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Biz of Acq -- Constant Change in Acquisitions

Amy Faltinek

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Amy.Faltinek@ttuhsc.edu

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ANSWER: To some extent, these storytellers do what is being done in every library, school, and daycare center on a daily basis. It is important that the readings are done live to a small group of people (usually about 20) and are not recorded or streamed for later playback. Section 110(4), the so called nonprofit performance section, permits public performances of nondramatic literary and musical works without permission of the copyright holder if those performances are not transmitted, provided certain conditions are met. For example, there may be no payment to performers, promoters, etc., and there may be no admission charge, or if there is one, the proceeds must go back to charitable, educational, or religious purposes.

The real question here is whether **Second Life** counts as a transmission. There are arguments that support both views. Typically, anything done over a computer network is transmitted. But one could argue that a live reading in **Second Life** is more like a live performance than it is a transmission. But, at this point, the law likely supports the fact that it is a transmission. If so, then permission would be required for the reading of the stories.

The librarian could approach a few publishers and make the argument that the readings are equivalent to a live performance. If she can get them to agree, then she could use this agreement to convince other publishers to agree. 🐾

Biz of Acq — Constant Change in Acquisitions

by **Amy Faltinek** (Unit Assistant Director, Library Acquisitions, Preston Smith Library of the Health Sciences, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 3601 4th Street, Stop 7781, Lubbock, TX 79430-7781; Phone: 806-743-4579) <Amy.Faltinek@ttuhsc.edu>

Column Editor: **Michelle Flinchbaugh** (Acquisitions Librarian, Albin O. Kuhn Library, University of Maryland Baltimore County, 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250; Phone: 410-455-6754; Fax: 410-455-1598) <flinchba@umbc.edu>

Change is the one constant in the Acquisitions department at the **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC)** Libraries of the Health Sciences where Acquisitions work for all four libraries is centralized in Lubbock. Like most libraries, the change in the process of our everyday job duties is as common as the change from print to electronic resources and the ensuing need for organizational change.

Payment Processes

Not all of the changes are by choice, but the result of institutional decisions. The institution's implementation of a new accounting system and the relocation of several of our Finance and Administration departments to other campuses within the city bring about

changes specific to the Acquisitions department. The new accounting system changes the format of account numbers for creating electronic purchase orders. It also provides new financial reports, all in a new format. There is also a new look to the vendor payments area. We became a more paperless department because of the relocation of several of our Finance and Administration departments. No longer can a paper copy of an invoice be walked over to Accounts Payable. Now we request electronic invoices from the vendor and submit them for payment via email attachment. Some vendors still send paper invoices. We scan paper copies and submit them for payment. Also, no longer can an original license be picked up from

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purchasing. This is now done via email attachment, as well with electronic signatures.

Using a vendor-specific purchasing card changes the payment process for that one specific vendor and requires it to be paperless. Although the payment process is now paperless, there is still a need for documentation for review purposes.

Streamlining

Cross-training offers the opportunity for a fresh look at the processes of Acquisitions' jobs. It provides an opportunity to question processes and propose different ways of doing things, or the possible removal of some steps in order to streamline workflow. It is also an important element for creating a more efficient department. If a staff member is out unexpectedly or for a long period of time, a fellow employee can take care of a job duty that needs attention right away or tend to job duties so work does not pile up for the employee who is out of the office. It is also helpful during periods of heavy workload because more than one employee can work toward completing the job. Examples of this are when a large number of books need to be ordered, or when purchase orders need to be completed for all items that renew at the beginning of the fiscal or calendar year.

In order to better communicate and track workflow, we created a shared folder for the department. This allows all staff members to have access to all files stored in this folder. Items in the folder include, but are not limited to, a pending report, invoices, a list of purchase order numbers, frequently-used forms, and training manuals. The shared folder enhances continuity of workflow. If an employee is out and a document they have been working on is needed, it is available to the rest of us in the department.

We are compiling a vendor contact list. It is a work-in-progress because of the changes of vendor representatives. This is another document that is in the shared folder. It allows any employee in the department to make changes to the list as new information becomes available.

