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Vendors Begin to Address the Needs of Community College Libraries

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Many publishers will only send the activation information directly to the library as the eventual end-user. These publishers want the library to authenticate access and agree to terms and conditions. For some libraries this is a great burden, especially those with few staff. All agents are seeking ways to provide seamless access from the point of ordering as we see this as part of our role as an agent. Standards for transmitting activation data will certainly improve the situation, which is hopefully on the horizon.

Beyond activation and registration, agents provide a wide range of services for obtaining e-journals. Swets offers negotiation services for electronic package plans where we start with determining the appropriate packages for that customer. This can also include licensing. In addition, Swets and other agents can provide a detailed EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) invoice of the customer's publisher package plans. When publishers cannot provide EDI invoicing for libraries' automation systems, this service from agents enables customers to quickly process invoices and produce budgetary information. In order to obtain the required financial details electronically, libraries have been pressuring publishers to let agents handle payment and invoicing of package plans.

Streamlining Processes in the E-World – The Industry Responds

Largely for agents, it is still as manual a world as it was in the print arena; and even more so, as there is so much information to track and record. This is true not only for the agent, but

also for libraries and publishers. Just as agents are adding modules to their systems, libraries are turning to Electronic Resource Management systems (ERMs) produced by library automation vendors to help them handle the workload associated with electronic products.

Recent efforts through the **Digital Library Federation (DLF)** (<http://www.diglib.org/>), **National Information Standards Organization (NISO)** (<http://www.niso.org/>), **International Committee for the EDI of Serials (ICEDIS)** (<http://www.icedis.org/>), and other industry groups have resulted in proposed plans to streamline the process by sending data electronically via transaction sets.

Agents are supporting these efforts through membership, sponsorship, and participation. Through a Joint Working Party of NISO and EDIteur (EDI for Europe), for example, transaction sets are being designed to send title coverage information (including holdings), update subscription details, describe an e-resource, supply Table of Contents, define license terms, and spell out the requirements for access registration. These files, which are sent electronically, will update link resolvers, ERMs, and other systems.

As part of the **SUSHI (Standardize Online Usage Statistics Harvesting)** group sponsored by NISO, DLF and COUNTER, two agents (Swets and EBSCO) successfully transmitted a usage report to two library automation vendors (**Innovative** and **Ex Libris**). In addition to agents and automation vendors, content providers and libraries are also participating.

These types of standardization efforts are necessary for all parties of the serials industry; watch for updates on standards in *Against the Grain* and on the NISO, ICEDIS, and DLF Websites.

Conclusion

Administrative services have always been a major role of subscription agents, and the increasing complexity of e-resources has resulted in a growing need for these services. Basic administrative tasks, such as ordering, invoicing, and renewing electronic subscriptions, involve title setup, providing information for activation, new pricing models/packages, and licensing and rights management. Agents help to streamline these processes through EDI interfacing with automated systems and by taking on the time consuming work of managing these processes when automated options are not available. In addition, libraries now require electronic journal management reports for better overall budget controls as spending shifts from print to electronic, and they rely on agents to provide for these reporting capabilities.

The electronic needs of libraries are growing far more technical and complex, and just as libraries have had to reorganize to handle e-subscriptions, so have agents. We have undertaken extensive training of staff, as well as the addition of new staff and electronic capabilities, investing significantly in new technologies for e-resources.

The e-world continues to evolve and agents are addressing the needs of the marketplace through providing services and products, participating in standards organizations and working closely with our publishing colleagues to ensure that our customers have access to their electronic resources. In the long run, our goal is for our customers to have seamless ordering, and activation and uninterrupted access and we will endeavor to work towards that end.

Vendors Begin to Address the Needs of Community College Libraries

by **James A. Buczynski** (Electronic Resources Acquisitions / Information Services Librarian, Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology, 70 the Pond Road, Toronto, Ontario M3J 3M6; Phone: 416-491-5050 x.3159; Fax: 416-736-1163) <james.buczynski@senecac.on.ca>

The two most popular questions at the reference desk are: "Where can I find ____?" and "Why is it not available online?" In community college libraries, the third most popular question is "Why don't YOU have online access to ____?" Community College libraries are currently experiencing significant frustration in migrating print holdings to electronic access.

