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Blurring Lines--The Logical Extension of the Demand-Driven Purchase Model--Customization, Multi-Media and Ever-Improving Analytics

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And They Were There from page 80

Deciding what to do with donated material is a persistent question for libraries; one made all the more complicated when a self-published author donates a copy of their work. **Ginnani** and **Buchanan** opened the discussion with the tale of an author who attempted to involve the library dean and the Provost in the process of approving his donation.

The trouble with self-published works, they explained, is that they seldom have published reviews for librarians to consult in determining the book's fit with the collection. They also typically lack editorial review prior to publishing, so librarians are unsure of the academic worth of the book. Self-published authors are usually unaware of library staff processes for evaluating books, and are usually emotionally invested in seeing their works accepted.

The session attendees shared their institutions' policies towards self-published donations, whether they are accepted, declined, or returned. The library community is still far from a consensus on this issue.

The participants agreed that a clearly worded policy that is available online as well as at library service points is the library's best friend in determining the fate of self-published works. Library administration must support the policy, as disappointed authors can run to them, looking for a sympathetic ear. 🌱

*That's all the reports we have room for in this issue. Watch for more reports from the 2014 Charleston Conference in upcoming issues of **Against the Grain**. Presentation material (PowerPoint slides, handouts) and taped session links from many of the 2014 sessions are available online. Visit the **Conference Website** at www.charlestonlibraryconference.com. — KS*



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Blurring Lines — The Logical Extension of the Demand-Driven Purchase Model



Customization, Multi-Media and Ever-Improving Analytics

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Demand-driven acquisition (DDA) in the eBook space has been with us long enough to have generated both acclaim and reproach. New publishing initiatives to create demand-driven friendly content have emerged, untethered from legacy print-based pricing logic, in parallel with the inevitable backlash that has seen publishers pull content from DDA distribution because of usage too low to trigger purchase. Journals have been slower to the DDA game, although options are emerging through platforms like **Read Cube** and article rental programs. And video has been available in DDA and Evidence-Based Acquisition (EBA) for several years, and demand is growing at pace. Librarians praise the return-on-investment (ROI) when lightly used content gets read, viewed, and used but not in sufficient volume to trigger purchase and only very high-use content is triggered for purchase. Publishers and aggregators of content enjoy the “long tail” opportunity to expose their back catalogs at very low marginal cost, but worry about the financial impact on their front list should it not drive enough views to trigger purchase.

We are in the very early days of DDA across media types, and a fair amount of sorting will take place in the coming years as we establish equilibrium between library purchasing efficacy (ROI) and proper compensation for content creators to sustain their enterprises. I see three key points upon which the future of DDA will evolve and, in doing so, will bring us closer to a market-responsive equilibrium between the needs of content providers and the demands of content consumers:

1. Customization of trigger, price, and length of trigger view and period/scope of access to content post purchase.

2. DDA platforms that are multi-media and include text, image, video, and audio all in one platform.
3. Ever improving data analytics that empower both the library and the content provider.

Customization

There really is no natural limit on a specific library's possible DDA profile. Given a sufficient progression in the technology of the publisher or aggregator-provided platform, each library account should be able to customize its experience. Four inputs come together to form the “fulcrum” of negotiation between the content provider and the library: the price paid, the length of the view that triggers the purchase, the number of views that trigger the purchase, and the period and volume of access once a DDA purchase is triggered. The “fixed” view we have on this today is hurting all of us as content and value-in-use of content in the library are far too diverse to be captured in a single model. Further, different libraries and different librarians will value the same content differently. I often come back to the example of a classic ethnographic film. Such a film is a staple of an Anthropology 101 course and can be viewed by hundreds of students a semester, but only “viewed,” from the perspective of a DDA trigger, once a semester. This film is highly prized by the creator and by the consumer, but the current DDA model fails to capture this value as it only measures aggregate click through's or hits. Imagine, instead, that the library could gain access to this film, and many more like it, with the following DDA profile: purchase for

continued on page 82

perpetual access, multi-viewer, on the first view that exceeds five minutes for a price of \$750.00. Then couple this profile with a separate profile for all other video that states: subscribe for one-year access, multi-viewer, on the third view that exceeds 30 seconds for a price of \$99.00. And you can extend this logic to high-use e-textbooks versus esoteric scholarly manuscripts. Or high-use audio tracks for music appreciation courses versus obscure performances on the Clavichord. And on and on... Without such a model, much high-use, high-demand content is likely to not be available in DDA.

Multi-Media

Why should a librarian or library patron have to access DDA content via multiple platforms and vendors? eBooks, archival documents, audio tracks, video, musical scores, data sets, journal articles, etc., etc. are all content types amenable to measurement, use and sale. The aggregation and distribution of content by small and large companies alike is increasingly multi-media and, therefore, the platforms must eventually also be multi-media. Specialized collections, especially in areas like music and film studies, provide scholars and students with a mix of media types for study. Of course, the *Modern French Film Studies Collection* can be purchased, and the individual items within the collection can be purchased via single-title sales, but DDA via a single, multi-media platform allows usage to determine the purchase pathways and the student of modern French Film might well be the trigger of the purchase of a video, a film script, a reference monograph on the film, and a biography of the director; or not... depending on the level of interest and the purchase trigger parameters selected by the librarian. Massive aggregation of eBooks, through platforms like **ebrary**, delivered DDA, has allowed libraries to migrate toward a single eBook platform and evade, even partially, a state of “platform weariness.” Imagine then a future state where a single mixed-media DDA platform supports access to all the media types central to a student or scholars search within and across disciplines and areas of study.

