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Patron-Driven Acquisition: Collecting as if Money and Space Mean Something

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interplay between the aggregator and publisher versions of purchased and not-yet-purchased eBooks. **From the aggregator side**, what happens to discoverability and use of books that have triggered a purchase on the publisher site? Ideally these books remain permanently discoverable on the aggregator site, but being able to continue to use them there would require dual hosting, which has caused problems in the past. Alternatively, these books could be discoverable on the aggregator platform in a **Google** books-like (read-only) fashion, but usage (i.e., copy, print, download) would require transfer to the publisher site, requiring sophisticated transfer functionality in order not to be a nuisance to the user. **From the publisher side**, what happens when a user moves from a book their library owns on the publisher site to one it does not own, and the publisher wants to facilitate use and/or purchase of that book in a patron-driven model? This would likely require sophisticated transfer or activation of PDA back through the aggregator. Although these challenges are significant, the potential benefits for each stakeholder warrant the effort it will take to address them.

It is also important to recognize that this approach could and should be applied incrementally — that is, for those publishers who want to participate in this fashion and invest the necessary resources in its design. For example, a **pilot PDA-to-Publisher system** could include a small group of publishers (say 3-5) that want to try including their content in an aggregator-based system that results in purchase of books on the publisher site alongside other publishers' content that then results in PDA in the traditional manner (i.e., resulting in "ownership" of content on the aggregator site). This initial pilot would involve a similarly small set of libraries that want to experiment with this DRM-bypassing approach.

Ultimately, a simpler solution would be to reduce the restrictiveness of DRM on aggregator-hosted content, which *might* eventually happen. But can we afford to wait?

A final word on discoverability: the elephant in every acquisitions room. We know that the majority of traffic to e-journal content currently arrives via **Google** and other Web search engines. This is not as much the case with eBooks, especially those contained in aggregator platforms. As publishers scramble to optimize their book content for discoverability from the open Web, it seems crucial that

library-purchased eBook content be discoverable in this way. One way to achieve this is to ensure that we own publisher-hosted content, and to seek to leverage traffic to publisher sites to drive acquisition of the content our local users are most interested in. There is no technical reason why this can't happen, even via the aggregators, but it will require concerted effort on all of our parts to make it so. 🍌

Endnotes

1. **Price J.S. and J.D. McDonald.** 2010. "Beguiled by bananas: a retrospective study of the usage & breadth of patron vs. librarian acquired eBook collections." In *Charleston Conference Proceedings 2009*. **Bernhardt B.R., Daniels T., Steinle K., Strauch K.**, Eds. Westport, Conn. Libraries Unlimited. (In press) <http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/u/?lea,175>
2. **Paulson K., Morris C., Polanka S., Tracy T. and R. Seger.** 2010. "Archiving eBooks: how you can keep what you own if disaster befalls." **Charleston Conference Presentation.**

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Patron-Driven Acquisition: Collecting as if Money and Space Mean Something

by **Peter Spitzform** (Collection Development Librarian, University of Vermont) <Peter.spitzform@uvm.edu>

When we started our Order-on-Demand pilot project at the very end of 2007, we did so because large swaths of our book collections were going unused. A then-recent study of circulation data showed that fully 40% of our books had not been checked out for years after they began sitting on our shelves. While our study predated the economic crash by a year or so, times were nevertheless getting tougher, and we felt that it was only a matter of time before university administrators began to request more accountability for how we are spending our money.

Our grim circulation statistics were hardly representative of our being an outlier. In fact, the **University of Vermont** turned out to have the same rate of (non-) circulation as virtually every other circulation study to be found in the literature, beginning with the famous Pittsburgh Study from 1973 conducted by **Allen Kent**.¹

As the reality of our circulation study sank in, we considered creating a print-on-demand trial. While our central printing office on campus did not own an **Espresso Book Machine**, they nevertheless possessed advanced, so-

phisticated equipment, and they were willing to join us in an experiment to print and bind books from electronic files when (and only when) patrons indicated their need for these titles. It didn't take long, however, to determine that publishers were not making their front-list titles available electronically, and we already owned the older titles they were providing the files for.