Traditional library holdings included small numbers of periodical titles (less than 500) at each campus library, with very limited backfiles, often five years or less. Reference collections are small and focus on high use titles. Emphasis is placed on currency and exposing students to their

discipline's literature, not comprehensive research. Students often do not have access to abstracting and indexing tools for many journal titles held in the collection. Book and periodical jobbers enable technical services staffing to remain minimal.

Acquiring online access to the same print holdings is proving elusive. The business models employed by publishers, in general, do not address the needs of community college libraries. Vendors have taken a conservative approach when migrating their product mix from paper format to electronic. Given unknown price / demand curves, nobody wanted to determine by hindsight that

they had given away their "digital gold." Early on, the bottomless demand for electronic access gave vendors immense bargaining power. Products and licensing terms and conditions were focused on increasing revenue per subscriber. As a result, product design, product pricing models, and annual increases were barriers to acquisition. Acquisitions librarians experienced significant culture shock. The envisioned digital library was, in practice, difficult to realize.

At the turn of the century, most e-journals and e-books were licensed in big collections of titles. Title by title selection, the traditional selection process of libraries, was replaced by all or nothing bundles of titles. At the time, there was an insatiable demand for online information, thus the bundle products were attractive.

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A community college library could have online full text access to more titles than they could have ever afforded in the print subscription marketplace. In time, faculty began to request specialized subject collections. The products being offered by vendors, however, were oversized for community colleges and unaffordable. Consortial bargaining has proved futile for many community colleges because prices remain out of their league.

While the pricing issue has improved, bundles remain oversized. **IEEE Xplore** is a good example. The bundles were designed to meet the needs of universities and corporations. Community college faculty and students need neither the range of content available nor the deep backfiles. Small, affordable subject bundles of titles would substantially open up community college libraries to **IEEE**. Vendors need to develop products to address the specific needs of community colleges. They are not the same as universities.

It is very difficult to explain to patrons why online versions of print publications defy common sense. Concepts like embargoed full text access (full text access is unavailable for as little as a week and as long as two years, to protect print subscriptions accounts), missing freelancer articles (**Tasini** legal case in the U.S. and the **Robertson** case in Canada), missing graphics, and selective coverage baffle library users. They also complicate acquisitions decision making. In many cases online offerings do not equal their print equivalents. Missing images in a scholarly art journal are a huge problem. Selective full text access to a newspaper's articles is useless when the article sought is not available online. While university libraries would never cancel a print subscription based on availability in any third party aggregator's product, because continual access is not guaranteed, community colleges often take the risk. In the worst case scenario, the title can be acquired directly from the publisher, when no longer available in the aggregator's product.

Industry trends indicate that more and more titles are exclusively available from one vendor, and increasingly in only one product. The propulsion towards this direction is obvious: exclusivity brings competitive advantage. The business information product battle between **EBSCO (Business Source Premier)** and **ProQuest (ABI/Inform)** is a perfect example of competitive tactics employed by vendors that result in barriers to canceling print subscriptions. Each product has its own list of exclusive online titles. Want online access to *Harvard Business Review*? It is only available from **EBSCO**, via **Business Source Premier**. The traditional title by title acquisitions strategy employed by libraries is impossible in this industry environment. More and more titles are bundled exclusively in "Big deals." Unlike university libraries, community college libraries do not have the funding to acquire multiple "big deal" products in any one subject area. The barrier is real and gaining influence.

Leasing access to content, as opposed to the tradition of ownership, has proven problematic for community college libraries. Differentiated pricing business models and unattractive access options are the two biggest frustrations. Most products are developed with a primary customer in mind, be it a university library, public library, a corporation, etc. Pricing and access options reflect the needs and funding resources of the primary customer. Often community colleges are either forgotten or inappropriately grouped with universities.

Prior to the advent of digital libraries, journals and books had fixed prices for all institutional libraries, regardless of size. When vendors released digital products into the marketplace, they introduced the sinister concept of FTE based pricing, pricing that is based on the size of a library's customer base. Philosophically, the concept seems reasonable. However, in practice it is dysfunctional. Assuming all library patrons will use the product is generally false in most cases. Many highly specialized resources are used by very small patron groups. Medium and large institutions pay significantly more for access, whether the magnitude of usage warrants it or not. Providing access to online materials, of interest to small user groups, becomes easily cost prohibitive for community colleges.

