

April 2011

Library Perspective, Vendor Response

Robin Champieux

Ebook Library, Robin.Champieux@eplib.com

Steven Carrico

University of Florida Smathers Libraries, stecarr@uflib.ufl.edu

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



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Champieux, Robin and Carrico, Steven (2011) "Library Perspective, Vendor Response," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 23: Iss. 2, Article 40.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5817>

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.

ATG Interviews Glenda Alvin

Assistant Director for Collection Management and Administration, Tennessee State University

by **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: Tell us about your job at Tennessee State.

GA: I wear two hats: I am Head of Acquisitions and Serials as well as the Assistant Director. Our department purchases everything from office supplies to databases.

ATG: How many people work in your department?

GA: Cataloging (3), Acquisitions and Serials (6).

ATG: What is your materials budget?

GA: Capital outlay from state budget: \$1,464,000; I supervise an additional \$500,000 spent from Title III accounts for databases and periodicals.



ATG: Are you buying books and journals?

GA: Yes, both print and electronic

ATG: Are you buying eBooks? If so in packages or individually?

GA: Packages.

ATG: Who's your favorite author?

GA: I don't have one.

ATG: Anything else you want to add?

GA: I am a member of ACRL: Editorial Board of CHOICE and African American Studies Section; I am also an active member of the Black Caucus of ALA, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and the Zuri Quilting Circle. 🌿

Library Perspective, Vendor Response

Column Editors: **Robin Champieux** (Vice President, Business Development, Ebook Library) <Robin.Champieux@eblib.com>

and **Steven Carrico** (Acquisitions Librarian, University of Florida Smathers Libraries, Box 117007, Gainesville, FL 32611-7007) <stecarr@uflib.ufl.edu>

Column Editors' Note: This column for *Against the Grain* is devoted to discussing issues affecting library acquisitions, library vendors and the services and products they supply to academic libraries, and the publishing marketplace as a whole. It is an ongoing conversation between a book vendor representative, **Robin Champieux**, and an academic librarian, **Steven Carrico**. — **RC and SC**

Steve: **Robin**, haven't seen you since the Charleston Conference, and I remember you were working with the Orbis Cascade Alliance consortium to set up a shared eBooks plan. How is that coming along? Is this a patron-driven/demand-driven model?

Robin: Yes, I'm working with the Alliance implementation team now and we're planning for a late spring launch. It is a demand-driven model and, as you can imagine, a lot of the discussion and preparation is focused on how to apply our experience with individual institutions to a 36-member organization.

Steve: I've been busy with an initiative somewhat similar here in Florida. I'm a member of a collections committee representing the state's largest library consortium and we're

working on developing a shared eBooks plan. It's quite a chore trying to get 11 academic libraries on the same page and to all agree on an eBooks acquisitions plan. It took months just for an eBooks task force to convince all 11 libraries to agree to form another task force to invite vendors and eBook aggregators to present their eBook shared acquisitions models. Whew! Talk about complicated.

Robin: Yes, I can't speak for the Alliance, but I know this was a major endeavor. They too organized teams to lead phases of the investigation and implementation. This approach is very smart. As a vendor representative, it helped me better understand the consortium's goals and how EBL needed to re-think our approach to meet the requirements. The Alliance pushed out a lot of valuable information. Moreover, it's made our work with partners more positive. Several publishers, for instance, have commented on the clarity of the pricing model, its rationale, and the evidence we provided to support it.

Steve: There are a couple ironies that I have to point out: one being how radically different it seems for library consortia to agree on shared eBook models. There are long discussions and even disputes about the smallest issue when it comes to agreeing on an eBooks acquisitions plan;

meanwhile, consortia often with little fuss and much less debate, all kick in thousands even millions to fuel the Big Deal e-journal packages and database purchases. What really highlights the paradox is that most of these shared eBooks plans are funded with only a small proportion of the materials budgets when compared to the Big Deal. At least that's my perception of the landscape. You probably have a better sense and view on all this from your vendor seat, so what's your take?

