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Biz of Acq — A Year of eBook PDA at Eastern Michigan University

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A year has passed since **Eastern Michigan University's Library** initiated a patron-driven acquisitions pilot to receive eBooks from **ebrary**. We first reported about the project last year in the November 2012 *ATG* issue. Now we have data and lessons to share.

First here's a brief summary of what we did. We decided to add records to our online catalog for all **ebrary** eBooks that matched our **GOBI3** approval profile from 2010 to date (we did not want to add old content that we did not previously select). We had already been selecting individual eBooks from **ebrary** as part of our normal selection procedure using **YBP's GOBI3** service. Our current catalog was compared versus the **ebrary** database so we could exclude all books that we already owned as eBooks or in print. We also had a few restrictions: no textbooks, cookbooks, dictionaries, conference proceedings, or books classified by **YBP** as "professional." We also capped the price at \$200 and three short-term loans (STL) must be allowed before any purchase event. We wanted any publisher who triggers a sale with a single use excluded.

We set up a deposit account with **YBP** to cover the STLs and the ultimate purchase that is separate from our regular selection so that none of the traditional subject funds are being expended.

The 2010-2012 records were loaded in early May 2012 (approximately 10,000 **ebrary** records) with weekly updates occurring thereafter. The phrase "DDA Title" was added to the 590 note field so that the librarians and staff could easily identify the eBooks that were included in the pilot from any other eBook. (**YBP** calls their system "demand-driven acquisitions," hence the "DDA"). We did not announce our pilot to the public because we wanted our patrons to use the collection as normal. We asked the librarians to view the DDA titles in **GOBI3** in the "preview" mode rather than tripping a STL.

In the first twelve months we have over 16,000 "DDA" titles in our catalog. We have spent a little over \$12,000. The cost per month has been as low as \$238 and as high as \$1845. The total value of DDA collection is more \$1,500,000. Approximately 20% of the titles have been visited.

695 books have tripped one or more STL with 36 being purchased. These 695 STL titles came from 2,165 user sessions with 55,434 pages viewed, 2,275 pages printed, and 413 chapters downloaded. 288 of these books had 50 or more pages viewed. 37 of the books had 10 or more user sessions. If purchased, the

price of these 695 books would be approximately \$64,200. The array of subjects being used is amazing and covers most of the **LC** classes within our library's **GOBI3** approval profile.

The purchase cost of the 36 books comes to \$3,220. Our top five books by number of user sessions are *Cultural Criminology: An Invitation* (57); *Contemporary Critical Criminology* (54); *Linux Command Line and Shell Scripting Bible, 2nd edition* (30); *Ethnicity and Family Therapy, 3rd edition* (28); and *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (26). The former two lead the way with pages viewed, 1,480 and 1,824 respectively.

One of the nicer features in **GOBI3** is that it notifies the selectors that a particular eBook is being included in our weekly load ("auto DDA record sent") when viewing the record. This allows the selector to decide whether to let the patron's usage decide whether we purchase the book or to order it now. After one year many of our firm orders continue to be for eBooks that are "auto DDA record sent." Some of our selectors want this book for our permanent collection now. Another option in **GOBI3** is the "Request DDA" button. It allows the selectors to override our parameters (such as over \$200) to include a particular eBook into the DDA pool.

It is very easy to get the usage statistics from **ebrary**, and the staff has been responsive to our requests. We had one incident where all of the DDA titles were shut off over the weekend when someone at **ebrary** was confused about payment, but this was easily resolved and access was resumed.

There have been some snafus. We discovered that some textbooks were included as part of the DDA load. We have worked with **YBP** to identify these textbooks so we could strip these out. We also discovered that a few publishers that do not allow STLs were also included in our load. Three books were tripped for purchase after two user sessions. There is a publisher (you know who you are) who cancelled the eBooks after the DDA records were loaded so that the links are dead. The occasional link does not work so we must work with **ebrary** to reestablish the link. We also are noticing that some older books continue to be retrospectively reproduced as eBooks.

We also have a continuous issue with **Safari**. Our university graciously purchases this package for our campus. We purchase MARC records for the catalog that link to the individual eBooks. We do not want to purchase the **ebrary** version of this book too. This calls for extra diligence by the Technical Services staff to continuously weed these out. We also recently added **Rittenhouse's R2** for medical eBooks, so this is another source of possible duplicates.

The pricing model and availability of eBooks causes some concern. There was a recent psychology book with a \$60 print and \$160 eBook price. With such pricing gaps some of our selectors have asked to remove the eBook DDA option for certain titles from our catalog. While they are getting better, not all publishers have eBooks available at the same time as the print. Do you wait for the eBook? We have a folder for "not-yet-available" eBooks, and some titles have been in there for over one year. The social sciences and humanities publishers are still lagging behind their STEM counterparts. There is some retrospective conversion of older books to electronic by some publishers. While it is interesting to see that there are electronic versions of some of our faculty's publications now available, we do not want older content in many subjects.

We use **ProQuest's Summon** product as our discovery service for the past two years. When the patron gets to our library Website, the default setting is **Summon**, and our patrons must chose "Books" to reach our catalog. It would be interesting to know how many of the DDA usage comes from the discovery service versus the catalog. During the past two years our interlibrary loan requests for books have fallen. This is true at some other academic libraries in Michigan. Again, we are not sure if there is any relation to the use of the discovery service coupled with our patrons' desire of immediate access to content.

We have decided to continue the pilot for another year. The costs have been reasonable and the usage has been very encouraging. Our patrons have embraced the electronic journal and seem to be warming up to the electronic book. We would encourage others to consider it. 🐼