Limiting access to lower FTE numbers, even if technically feasible, which at many institutions is not, harms the greater library community and goes against the tradition of open access to a library's resources. Guesstimating the number of primary users is more reasonable, however, few vendors are willing to price based on contentious counting methodologies. The end result is high subscription costs in comparison to print subscriptions with identical content. Without increased materials budgets, acquisitions decisions are difficult. Unfortunately, many community college libraries are forced to "bait and switch." The goal of the bait-and-switch is to convince faculty that online access to key titles in their field is possible. Funding resources are migrated from print to electronic budget lines. As a result of higher subscription pricing, cuts are made to the overall number of titles on subscription. The deception, whether intentional or not, is that faculty may not be better off than before they took the "bait".

Community college libraries are often grouped with universities in differentiated pricing models. Whether it is intentional or not, the net effect is that many products are priced beyond the means of community colleges. The primary focus of community colleges is teaching not research, thus library funding is substantially lower than at universities. Community college libraries do not have the same financial resources that universities do nor do they have the same demand for backfiles. Product usage is proportionally lower, due to substantially lower quantities of research activity. Student library research has a small role in curricula at this level of higher education and faculty are generally not full time researchers, nor are they faced with "publish or perish" institutional expectations. Low usage of products is an important consideration when allocating

funding. Print subscriptions tethered to online bundles are unwanted. Given that there are more community colleges than universities, vendors have missed opportunities to increase sales. Recently, **Elsevier** made a bold move to appeal to community colleges by setting attractive pricing for content on their **ScienceDirect** platform. Hopefully, this is a sign that vendors are noticing the market they have largely ignored up until now.

Migrating access from print to electronic generally increases reference materials expenditures. Electronic versions of print materials are generally more costly, due in part to enhanced content, more frequent updating, and the willingness of libraries to pay more for electronic access to reference works to meet digital library expectations. At this time, business models favor annual subscriptions over one time license fees for perpetual access. The threat of losing access ensures subscribers will not cancel subscriptions. Many vendors continue to bar perpetual access from licenses.

For highly used materials annual fees are easy to justify, but lesser used materials, like subject encyclopedias, are more difficult to rationalize. Print reference materials are purchased irregularly, upon publication of new editions, but leasing access requires annual funding allocations. The answer to the query, "Why do you still have all these books here?" (referring to the reference collection) is that many titles are not available for online acquisition. In addition, a community college library would need to increase its reference materials budget by a factor of ten or twenty to make the switch from print to electronic. A funding increase of that magnitude is not feasible.

Fortunately, reference product usage is declining as research and learning methods change, freeing up funds for electronic acquisitions. The connection between a reference work and a user is principally the librarian. What happens when users don't come to the desk, or ask questions in online service environments? The collection becomes invisible and usage drops sharply. Look at the annual reports of libraries across the United States and Canada, over the past four years, and you will see that drastically reducing the size of the reference collection is a common theme. Renovations and new buildings are designed for reduced print reference collections holdings. Assuming much of the titles traditionally held in a university library reference collection are not available online, clearly, the role of the collection has changed. New research and learning methods have cut demand for this collection and as a result supply has been reduced to compensate, much to the chagrin of librarians. Librarian blogs are full of entries mourning the demise of large reference collections.

Digital rights management systems (DRMSs) remain a big challenge for both libraries and vendors. DRMSs are used to control access and use of content through a combination of software and hardware technologies. They can also monitor and block users who fail to adhere to the permitted uses of licensed content. Consumers seek a consistent functional-

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ity experience. On campus, they want barrier free access to library resources via registered IP address ranges. Off campus, they expect consistent, easy authentication via their institutional network access username and password. Some vendors remain unable or unwilling to provide this type of access. Many products are solely available via a username and password set by the vendor. Libraries are challenged to disseminate the access information — for what can easily be hundreds if not thousands of products. Many community college collection policies forbid acquisitions of resources available this way, and scripted “screen-scraping” technical solutions to the username/password dissemination problem are problematic to maintain.

