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Bet You Missed It: What do coloring books and ghostly tales have in common?

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Collection Management Matters — The Database Dance: Waltzing with a Big Budget Cut

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Every Collection Management Librarian dreads the day of the big budget cut, because it involves a lot fancy footwork with vendors, faculty, and students. Faculty have to be given clear explanations as to why the library can no longer purchase the database that supports one or two small classes in the department, and students have to be informed about alternative means for accessing full text. Database vendors have to be flexible about what the library can afford in regards to expensive databases or bundled databases which have barely used components.

When I am evaluating renewing databases, I usually look at three components: usage statistics, the program/majors it supports, and accreditation requirements. For the usage statistics, I look at what we collect in-house from our ILS and then look at the usage statistics, specifically the full-text downloads, on the vendor's Website.

After I have compared the usage statistics, I discuss the databases that I intend to discontinue with the Library's Database Committee, which has a cross section of public and technical services librarians. The committee may agree to the terminations, or they might decide

to give it another year to see if usage picks up. This usually happens because someone has knowledge of an instructor who has an assignment for that product. In some cases, I will send an alert to the department to let them know that the database is on probation.

For example, the usage statistics demonstrated that Nursing Education in Video was barely used by the Nursing faculty, who for years had been calling about needing money for videos. As their liaison, I sent a message to the entire department stating that the cost per use appeared to reflect that the database did not support their curriculum. The Dean wrote me back to say that they would take up the issue at their next department meeting. Sometimes this approach works, and sometimes it does not.

When there is no response, I am left wondering what will happen if some faculty member skipped the message and then will complain later when the database has disappeared. Sometimes new faculty are hired who used one of our discontinued databases at their former institution and are upset that we don't provide it, which happened with two databases.

I send an email to all of the departments that I

think use the database the most, explaining our funding issues, the cost-per-use of the database, and my proposed plan of action. Sometimes this may include the deletion, but it might also include a suggestion for another database they have not considered, that is more inexpensive, but offers similar coverage. Each message always has a phrase stating that, if the department wants to retain the database for accreditation purposes, we will try to follow their wishes. If nobody contacts me after a period of time to say that they need the database for research or to support their classes, then I proceed with my plan. If I am offering a substitution, I give them a 30-day trial, asking for comments, and if nobody responds, I send them a reminder midway through the trial.

Asking the sales representative to supply the statistics is a good strategy, because they can do the math and see that the database is not that popular. This can often pave the way for a discussion about a smaller package or a reduction in the renewal price, if the library cannot afford the full price. One of my vendors offered a 50% reduction on the renewal price, rather than smaller package, because we both could see that only one segment of the database was being used by a small number of patrons.

Negotiating with vendors to unbundle their packages, so that the most popular database can be retained, can set off a bit of twirling,

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

INNER CHILD BATTLES STRESS THRU COLORING by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Well, I see college hysterics want safe rooms where they can color pictures and view films of frolicking puppy dogs. The French are out of ahead of them. **Hachette** has released *Art-Thérapie: 100 Coloriages Anti-Stress*, and the French are taking to it big time. Two million copies sold. They are mandala designs which seems quite Jungian.

Despite non-stop vacations, the French think they are the most stressed-out folks on earth. But we come in second. So **Barron's** is releasing art-therapy coloring books.

See — **William Brennan**, *Atlantic*, "Coloring Books for Existential Angst," April 2015, p.33.



GRIM SCANDINAVIA by Bruce Strauch (The Citadel)

Let's read some ghastly tales in a socialist paradise. (1) **Maj Sjöwall** and **Per Wahlöö**, *Roseanna* (standard trope of murder interrupts summer plans) (1965); (2) **Henning Mankell**, *Faceless Killers* (elderly couple butchered in remote cabin) (1991); (3) **Jo Nesbø**, *Police* (killing members of a police dept. in way that evokes crime each solved) (2013); (4) **John Ajvide Lindqvist**, *Let the Right One In* (made into a truly creepy movie) (2004); (5) **Karin Fossum**, *The Caller* (Mom checks pram and finds baby drenched in blood) (2004).

See — **Erik Larson**, "Five Best," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 14-15, 2015, p.C10.