Next, we considered what would happen if we were to provide access to book titles we did not yet own, but would commit to purchase at the point of patron need for them. Following an interesting discussion with our rep from **YBP**, who took our ideas seriously, we were able to institute a demonstration project wherein we loaded the MARC records for books from three large, academic presses (**Wiley, Palgrave Macmillan, and Oxford**), link these records to order forms within our OPAC and allow patrons to order the books we did not yet own; we made a commitment to get the books in their hands within three working days from when they

placed the order, if their need was urgent (as noted on the online form). We were told that,

as of November 2007, we were the only library in the United States that had instituted a version of what we now know as Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) for print books, though our term of choice is Order-on-Demand. We very much wanted to test the hypothesis that books specifically wanted (and ordered) by patrons might have a better rate of circulation than books we obtained in the traditional way (primarily from our shelf-ready books received on our profile with **YBP**).

After three full years in operation, I believe the evidence suggests that this project has been a success, though there is not unanimous agreement about that in our library. Some librarians feel that our collections role should remain unchanged from years or even decades ago, wherein the library should purchase any and all books that fall within our "approval" profile with **YBP** in case there should ever be a need for these books by our patrons. I maintain that while there are students who are undoubtedly disappointed that a book that looks promising is not yet on our shelves, it is more common for patrons to simply order the book when they need it, and pick it up when they are notified that it is awaiting them at the circulation desk. Here are some data about our Order-On-Demand program that might allow you to draw your own conclusions.

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In fiscal 2009, 505 books were ordered on demand from the records in our OPAC for books we did not yet own. If we had not done this pilot study, but instead continued to receive books from these three publishers based on our approval plan with **YBP**, we would have received 1,759 books. That means that we did NOT receive 1,254 books that we otherwise would have. Given this, we spent \$33,149.64 for the books our patrons ordered on demand, while we would have spent \$142,231.12 under the old method. So, in FY2009, we saved \$109,081.48 and roughly 120 linear feet of shelf space. The books that were ordered on demand circulated an average of 1.18 times since the start of the program, while books received on our approval plan over the same period circulated an average of .67 times. (This circulation data was collected in February and March of 2010.)

In fiscal 2010, we ordered 590 books on demand, while we would have received 1,502 books under our approval plan. By not receiving the 912 other books we would have received on our approval plan, we saved roughly 90 linear feet of shelf space. In that year, we spent \$37,971.86 for books ordered on demand, though we would have spent \$88,604.60 if those books had shown up on our approval plan, saving us \$50,632.79. Meanwhile, the books ordered on demand circulated an average of 2 times each since the inception of the program, while books received on our approval plan over the same period circulated an average of 1.18 times. (This circulation data was collected in March of 2011.)

	2009	2010
Books ordered via PDA	505	590
Books that would have arrived on approval if no PDA	1,759	1,502
Books not received because of PDA	1,254	912
Dollar savings from PDA	\$109,081	\$50,633
Shelf space saved (linear feet)	120	90

With books ordered on demand circulating about 70% more than books bought “just in case,” this model of collection development makes intuitive, spatial, and financial sense.

And clearly, the meteoric rise of PDA for eBooks takes our Order-On-Demand trial much further. Rather than having to impose a delay for desired material to arrive for patrons, eBooks are instantly viewable and readable. Thus, the primary objection some librarians had to our pilot study — that the books should already be waiting on the shelves for patrons when they need them — vanishes. eBooks via the MARC records that link to them from the

OPAC are provided with every bit of discoverability that print books have, with the highly desirable bonus of paying for books only when they’re needed and used. We have just instituted a Patron-Driven Acquisition program for eBooks in conjunction with **YBP** and **EBL**. It has only been active for six weeks so far, so we do not yet have sufficient data to draw any conclusions. We are using the same three publishers we used for our print trial, substituting eBook records whenever they exist.

To review so far: Books ordered on demand show superior circulation rates; they provide savings in money, savings in shelving space; books are at least as discoverable as those received in the usual fashion, and provided at the point of need.

I’m not seeing a big downside here.

The **UVM Libraries** rely on two off-site storage facilities to hold our older and less (or non) circulating materials in order to make room for more volumes on the libraries’ shelves. One is a huge underground space on the far side of campus with half devoted to journals, the other half to books, all on compact shelving. The other is a rented commercial warehouse space in a neighboring town. Both sites are at capacity. Renting a third off-site storage space would be cost-prohibitive and, frankly, irresponsible. In the past, we had no alternative to acquiring print books, which take up room on physical shelving. Electronic books may well help libraries manage their collections less expensively, and acquiring only those specific titles that patrons want, rather than purchasing all those that we think patrons might someday need, will certainly reduce the footprint of the print collections.