Robin: The consortial projects I've worked on have been time intensive, but necessarily so in many respects. I think there are obvious and hidden complexities. For example, the Alliance implementation team's careful investigation of managing technical services and cataloging needs across the member institutions has been a real eye-opener. Every library has different resources and expertise. The implementation team is working hard to balance these with issues of discovery and the overall goals of the pilot. On the vendor side, working with publishers and gaining approval for a model can be a very long process. Often, we also have to define, build, and test new technology to support a model. But, as the models mature and the various stakeholders gain experience, I think the process will simplify and speed up.

Steve: That's good to hear! The second irony of eBooks is not in the acquisitions piece but in the cataloging and discovery side of eBooks. After much time and energy

continued on page 53



The science of service.

At Eastern Book Company, we've spent more than half a century shaping our unique brand of service. The first step is fulfilling our customers' orders with unmatched speed and accuracy. Then we custom-fit our operations to our customers' needs, allowing libraries to streamline processes and maximize budgets. And finally, we cultivate next-generation technologies to help our customers build the libraries their users need.



Eastern Book Company

1-800-937-0331
www.ebc.com

Trust. Expertise. Service.

Library Perspective, Vendor Response from page 52

spent setting up eBook plans, many academic libraries will rely almost exclusively on vendor and publisher supplied eBook catalog records. The libraries spend very little time and effort in doing any quality review and/or enhancing of those records; therefore, many academic libraries — including mine — have hundreds and thousands of eBook catalog records that are often low quality and certainly not full level. Vendor and publisher eBook records are definitely improving and thankfully so. Finding eBooks can be very difficult for a lot of library users and library catalogs containing a multitude of minimal catalog records doesn't help discovery. Nor does the lack of promoting the eBooks, which is something else many academic libraries are not doing very well.

Robin: First, can you elaborate a bit on your comment about promoting eBooks? It strikes me as a bit curious and for a couple reasons. I think we can agree that as a format eBooks differ from print in important qualitative and quantitative ways. But do these distinctions mean that eBooks should be promoted differently from other resources? The large majority of libraries I've worked with on demand-driven projects, do not promote the content outside of simply loading the corresponding records. Despite this lack of special promotion, usage is high and the programs are successful. On the subject of records, I agree that we can do a

better job, but I also think the vendor and library communities need to have frank discussions about priorities, means, and outcomes. So much metadata creation and distribution is siloed and unnecessarily replicated. I think collaboration is important. For example, many vendors are establishing and strengthening relationships with **OCLC**. Partnerships like these allow vendors to provide free or low cost cataloging options to libraries, while ensuring fuller description and more options for customization.

Steve: About promoting eBooks, I agree that eBook usage is significant at most academic libraries; what I'm suggesting is usage could be even higher if libraries promoted the existence and improved the search and discovery aspects of eBooks — especially to faculty. Random discovery and access seems the *modus operandi* for eBook use, although I suppose one can argue that is how users find print books as well. Now I have a few questions for you on how college and academic libraries are developing shared eBooks plans. What's the ideal way to approach a shared plan if the collaborating libraries or libraries in a consortium vary in size and type; that is, how is content profiling approached so that the eBooks offered will appeal to all the various users? How the devil do you manage de-duping against so many holdings? And how do the participating libraries keep duplication from occurring going forward?

Robin: The profiling approach will differ consortium-to-consortium depending on the goals and focus. In most cases, I think orga-

nizations will focus on content that, as much as possible, will meet the needs of users across the member institutions. By cooperating on delivering this material, each library can devote more effort and money to local needs. De-duping... to start a shared plan many libraries or consortium may not want to de-dup against each library's holdings, as they don't facilitate shared access. The libraries may want to weed out titles with specific thresholds of multi-copy holdings, but likely not everything. Partnerships between vendors, new technologies, and smart workflows can manage unwanted duplication moving forward. You know, this is new territory for both libraries and vendors. There is a lot of creativity and experimentation happening; and I expect many best practices to emerge from these early projects.

Steve: New territory, I like the sound of that. Makes what we're doing seem cutting edge; or at very least, that libraries, vendors, and many publishers are finally coming together in an attempt to embrace the new eBook acquisitions models. It could be such a big step forward for all of us, don't you think?

Robin: Yes, I do. It will be important for everyone involved to be daring, creative, and flexible. There are bound to be ideas that challenge existing business models, collection development and technical services workflows, and relationships between libraries, vendors, publishers, and users.

Steve: What else is there to say after that eloquent speech? Nice finish! Talk to you next time. 🐻