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Academic E-Books: Publishers, Librarians and Users

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der, style, and sensibility as **José Vasconcelos**, **Graham Greene**, **Oscar Zeta Acosta**, **Maya Angelou**, **Sam Shepard**, **Elena Poniatowska**, **Demetria Martínez**, **Alicia Gaspar de Alba**, and **William Carlos Williams**.

Clearly, one might argue that constructing a comprehensive bibliographic tool for monographic materials related to the U.S.-Mexico border region is an impossible endeavor. After all, how do you create a complete resource for a field of study that is not only inherently complex, but more importantly, is constantly growing both in quantity and quality? How do you begin to capture the vast amount of scholarship that has been produced by and about these multifaceted communities in a single document? Indeed, it would be difficult to list all available information resources about this borderlands region within a single text. To that end, this bibliography is by no means comprehensive, but offers a small sampling of titles to stimulate the critical study and understanding of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. 🌸

Endnotes

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Editor's note: An asterisk () denotes a title selected for *Resources for College Libraries*.

Academic E-Books: Publishers, Librarians, and Users

by **Michael Zeoli** (Vice President, Content Development and Partner Relations, YBP Library Services) <mzeoli@ybp.com>

Academic E-Books: Publishers, Librarians, and Users edited by **Suzanne M. Ward**, **Robert S. Freeman**, and **Judith M. Nixon** (Purdue University Press, 2016) contains all the elements of a compelling thriller. Depending on your perspective you may ask, “how will our hero escape this time?” or sitting on the edge of your seat, wonder, “when will the other shoe drop?”

The book captures the essential “Janus” perspectives and issues from a leading cast of characters in the academic *book* ecosystem, which is as challenged as the earth’s ecosystem these days. We have come to a moment in which, as **Rhonda Herman**, President of **McFarland Publishing**, states, “. . . inaction is simply not an option.” In the Introduction, the editors write modestly that “this book provides a snapshot of both the eBook reality and its promise in the mid-2010s.” This book in fact uncovers major chasms opening between parts of the scholarly *book* supply chain; some described directly in the essays and others *indirectly* though the juxtaposition of views, which like “snapshots” also capture information obliquely and sometimes unintentionally. By soliciting contributions from various perspectives along the scholarly book continuum, the editors have “set traps for accidents”; in fact, one of the greatest values of this book to our ecosystem lies in the “synapses” between perspectives.

How do we reconcile statements such as these:

“the relationship between scholarly publishers and libraries is a vital and defining feature of this [scholarly books] market...”

(**Nadine Vassallo**, **BISG**) and “there is no pressure to acquire books before the moment of need. Thousands of eBook titles are candidates for cost-avoidance, or at least cost-deferment” (**Suzanne Ward**, **Rebecca Richardson**, **Purdue University Libraries**).

From a publisher perspective, **Rhonda Herman** writes, “For print books, advance orders fell roughly 50% since 2010 [...] the amount of revenue from eBooks is not enough to make up for the drop in print revenue.” She continues, “But the combination of DDA and the Short-term loan (STL) has begun to undermine the equilibrium in the revenue of some titles.”

Her views are echoed in the contribution by **Tony Sanfilippo** (Director, **Ohio State University Press**) who writes, “But it is also becoming evident that certain models are becoming rather problematic for publishers [...]. Demand-driven (or patron-driven) acquisitions and the typically accompanying short-term loan option [...] is one example. [...] one thing is immediately clear: this model is guaranteed to delay the majority of a title’s revenue until one year after publication.” As **Herman** noted, **Sanfilippo** also observes that “this model is also significantly cannibalizing print sales.”

We should bear in mind that for most publishers in the humanities and social sciences, 70-90% of publisher *book* revenue continues to be from print and much of this material is unavailable either in digital format or in DDA. As an aside, fewer than 250 of the 1,500 publishers on **YBP’s** approval plan publisher list make more than ten frontlist titles available in

DDA; as of September 2015, fewer than 100 publishers with more than 50 new titles per year make more than 50% of their frontlist available in DDA, and just half of those publishers make more than 75% available. It is important for us all to recognize that not all publishers have had the courage to participate in and experiment with new digital business models, and that many titles are not available in these models even for publishers that do participate.

McFarland, like many publishers, is making changes to its DDA and STL policies concluding that “Revenue has fallen too quickly so inaction is simply not an option.” This position is in fact widespread among publishers and recognized in libraries that have been experimenting with DDA and STL longest. As **Karen Fischer** (**University of Iowa Libraries**) states in her article, “By 2015, some librarians began wondering about the long-term sustainability of the short-term loan model. As more libraries employ the STL model, many publishers have become increasingly uncomfortable with it. [...] Many publishers attribute considerable revenue losses to the STL model...” Beyond changes in pricing, publishers are also withdrawing titles, as **Kathleen Fountain** (**Orbis Cascade Alliance**) explains in her essay, writing, “in a review of the five titles with the most loans in FY 2014, three were no longer for loan or sale.”