My vision for the library of the not-so-distant-future takes all these positive aspects of PDA into account, and maximizes them to the point where the patron is actually presented with more access to materials than in the old model of libraries-as-repositories of books and other knowledge objects. It might look something like this:

Book publishers get beyond their anxiety about eBooks, and provide simultaneous publication of their books in both print and electronic formats. This will do away with the current problem of many publishers clinging to a model where the print edition is released, followed (maybe) by the electronic version at some indeterminate point in the future. Once print and electronic editions of books are published simultaneously, libraries (and the scholarly book-buying public) will be able to structure their buying in a rational, predictable manner, rather than the largely hit-and-miss fashion now that results from libraries desiring to purchase more eBooks within their normal workflow, but being forced to purchase the print because of uncertainty when the electronic format will be issued. At that point, libraries will load the

MARC records for any and all books that fall within their academic scope and mission, and patrons will encounter these in their normal course of conducting research. But instead of noting the call number and trudging into the stacks to find the book they need, they simply click on the link in the catalog and access the entire book on the computer (or tablet, or smart phone) they are using, and start reading. Despite the slight variations in how different eBook vendors set up their rules, most will incorporate some form of a free preview of an eBook, a loan period of some length, the first, say, two to ten clicks on that book, followed by an automatically-triggered purchase of the book on its Nth click (N being determined by the library.) For the initial loan periods, libraries will pay some fraction of the list price of the book, followed by a payment for the full list price of the book when a purchase is triggered. All vendors will create a rule (based on their agreement with publishers) that a purchased eBook can be opened a certain number of times in a given period, after which the library must purchase an additional copy of the book.

Because it may take a very long time for all publishers to be able to issue eBooks (either simultaneously with the print editions they publish, or on their own — it is currently not economically feasible for very small presses to offer eBooks), libraries will continue to receive books in print for the foreseeable future, alongside the numerous eBooks they make available. Consequently, it will be in virtually all libraries’ interests to work with book vendors, who can supply whichever format of books a library prefers, and consolidate the invoicing for both purchases and loan charges for eBooks. Libraries will not have to juggle invoices either from numerous book publishers or vendors — at least no more so than they do today.

Several thorny issues will need to be resolved over time in order for this new method of collection development to be fully functional. One is when — or even whether — to list their books in **WorldCat**. **WorldCat** has become an ever-stronger tool for discovery, especially when patrons utilize it via **Google** or **Google Scholar** searching. However, current limitations placed on eBooks by vendors (at the insistence of publishers) preclude eBooks from being lent to other libraries via ILL in the normal sense of lending an entire book. **OCLC** holdings, then, have at least partly evolved away from their traditional use as a tool for ILL, and more toward their function as a discovery tool. Publishers worry that the lending of eBooks will diminish their income to unsustainable levels, and generally allow only parts of eBooks to be lent to other institutions as a result. Until ILL rules for eBooks settle on a new norm, there will be confusion about **WorldCat** holdings, and what they have traditionally represented to the library community. If libraries were to load their “holdings” of MARC records for books they do not yet own into **OCLC**, there would no doubt be ILL requests for those books. Should libraries be purchasing books when other libraries request them for ILL purposes? Or should libraries list only those books that have been fully

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purchased on their PDA program to be listed in **WorldCat**? And if libraries are prohibited from lending entire eBooks, but can only lend chapters, what will the long-term effects of this be on traditional interlibrary loan? In my opinion, librarians and the publishing community should be working together to address these concerns. While ILL should not be a primary driver of libraries' participation in **OCLC** holdings, it is nevertheless a time-honored tradition in much of the world to loan materials between libraries and their patrons, and eBooks should not be cast in the role of killing ILL.

As eBooks proliferate, and especially as libraries move toward patron-driven acquisi-

tion of eBooks, another issue that arises is that of reading devices. eBooks can certainly be read online easily enough. The question of portable reading devices raises the problems of economic disparity. Patrons who have laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc. can easily download eBooks to them and use them away from the library. While such devices are relatively inexpensive, given their power, they nevertheless can be prohibitive to a number of patrons. Many libraries lend devices to patrons, but doing so can be a hardship for libraries, or at least a complex problem. Keeping such devices working and clean of viruses and other infections can be challenging, and such simple events as rainstorms and gravity can take their toll on them.

