Any selector in the State participating in the experiment can order titles for their library from the account.

The “Not in Ohio” experiment is at the point of achieving production status, in which a half-dozen or more libraries will routinely buy books that otherwise would have escaped the consortial net.

The Future of Consortial Relationships

Not surprisingly, we believe that vendor-consortia partnerships will play an important role in both our futures. Corporations are scrambling to divide the eBook marketplace and libraries themselves must find roles in an increasingly virtual world. Specifically, if patrons do not visit libraries, libraries must find ways to deliver services to patrons... wherever the patron may be. YBP’s core competencies, describing books and profiling the interests of libraries, can easily be extended to faculty. Through GOBI, libraries will soon be able to deliver notification of new titles to faculty, based on a personal profile. Faculty can then recommend titles back to the library, but rather than choosing simply to purchase or not, will indicate whether a book should be “owned locally,” “owned consortially,” or not owned at all. YBP will then run the “own consortially” file against our database of the books consortia members have bought from us. Put differently, the ties between consortia and their vendors should lead to experiments that will profit both and to thinking that may help both find their way as critical parts of this new world.

From the Other Side of the Street

sues in the arts; education; literature; ethics; social economic, and political arenas; human relations; intercultural communications; and foreign affairs.” Indiana University Press publishes books that will “matter twenty or even a hundred years from now—books that make a difference today and will live on into the future through their reverberations in the minds of teachers and writers.” Utah State University Press is dedicated to acquiring and publishing books of “superior quality that win the esteem of readers and that appropriately represent Utah State University to the community of scholars.” Wilfrid Laurier University Press was established in 1974 to publish scholarly books and journals in the humanities and social sciences.

Scholarly books undoubtedly are written by scholars and are for the scholarly community to ensure the interchange of scholarly ideas. Still, presses can define these books in an unusual ways. Princeton University Press has “hewn its charter” to make available books “whose scholarly importance exceeds their financial rewards.” The main function of the University of Alaska Press is to serve as a means for professional scholars to have works published that “might not otherwise appear in book form.” Oregon State University Press desires to publish important ideas and information that “otherwise might not find a forum.” In other words, due to market numbers, university presses must publish losers in the sense of revenue but winners in the sense of the advancement of knowledge.

However, in recent years, under the stress of ever diminishing returns on monograph publications, university presses have sought to increase income by publishing books for general audiences. Regional publishing has always been a strength of university presses evidenced by books on native flora and fauna and on local history. Still, their has been a notable shift in the publication strategies of some university presses. Commercial publishers have sought to solidify profits by trimming their mid-list authors. University presses have stepped in to fill this gap. The University of California Press is proud to attract authors “whose work transcends traditional academic boundaries to speak to people everywhere.” Indiana University Press “emphasizes scholarship but also publishes text, trade, and reference titles.” Johns Hopkins University Press publishes books for the general reader, “who find in them [books] enjoyment as well as enlightenment.” Of the more than 900 books in print at the University of Wisconsin Press, many are intended for the general reader in the areas of “biography, natural history, poetry, and social issues.”

Even though books still remain king, even to Stephen King, a number of presses have moved past the printed page. New York University Press (NYUP) whose books have a “prominent place on the table of public debate,” considers itself a gadfly and is willing to publish books from “different regions of the political spectrum ... to generate dialogue, engender debate, and resist the categorization of our publishing program. NYUP sees the future more clearly than some presses in the recognition that the past is gone when “libraries more or less financially university press operations.” In recent years, in fact, NYUP is trying to redefine “what it means to be a university press.”

Johns Hopkins University Press (JHUP), understanding that its primary mission still is “to seek out and publish books and journals of superior quality that contribute significantly to the progress of research and learning,” realizes that this can