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Being Earnest with Collections — Investing in Open Access at a Small Academic Library



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Column Editor's Note: *When I was considering topics for this edition of **Being Earnest with Collections**, I reached out to a colleague who I have known for some time. Having just left the **University of Central Florida** after nine years, I am very familiar with the innovation that is coming out of **Rollins College**. I have collaborated with **Jonathan Harwell** on other projects and was impressed with his knowledge of cutting edge issues in collection development and discovery. He proposed this article on the various open access initiatives at **Rollins College**. There is a focus on open access and, in particular, a move toward promoting Open Educational Resources within academic libraries in Florida. One of my last presentations in the state was with **Claire Dygert** from the **Florida Virtual Campus**, and our topic was on efforts to reduce the high cost of textbooks based on library efforts to expand in the area of OER and textbook alternatives. When I got my first look at this article I was impressed by the efforts **Rollins College** has made and how they now serve as emerging leaders in open access. **Dr. Jonathan Miller, Jonathan Harwell, and Erin Gallagher** have shown that academic libraries of all sizes can play a role in the future of this movement. I hope **ATG** readers will be as enlightened as I was after reading this article. — **MA***

This morning I woke up by reading a long passage from **Richard Grant's Dispatches from Pluto: Lost and Found in the Mississippi Delta** (Simon & Schuster, 2015), a fascinating account by a writer who has migrated among various countries and now settled in Pluto, Mississippi. This book is listed at \$16 in paperback or \$11.99 for **Kindle**; it's not available from any of the library ebook vendors listed in YBP's GOBI interface. I read the excerpt as published in *The Telegraph* online and accessible free of charge. It's being shared on social media, so it can be discovered and read by people like me who weren't aware of the book or who don't regularly read *The Telegraph*. This is the sort of serendipity that opens texts to a broad readership because they are not hidden behind paywalls. At least that's the case for one selection from **Grant's** book.

As I write this, it's Open Access Week 2015, in which **SPARC** promotes the ongoing open access movement. In recent years we've been seeing increasing numbers of articles, books, and multimedia available with open access. Yet of course there are still many texts that are not. That's not always a problem for people. As long as we're academics...currently employed...by institutions with healthy

budgets...whose librarians have acquired the exact resources we need to access...or can request them via interlibrary loan. But it can be a problem for people who are members of public libraries that don't provide ILL service...independent scholars...academics who are between jobs, retired, or employed by institutions with limited budgets, or in remote countries...or remote areas of the Mississippi Delta, for example...many of our own students the day after graduation (or commencement, if you will...commencing reduced information access)...or perhaps anthropologists working for a state government that doesn't provide them with the library resources they need.

So in honor of Open Access Week, I'd like to share what we librarians are doing at **Rollins College** to support the movement. We are a small liberal arts college with a graduate business school, located in Winter Park, Florida. We've found over the past few years that while our faculty continue to actively recommend library purchases, those numbers have declined. Meanwhile we review every serial and database subscription annually to make sure we're using our funds effectively. Even without a cancellation mandate, we're identifying low-hanging fruit — subscriptions that have little or no usage and high costs. These factors have enabled us to find more effective uses for some of our library funds. We have canceled some subscriptions and added new ones. We have also invested in open access, to do our part in opening up the information landscape for our own patrons and for the world at large.

Rollins is a leader in open access. Our College of Arts & Sciences faculty passed an Open Access Policy in 2010. According to our Library Director **Jonathan Miller**, we were the third liberal arts college faculty to adopt a policy of open access, following the Harvard model (Miller, Jonathan. "Open access and liberal arts colleges: Looking beyond research institutions." *College & Research Libraries News*; vol. 72, no. 1, Jan. 2011, pp. 16-19,30; also available in our institutional repository).

Our library faculty have already supported the pilot collection of Knowledge Unlatched, which provides open access to books from a variety of scholarly publishers in various disciplines. This fall we decided to take a close look at the proliferating OA projects and determine whether we will support more efforts. **Erin Gallagher**, Electronic Resources & Serials Librarian (and **ATG** "Hot Topics" columnist), worked with **Shawne Holcomb**, Collections Data Specialist, to produce a spreadsheet with data on the projects to be considered. For each they provided the URL, a summary, availability of usage statistics, discoverability, embargo period, DRM, perpetual archiving, MARC

records, cost, platform features, contacts, internal notes, and notes from an informal survey of other libraries in the **Oberlin Group** consortium of liberal arts colleges. With **Ms. Gallagher** and **Dr. Miller's** leadership, the librarians discussed and voted on whether to support each project. Some we will go ahead and invest in, and others we will keep an eye on for further development and possible investment in the future. We'd like to share our decisions in case they're useful for our colleagues; and in the spirit of open access, we can share the spreadsheet with anyone interested. Here are our decisions in no particular order.