None of these problems are even remotely insurmountable, and as standards and norms

slowly begin to evolve, eBooks will become ubiquitous. We should welcome such evolution and begin to embrace the fact that patrons do a better job at selecting what they need for their research, and that what they select will tend to be used by others, as well. We need not feel threatened by the fact that the books we choose to purchase "just in case" are not used nearly as much as those selected by our patrons when given the opportunity to choose them "just in time." 🌱

Endnote

1. **Kent, Allen.** Use of library materials: the University of Pittsburgh study. New York: **M. Dekker**, c1979.

Developing a Model for Long-Term Management of Demand-Driven Acquisitions

by **Michael Levine-Clark** (Collections Librarian, Associate Professor, University of Denver) <michael.levine-clark@du.edu>

Anyone who has been to a library conference in the last several years has been to a talk or two on patron-driven acquisition (PDA). Academic libraries have reported — with mixed results — about PDA pilots of varying sizes. But all of these pilots have been add-ons to standard collection building practices. I want demand-driven acquisition (DDA) — my preferred term for this concept — to be the primary means for my library to build collections, and I think that it should become the main method for collection building at most academic libraries. In order to move to a DDA model on a broad scale, libraries need to develop new ways of thinking about our collections and services, publishers need to make eBooks available at the time of publication and provide a local print-on-demand (POD) option, and approval vendors need to develop tools to help us manage the complex workflow involved in this new process.

At the **University of Denver (DU)**, we have been interested in DDA for quite some time. From 2001 to 2005, we participated in a consortial DDA program with **NetLibrary** through the **Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries**. Though this model had some flaws, the concept has always seemed sound, so in 2010 we moved pretty aggressively into DDA for eBooks again with **Ebook Library (EBL)**. We also automatically purchase interlibrary loan requests that meet certain criteria relating to publisher, price, and date of publication. But these projects have represented fairly small portions of our overall collecting strategy. I have long wanted to expand to include the widest range of monographs possible into a DDA program.

Ideally, we would be able to develop a DDA plan that would deliver all of our scholarly monographs as eBooks with a local POD option. This would allow us to provide our users

with a much wider range of choices, would keep us from buying material that will never be used, and would make it possible for us to provide instant (or almost-instant in the case of POD) access to any title. Because most scholarly monographs are not made available as eBooks in a timely manner, and even fewer are available for local POD, this is not possible now. Instead we need to develop a hybrid model that incorporates print and electronic books, and we need to do so using the existing approval structure. We have been working with **YBP** to develop a plan that includes our existing **EBL** DDA plan, eBooks from other aggregators and publishers, and print books from our current slip notification plan. When this model is fully implemented, we will be able to provide access to a wide range of books and subjects on demand.¹

The more I have thought about DDA, the more I realize that what originally seemed to be a fairly easy concept is actually tremendously complex. If widely adopted by academic libraries — as seems likely to be the case — DDA will force us to reconsider how we define the library collection; will allow us to rethink traditional library functions; and will necessitate development of new tools and services to manage the complex workflow involved in the process.

Library collections have traditionally been defined by ownership and have recently been defined as well by access. Under a DDA model, collections are expanded to include everything that can be acquired in a reasonably short time. The collection is the pool of titles available for potential lease or purchase — and

its size is bounded only by the library's budget. Unlike a traditional purchased collection or even a collection based on long-term (annual) lease, a DDA collection is fluid. This sort of collection is based on immediate access rather than long-term stewardship. For academic libraries, that is a radical shift, and one that makes many librarians uncomfortable. If we embrace DDA, then we should also embrace — or at least accept — the notion that our collections are not permanent. We should be comfortable with the notion of purchase or lease at the point of need, even if that need is decades after the publication date — which should be possible because eBooks should not go out of print.

Library functions have evolved over centuries where the primary mission was to preserve physical collections. We have long been the only place to get particular books because after we bought them they went out of print. The only way for a user at another library to gain access to those books was to use the owning library's copy. Interlibrary loan (ILL) evolved as a relatively efficient means of getting these books to their users, and it is a service that libraries are rightfully very proud of. While ILL is incredibly efficient for transporting books from one library to another, it makes no sense at all for eBooks. With DDA, libraries have already begun leasing books for a day or a week rather than purchasing them to keep forever. We should replace ILL whenever possible with a DDA model that will allow us all to go to a single location to gain immediate access to any eBook, often at a cheaper cost than borrowing

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