We now schedule weekly meetings in the Acquisitions department. This is a chance for employees of this department to meet face-to-face and discuss what has been completed since the last meeting and what is to be completed before the next meeting or at a later date. We follow up each meeting with a summary of the meeting that is emailed to each staff member. The summary serves as a reminder to check on the progress of projects. The meeting also serves as a time to bring up any issues related to the department or that will affect the majority of the staff in the department. It also aids in teamwork.

The retirement of a long-term employee provides opportunity to evaluate the workflow within the department and, more specifically, within the duties of that position. The retirement of an employee also brings about the possibility of new ideas from a new

employee. Much like with cross-training, a fresh look at job processes from a new employee can benefit the department. This takes time as the employee learns the aspects of the job. Often, duties in Acquisitions happen and need to be dealt with once a year. Examples are the creation of a purchase order for a specific vendor and subscription renewals with a specific vendor.

We approached much of the change with a positive attitude and a sense of humor. One thing we have to laugh about is who has created the purchase order that has been rejected by the system the most times. I also provided guidance and made sure my staff had the needed training in order to perform their job duties.

Vendor Changes

Changes in vendor practices also affect Acquisitions departments. Along with buyouts and closures of companies and offices, customer service can be changed from one office location to another or even from one person to another in the same office. This requires adjustments for everyone, including learning to work with new vendor representatives. The change of procedures in the same office can also affect how we do our jobs. The start of vendors sending electronic invoices caused the Acquisitions department to change how invoices were delivered to our Accounts Payable department. We also have to accommodate those vendors who do not use electronic invoices yet by scanning and emailing the invoice to our Accounts Payable department.

Future in Acquisitions

In the future, I see the Acquisitions department having the potential for the use of electronic communication tools. Among the possibilities are task managers, wikis, collaborative software, instant messaging, and social bookmarking. The staff of an Acquisitions department face many deadlines, and a task manager helps with meeting those deadlines by using it to set up

email reminders. A wiki allows all staff to have access to department information in one spot. It is also a place to log information technology problems and tips. It enables staff members to work together on a project using collaborative software. Edits and comments can be made in real time, which can produce a document more quickly than waiting for each person to have the time to review a document and pass it on to another employee multiple times. Instant messaging can be used for interactive communication among staff. This allows for immediacy of communication, rather than waiting for an email to be answered. When staff members are traveling to branch locations, conferences, or training sessions, a social bookmarking service provides access to links of saved Web pages from multiple computers.

One concern about these ideas is the possibility of technology being a barrier to communication. Before even thinking about whether or not a message is going to be communicated clearly, the staff need to be willing to adopt the technology and then have a willingness to become proficient with the technology.

Another idea for the future is to bring in employees from TTUHSC's three branch libraries to see first-hand how processes are completed in acquisitions. Operations have the potential to work more smoothly if all those involved have the best understanding possible of workflow. It is also important for fellow

employees to know who handles which tasks within the department. In addition, it is important for Acquisitions staff to understand the needs of each branch library.

Many of the changes in the Acquisitions department at TTUHSC are a result of institutional decisions. However, a number of steps in different job processes are being redefined or eliminated by staff. The future holds the possibility of more change within the department for the sake of efficiency. 🌱



Random Ramblings — The Digital Divide

Column Editor: **Bob Holley** (Professor, Library & Information Science Program, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202; Phone: 313-577-4021; Fax: 313-577-7563) <aa3805@wayne.edu>

Michael Stephens, an Assistant Professor at the **Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Dominican University**, gave the first plenary session on Saturday morning during the 2009 **Charleston Conference**. In his talk, "Hyperlinked Library Services: Trends, Tools, and Transparency," he painted a glowing picture of what technology could do to improve library services. To quote the description in the conference program:

The **Hyperlinked Library** is an open, participatory institution that welcomes user input and creativity. It is built on human connections and conversations.... Librarians are tapped in to user spaces and places online to interact, have presence, and point the way.... This presentation provides a roadmap toward becoming the **Hyperlinked Library**: transparent, participatory, playful, user-centered and human....

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