The publisher experiences are borne out in the library contributions to the book, albeit cast naturally in a different light. As **Suzanne Ward** and **Rebecca Richardson** write, “In-

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instead of buying these books now, librarians can wait for the future moment when a user actually demonstrates a need for a particular title. If the title is part of an eBook PDA plan, the need is fulfilled instantly and possibly only at a low rental fee (STL) if the title is only needed once or twice.” **Karen Fischer** notes in her article the “significant drop in purchases (and therefore in costs) in 2013 when Iowa implemented the one-day short-term loan option.” **Jim Dooley** from the **University of California at Merced**, discusses the **California Digital Library** consortial arrangement with **ebrary** for a university press DDA plan. Sixty-five presses participate in the program for the **University of California** system comprised of ten libraries. As of August 2014, 2,733 titles were available to the consortium. There were 843 STLs and just 65 titles purchased... Similar results have been reported by other consortia such as **NovaNET** (report posted on the **NovaNET** Website) and **VIVA** (article in *Against the Grain*, Spring 2014). **Kathleen Fountain** writes that as **Orbis Cascade** looked for ways to mitigate costs as publishers adjusted to the effects of DDA and STL, “publishers rejected the widespread adoption of the **NovaNET** model because it would have substantially reduced their revenue.”

Kathleen Fountain and **Karen Fischer** are among the most experienced users of DDA and STL in academic libraries. They have contributed insightful, nuanced and constructive perspectives, especially for their treatment of



emerging challenges. Both describe efforts to manage costs as participating publishers, who we should not forget are also the relative minority that have chosen to *experiment as partners*, respond to the effects of DDA and STL on their revenue. Both organizations have had to implement a process of weeding content from their DDA pools to manage the increasing list prices of eBooks after they have already entered the library DDA repositories, as well as the sharp increases in STL prices. Unfortunately, from the publisher perspective, this removes the promise of DDA for the *long-tail*, as well as the use of STL in place of ILL for libraries.

Given the struggle by both publishers and libraries to manage revenue, one of the surprising revelations regarding STL was that the “trigger events” for STL to convert into a purchase are not controlled by the publisher. **Fountain** writes that the trigger was “moved as necessitated by financial realities. At the close of FY 2013, for example, they moved the trigger from 10 to 15 [STLs] to further delay auto-purchases that would have put the program over budget. The trigger remained set at 15 STLs during the entirety of FY 2014 [...] It has been the only time that the trigger remained steady through an entire fiscal year. As a result, the **Alliance** reduced its rate of auto-purchase for the year and spent more money on STLs than in previous years.” **VIVA** reported the same adjustment to STL triggers. The STL trigger to purchase was originally set for 10 but it was raised to 25 [...] in order to maximize access [...] while keeping total costs within budget” (*Against the Grain*, Spring 2014).

Other topics are treated in the book including an interesting article (particularly in the context of articles already discussed) on

Occam’s Reader, an effort by **Texas Tech University**, the **University of Hawaii**’ at **Manoa** and the **Greater Western Library Alliance** to solve the problem of eBook ILL. A significant portion of the book discusses user behavior, which is an important and little understood area, as **Michael Levine-Clark** highlights in his epilogue to this collection:

Although the ability to measure use has not significantly changed librarians’ understanding of user behavior, it has fundamentally shifted how they build collections. Most significantly, it has allowed the development of DDA, which has benefitted libraries by allowing them to present their users with a much larger pool of content from which to choose than was possible under traditional prospective purchasing models. But as the recent adjustments by publishers to STL pricing have shown, an unintended consequence of this new model is a decrease in predictable revenue for publishers...”

There is much more to be read between these covers. For its treatment of DDA alone, from various perspectives, this book is invaluable. It truly is more than a “snapshot”; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. As **Fischer** writes, “In the relative dawn of eBook PDA, there are still many issues under development, such as available content, digital rights management, pricing, reports, and sustainable PDA models.”

Column Author’s Note: It will be ironic if this book is purchased by libraries rather than left in the hands of patrons to “trigger” (who might primarily in fact be librarians). We wish it well on its voyage.

Little Red Herrings — Copy That?

by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>

Google Books won another (and possibly the last?) round against the copyright drudges, or so we are to believe. Is anyone surprised? I know I’m not. In the latest chapter, the 2nd U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in early October that **Google’s** book-scanning project is a-ok, copacetic, fine with them, it doesn’t matter — you get the point. The “creators” in this case, authors under the auspices of the **Authors Guild** to those of us who work around books, will appeal again, but it appears at this point that they are spitting in the wind. Since 2005 the **Authors Guild** has tried to put the brakes on this runaway train to no avail. As an author, I appreciate their persistence, but I wonder now if this isn’t just throwing good

money after a bad idea. A federal appeals court ruled that **Google’s** “snippets” were “fair use” because what **Google** was doing was transformative. I suppose in the sense that **Google** distilled whole books into small, bite-sized tapas-tastings, that’s true.

In any event, it’s all fair use and so fair game. If you’re one of the authors, it doesn’t matter what you think, or, rather, if you disagree, it’s up to you to do something about it. **Google** is doing you a favor because, according to **Google** spokesperson **Aaron Stein**, **Google** has turned those snippets into a giant “card catalog” for the digital age. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Besides, it exposes your materials to more eyes and that means more money, copy that?

Had **Google** lost, some insiders say that this would have been the end of the service and possibly the beginning of the end of **Google**.

The company would have had to pay tens of millions in fines, perhaps even billions, and it’s clear that **Google** was tired of the legal proceedings. This now gives them carte blanche to continue on their merry way doing what the Internet is so good at: helping technicians make money off of others’ creations for free. Whew! Glad we dodged that bullet.

It appears that most are happy with this outcome, including many librarians. A random sample of headlines runs along the lines of “Researchers Rejoice!” to “Huge Win for Google” to “Copyright Go to Hell.” I’m just kidding about the last one. I made it up. But it may as well have been one.

Now, I’m not going to defend copyright. Everyone hates it in this country and I really don’t need another reason for people to send me hate tweets, even though they are so much better and easier to dismiss than the old hate snail mail I used to receive. But I would like to

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