Username/password access is particularly frustrating for community colleges because they hold fewer subscriptions to “big deal” products. A large university provides access to hundreds of e-journal full-text products while a typical community college subscribes to less than 75 “big deal” products. The likelihood that any specific e-journal title will be accessible from a database already on subscription is significantly higher for university libraries than community college libraries. As a result, many community colleges license directly from the publisher, who often provides only username/password access. Titles aimed at practitioners or association members are particularly difficult to acquire for this reason.

There is an industry trend for publishers to opt out of licensing their content to third parties (aggregators). The idea is to go it alone to increase revenue. Unfortunately, many publishers assume that password/username access is adequate. Subscribers are taken for granted. The net result is that community college libraries shy away from their content in the marketplace.

While username and password access is sufficient for individuals, it is unreasonable for libraries. In addition to FTE based pricing models, this barrier is also blocking college libraries from migrating access to electronic. Serials subscription agents like EBSCO, through services like EJS, can mitigate some of the access pain associated with single periodical titles, but a comprehensive solution remains elusive. Access models designed for corporate entities, such as access limited to specific workstations, are grudgingly accepted by academic libraries. Products accessed this way are considered for cancellation annually based on use or if a suitable alternative IP range accessible product exists.

Practitioner focused association publications are widely available in electronic form. Access, however, increasingly cannot be acquired by libraries. Newsletters previously published in print, for example, have moved to email subscriptions. Manuals and books are now exclusively sold as PDF files. Attempts to license hosting rights have rarely borne fruit thus far. To answer the question, “Why don’t we have

against the grain people profile

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BORN & LIVED: Born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Lived two Years in Miami, Florida (worked at the **University of Miami**); now based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada (while my wife pursues her PhD)...next stop, hopefully somewhere west coast or on another continent.

EARLY LIFE: Oil painter and civil engineering Technician.

FAMILY: Married since 1994, **Joshua Thomas Buczynski** born September 24 2005.

EDUCATION: DEC Dawson College - Civil Engineering Technology; BA McGill University - Urban Systems; MLIS McGill University - Library and Information Studies.

FIRST JOB (EVER): Hand digging an inground pool in the basement of a house.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Have been practicing as a reference, instruction and collection development librarian for over five years. Presently, manage electronic information resources acquisitions and licensing for **Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology** (Toronto), serve as **Seneca Libraries’** advisor on copyright, serve as a computer science bibliographer and coordinate the information literacy program and virtual reference service at the **Seneca@York** campus. Regularly talk at conferences about copyright related issues in libraries and teaching, an editor and contributor at Internet Reference Services Quarterly and review books for E-Streams, Choice and Library Journal. <http://people.senecac.on.ca/james.buczynski/for-colleagues.html>

Ontario Library Association Annual SuperConference Planner (Ontario College and University Libraries Association) 2006, 2007

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: In-line skate, walk my beagle, watch documentary films.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Fingerprints of the Gods: The Evidence of Earth’s Lost Civilization* (G. Hancock), *Return on Imagination: Realizing the Power of Ideas* (Tom Wujec, Sandra Muscat).

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: “Keeping up with the Jones”

PHILOSOPHY: “Today’s the day I _____”

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Speaking at various conferences.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Balance career with family life.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Digital Rights Management Systems will sort out their problems and libraries will be able to license the content they cannot today. 🐾

_____?”, the publisher or vendor does not seem interested in selling to libraries.

As mentioned earlier, in the late 1990’s the bottomless demand for electronic access gave vendors immense bargaining power. Products and their licensing terms and conditions were focused on increasing revenue per subscriber and gaining new subscribers. Given this power, vendors were able to force libraries to sign licenses that prohibited traditional uses of library materials. This is especially problematic in countries with narrow copyright exemptions. In Canada, for example, “fair dealing” does not include teaching situations, as “fair use” does

in the U.S. The classroom is a de facto marketplace. Disseminating resources for teaching purposes requires permission and/or a license for use. Transactional or blanket licenses from copyright collectives make it easy to legally make photocopies for classroom dissemination or noncommercial course packages. The collectives, however, continue to possess few, if any, electronic dissemination rights from their members.