Data Analytics

Seven years ago, when I founded **Business Expert Press**, our eBook collection was made available exclusively through the **ebrary** platform. At that time **Counter** statistics provided little more than title-level and collection-level numbers of views and total pages viewed; neither we at **BEP** nor the libraries that purchased our collection had visibility into usage beyond these raw statistics. I suspect our internal team spent more time reviewing usage statistics (to assess the likelihood of a given library continuing to purchase our collection) than did our library customers. Usage data, to be truly valuable, must be more robust. Near the end of my time at **Pearson Education**, the company acquired **E-college** and I recall the standout feature of **E-college** that made it such a desirable acquisition target for **Pearson** was the robust “back office” data they provided university administrators on online course, program and instructor efficacy; measured both in student results and program profitability (i.e., enrollment rates and completion rates along with costs to support a given class).

The state of data analytics in support of the classroom and the learning enterprise has become increasingly individualized to the learner and has moved forward at a much faster pace than within the library content space. Fast-forward to 2015 and the current state-of-play in DDA. At present we are giving librarians little more than data about pages read, minutes viewed, total views, total users, etc. What if a librarian was able to distinguish between the views of faculty versus students? Ph.D. students versus undergraduates? The type of content (learning as opposed to scholarly reference) viewed by which departments at which time in the semester? Discipline profiles? Correlations between online programs, degrees, and content triggered for purchase? Location of view: classroom,

dorm, in library, off campus? Perhaps some of these possibilities strike a chord with you, the reader, and perhaps some of this is improbable and unnecessary. But evolving usage and user data that offers ever deeper insight into the values and needs of the library patron is the indispensable corollary to the description above about customization of the DDA profile; a library that knows a good deal about how its content is used will make ever better decisions about how to trigger purchase in an improved future-state DDA environment.

It is my hope that this column sparks debate, inspires publishers and aggregators, and sets off a conversation about how far and how fast we move with DDA. 🍷

Pelikan's Antidisambiguation — “Self-Preservation and the Cloud”

Column Editor: **Michael P. Pelikan** (Penn State) <mpp10@psu.edu>

Despite this column's dedication to the notion of “Ambiguation” (if you can disambiguate something, you must be able to ambiguate it, right?), I don't usually go in for “ambiguated” titles. We're making an exception this month, to reflect my genuinely ambivalent feelings about that most ubiquitous, aggressive, and downright inescapable of recent ideas to have had its turn at sweeping the “Net-mosphere”: the Cloud.

I can't remember a Net-based concept that has achieved such a degree of pervasiveness more quickly and completely than the Cloud. Certainly there are ideas of similar or comparable scope; social networking, for example. And there are clearly individual products that have achieved sweeping adoption in a very short time; Facebook, for example. But remember, in many ways, Facebook is simply an individual branded meta-service whose existence relies on the presence of the Cloud to make its connections, to keep it running, and ever-expanding. Same story with Twitter. Same story with Linked-In. These are entities that go beyond simply being something on a server. In most ways that matter, they are platforms, existing in and reaching out from a virtualized setting. They are way more than just Webpages.

For a useful exploration of the origins of the term in question, I refer you to the Wikipedia article entitled, “Cloud Computing.” I'll just touch on a couple of points here. Wikipedia says use of a cloud symbol to represent the Internet goes back to 1994. The phrase “Cloud computing,” however, received a primary socializing boost in 2006 with **Amazon's** introduction of “The Elastic Compute Cloud.” Indeed, the term coined by **Amazon's** marketing arm for its net-based virtualized computing platform, “EC2,” comes from an initialization of the words “Elastic Compute Cloud.”

The Wikipedia article aptly describes the use of the word “cloud” “...in science to describe a large agglomeration of objects that visually appear from a distance as a cloud and describes any set of things whose details are not inspected further in a given context.”

This turn of phrase, in fact, distinctly characterizes that which is in common among the vast majority of Cloud-based services we use today. It's your “stuff,” but the details associated with the management, storage, and retrieval of your “stuff” are not apparent, nor need you apprehend any of that to make use of the service. It's in the Cloud. Don't trouble your pretty little head about it.

From a practical perspective, it has proven very easy, very natural, to become accustomed to having immediate access to a wide variety of my “stuff,” regardless of what device I was using when I first wrote something, read something, took a picture, or listened to a piece of music. Web history? It follows me around — if there's a spot I visited in Chrome on my tablet this morning, I can find and reopen it this afternoon on my phone. Easy. It just works. And it reaches across devices, platforms, even applications — even modalities. Just as this column was going to bed, there came the announcement that **Amazon's** Echo would now be able to read to you, out loud, from books purchased through your Audible account. The prospect of “Alexa” reading to me is persuasive — it was one of the missing capabilities I noted early on with the Echo. I was pretty certain the obstacles lay more in the realm of licensing than in the details of technical implementation — remember the flap over whether the first Kindles would be able to read books you'd purchased, or, excuse me, I mean to say, you'd licensed? (Old perceptions die hard.)

In terms of keeping my “stuff” safe, there are few more seamless examples than **Amazon's** cloud-based infrastructure behind the Kindle. Need a preservation strategy for old articles — the ones you used to photocopy and hang on to? Now you can simply render them into a pdf and email it to your Kindle's email address. Not only will it appear on your Kindle, but when you buy a next Kindle (which you will, or at least, I will) you won't have to copy a thing onto it — your “stuff” is already in the Cloud, waiting for you to download it. Books, articles, music, photos, videos, all are safely enfolded in the Cloud. The

continued on page 83