- Knowledge Unlatched: We paid \$1,300 for the pilot collection a few years ago. We will pledge at least \$2,643 for the next collection, although this cost might go down with more libraries participating. We will be selecting packages to support, based on upcoming Webinars.
- PLOS: We will join as an institutional member, and will use direct billing to cover any author costs for our faculty.
- BioMed Central: We will join as an institutional member for \$960 annually.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: We will join with Professional Membership at \$25 annually.
- Open Textbook Library: No cost unless an entire book is printed. We are promoting with a link on our OER page (see below).
- Lever Initiative: We will support with \$4000 annually.
- Open Access Network: \$10,791 sought. Not supporting at this time.
- Open Book Publishers: \$500 annually sought. Not supporting at this time.
- Open Library of the Humanities: \$500 annually sought. Not supporting at this time. (Disclosure: I volunteer as a section editor for the OLH.)
- PhilPapers: \$500 annually sought. Not supporting at this time.
- Open Library: donations accepted. Not supporting at this time.
- Reveal Digital Independent Voices: \$5,130 sought. Not supporting at this time.
- HAU-NET: no cost information available yet. Not supporting at this time.

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Of course, I'll think a little about just how it makes sense to sell a book at that price at all and where the concept of profit has gone. Which part of the \$1.45 pays for the printing and binding, which for the distribution to booksellers, and which part for the shipping to me? It's a good choice for a professor to assign her students in a world of overpriced textbooks.

While I waited for that to arrive, I happened to walk past a bookstore. You remember bookstores. They're easy to spot: big sign "Books" outside and lots of greeting cards, wrapping paper, and writers' supplies inside. But behind them, actual books. It took me thirty seconds in the store to find what I was looking for: Vintage books edition, near-exact reprint of that copy that went to college with me.

I photographed the ISBN and mailed it to myself. Back to Amazon: if I search for editions of *Ulysses* or even just paperback editions of *Ulysses*, I do not find the Vintage edition at all. I do find its cover illustrated on one entry on page 13 of the hits, but that points only to four used copies priced each at more than \$2,000 (two thousand dollars: not a typo, but no explanation what could justify the price). If I input the ISBN, I get the correct edition, for \$12.45, Prime eligible. It comes with other tabs for hardcover and eBook editions, but those tabs lead to editions that have nothing to do with the Vintage edition. (When I wrote up this sad tale on the redoubtable *Liblicense-l* discussion list, a reader pointed me to an **Oxford World's Classics** edition. It is similarly invisible to the basic search but available if you know the ISBN already.)

That copy of *Ulysses* I took to college must have come from the **Basset Center Book Store** in El Paso, where the leftist philosopher **Paul Goodman's** books spun on a rotating rack just across the aisle from the special corner hosting the richest selection of **John Birch Society** publications I've ever seen. I never knew I had it so good. And you can't go home again.

You can, of course, go to a library. I'll resume this story in my next column and explore the alternatives. **Joyce** is not dead yet. 🌿

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throughout the process. If you don't write it down; it doesn't exist and at the very least cannot be measured.

A strategy document for negotiations is really a "living" text, which means that as you progress through the process, some demands will be met whereas others may go unfulfilled. That's what naturally happens and it is certainly understandable that you may win some and lose some. No matter, to gain your favorable results along the way leading to the final objective, stay the course, continually assess yourself and success will be imminent.

I am reminded of the song sung by the great **Harry Belafonte** called "Hosanna." The opening line of this calypso tune is "House built on a weak foundation, will not stand." In negotiating, the foundation of those discussions must be built on a strong foundation. That involves Objectives, Timetable, Team, and Strategy. If those four elements are covered, the library will be prepared and after all, preparation is the name of the game. If not adequately prepared, success will be fleeting, if at all. 🌿

Mike is currently the President of Gruenberg Consulting, LLC, a firm he founded in January 2012 after a successful career as a senior sales executive in the information industry. His firm is devoted to provide clients with sales staff analysis, market research, executive coaching, trade show preparedness, product placement and best practices advice for improving negotiation skills for librarians and salespeople. His book, "Buying and Selling Information: A Guide for Information Professionals and Salespeople to Build Mutual Success" is available on Amazon, Information Today in print and eBook, Amazon Kindle, B&N Nook, Kobo, Apple iBooks, OverDrive, 3M Cloud Library, Gale (GVRL), MyiLibrary, ebrary, EBSCO, Blio, and Chegg. www.gruenbergconsulting.com

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- Unglue.it: free to join, and pledges accepted. Not supporting at this time.
- UC Press Luminos: \$1,000 minimum sought. Not supporting at this time.

Along with these investments in external programs, we're investing internally as well. **Dr. Miller** has initiated an internal grant program for Rollins faculty as an incentive to adopt and/or create open educational resources (OER) for their courses. Our OER page at <http://www.rollins.edu/library/services/oer.html> provides an explanation of the grant program, a brief note on the costs of textbooks (some are over \$350), and links to OER repositories. The grant provides a stipend to the faculty member, as well as a team of collaborators consisting of a librarian, an instructional technologist, and the director of our Institute for Effective Teaching. The first recipient, **Dr. MacKenzie Moon Ryan**, is bringing OER to her course on global art history.

After **Dr. Miller** presented the OER grant program at the Florida ACRL meeting last week, several in attendance remarked that he had given them a nudge toward actually taking action and investing in what we're talking about so much. OER is an important element of the open access movement, and has become a hot topic recently as textbook prices continue to rise.

As we head back to Charleston, I'm hoping to hear about how other librarians are choosing to invest in open access. Are you supporting some of the programs we've listed, and/or others? Are you collaborating with faculty members on identifying and/or creating OER, and researching the usage rights for those resources? If we're going to be earnest in supporting the open access movement, we're going to have to continue investing time and funding in open access resources. 🌿