Copyright collectives are of little help in the digital marketplace and transactional licensing with publishers directly is often cost prohibi-

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tive. Consequently, product licenses that do not exclusively permit use in course reserves, non-commercial course packages, or permit copying/printing for classroom dissemination, are used as justification for maintaining print holdings. Royalties for providing classroom dissemination via photocopying or printing; or electronic access to one book chapter or periodical article range from \$5 to \$5000, per course section. Licenses for photocopying or electronic dissemination are often unavailable from rights holders. Products with persistent URL functionality, in theory, eliminate electronic dissemination issues. The conflict that arose earlier this year regarding placing Harvard Business Review case studies on electronic reserve challenged the idea of engineering technical solutions to electronic reserve licensing barriers. The

cases are available via persistent URL to **EBSCO's Business Source Premier** product. However, the links cannot be used on course reserve systems to link to the full text.¹ Although problems remain with the uses permitted in license agreements, libraries are generally negotiating more favorable licensing clauses to address their needs. Keep in mind that some aggregators, however, do not possess the rights themselves (inter-library loan, course reserves, course packages, etc.), and so they cannot make them explicitly available to libraries.

Developing and managing digital collections in practice is proving more labor intensive than print collections for acquisitions and selections staff. At this time, jobbers are unable to mirror their print services in today's electronic products arena. Selection and acquisitions staff at community colleges are already pared to the bone to meet management productivity expectations, given product ordering and receiving

outsourcing initiatives. They are now struggling with new workloads derived from electronic product acquisitions. Investigating access and license agreements, setting up access points in the digital library, troubleshooting content/access problems, answering queries about the permitted uses of resources, and managing trials and renewals is extremely time intensive.

Many libraries have not yet moved away from the staffing model whereby one librarian is responsible for the acquisitions of all electronic resources. Format migration initiatives are limited to the time this person is available to acquire electronic access to held print publications. As more and more libraries decentralize electronic resource acquisitions tasks to selectors and technical services staff, this bottleneck will be eliminated.

Recently released electronic resource management systems, like **Endeavor's Meridian** system, **Serials Solution's ERMS**, etc., provide the infrastructure needed to decentralize acquisitions. Like other resources, these systems have unknown price / demand curves, and prices thus far remain out of reach for many community college libraries. Community college libraries are unwilling to allocate funding to acquire these systems because they have so few electronic resources to manage. However, they have so few resources, in part, because they do not have the infrastructure to acquire more electronic resources. In-house developed solutions, like those deployed today in many university libraries (**Hermes**, **Vera**, **ERLIC**, etc.) are not a reasonable solution given staffing realities.

End user expectations of searching ease, collection size, and direct full text access are clashing with the reality of community college digital libraries. Developing and managing digital collections, in practice, is chock full of roadblocks and detours. In their rush to profit from electronic publishing, vendors have previously forgotten community colleges. Today, there are encouraging indications that vendors have begun to direct their attention to a relatively untapped market, community college libraries.

For Further Reading

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by contributing metadata covering materials in other electronic formats, including electronic books, digital audio books, digital theses and dissertations. As part of the agreement, **Dr. Eric S. Hellman**, Founder and President of **Openly Informatics**, and his staff, will join **OCLC** to continue to manage, innovate and support **Openly Informatics** services. **Dr. Hellman** will serve as Director of the new division, op-

erating as **OCLC Openly Informatics**. Founded in 1998, **Openly Informatics** is a linking software and metadata company headquartered in Bloomfield, New Jersey. **Openly Informatics** has consistently been first to market with a number of innovations, including release of the first open source link server, the first to integrate A-Z list functionality within a link server, and the first to develop a link server compliant with OpenURL 1.0. www.openly.com/

Neil Westin is leaving Elsevier for den-

tal school at the **University of Tennessee Health Sciences** in Memphis. We will miss him but hope that he keeps in touch!

Talk about a voice from the past. Heard from none other than the fantabulous **Barbara Home Stewart** (longtime rep with **ISI**) over the holidays. She is doing great, and she has a good friend whose daughter is hoping to come to the **College of Charleston**. She was catching me up on some of the **ISI** folks like **Arthur Kennedy** who has retired

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