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Karen R. Harker Profile

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dexing. We also downloaded journal coverage lists from database providers for manual comparison. This method is limited in that it only includes titles, but lacks date ranges.

For usage, we applied the usage measure closest to the end user's experience with the resource. This measure would form the foundation of cost-effectiveness (CPU) and vary by resource: abstract/record view for databases and reference resources; full-text downloads for eJournals and eBooks. Thus, the resources were compared with others of the same type. The three-year average usage and average cost-per-use were the measures used in the analysis.

To incorporate our concerns about extraordinary cost increases, we included expenditures over several years. Adjusting for changes in pro-rated costs for missing or overlapped months, we were able to calculate the average annual rate of change in costs.

For evaluating our "Big Deals" we not only examined overall usage, but also the distribution of usage across each of the titles in the package. The greater the distribution of titles used, the more effective the deal was as a package. If a package was considered a poor value, then we calculated the cost-per-use based on the subscription cost of each title, comparing that with the cost of obtaining articles from alternative methods like interlibrary loan.

The final component of our scale would be the more subjective measures of quality, which were provided by the Liaison Librarians. We provided the liaisons with an expanded list of resources that included not only those directly paid for by their funds, but also relevant interdisciplinary resources.

Relative Distribution — The usage, cost-per-use and the change in costs were all continuous measures, each on a different scale, making it difficult to compile into a single scale measure. To avoid the scale being unduly influenced by a single factor, we placed all of these measures on the same scale: their distribution relative to other resources of the same type. Using percentiles, we were able to effectively rank the resources on the same scale for each of the criteria.

Finally, we averaged all three scales (CPU, Inflation, and Liaison Ratings) into one composite score, which ranked the resources within their respective categories from lowest- to highest-performing percentile. Those in the lowest 20th percentiles were considered strongly for cancellation, while those in the highest 50th percentile were renewed automatically. Those performing between these two thresholds were examined more closely, with additional feedback sought from the liaison librarians.

Communicating Cuts and Fallout

Preparing for Cuts — We closely examined only resources costing \$1,000 per year or more, and recurring subscription, or subscription-like costs. We then set a series of goals, including the percentage across the board and overall dollar amount of cuts to be made, as well as a timeline for liaisons to select items to drop.

against the grain people profile

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Karen R. Harker

BORN AND LIVED: Born in California, but moved to Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Texas, as a toddler. Grew up in Richardson, Texas. Served in the U.S. Navy out of high school, and was stationed in Japan and California. Returned to Texas after service.

EARLY LIFE: Typical family life in suburban Dallas...happily, with no real tragedies or disruptions.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: My life has always centered around libraries and librarianship. My mother was a school librarian, and I spent part of my service manning the base library. This led to my first job out of the military at a public library, which gave me the experience that was considered necessary for my paraprofessional position at the **UT Southwestern Medical Library**. After completing the MLS program at **Texas Woman's University** in late 1999, I became their Web Librarian and eventually Research & Development Librarian. Currently, I am Collection Assessment Librarian at the **University of North Texas Libraries** in Denton.

Admittedly, there were diversions along the way; first was my brief stint as a school teacher (it is amazing how many people have these brief stints). Then there was my longer, and potentially more permanent stint in public health. I received my MPH in 2007, took a position as biostatistician for a clinical trial, and nearly completed my coursework for a PhD in epidemiology. But the trial's primary investigator moved to another university and took her money with her, and I was left in a department with nothing interesting to do. I "returned to Mama" when I saw the position for Collection Assessment Librarian, which is a perfect combination of my deep and personal relationship with librarianship and my skills and training in analysis and assessment.

FAMILY: Husband, and hopefully a new dog in the near future; Mother and sister's family living in the area. Father passed away far too recently.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I've been playing ice hockey since the **Dallas Stars** first (and last) won the Stanley Cup. In between games, I play with data, read, and play two instruments: alto sax and clarinet.

FAVORITE BOOKS: My traditional favorites had been those from childhood and college years (*Huckleberry Finn* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*), but more recent favorites include **Thomas Piketty's** *Capital in the 21st Century*, **Peter Heller's** *The Dog Stars*, **Isabel Wilkerson's** *The Warmth of Other Suns*, **Marissa Pessel's** *Night Film*, and **Marilynne Robinson's** *Gilead*.

PET PEEVES: Line-cutting and knee-jerk reactions.

PHILOSOPHY: What you see may not be all there is.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: The basic infrastructure of the **UT Southwestern Medical Library**, that I built and implemented, is still in use today, nearly 8 years after I left. True, it looks much nicer and more professional, but it's nice to know that something I worked so hard to develop can still be useful after so many years (in "computer years," no less).

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I am working on developing the infrastructure that would enable the **UNT Libraries** stakeholders see the value of our collection on student and faculty outcomes.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Not very far from where we are going now. I believe the revolution to eBooks will be farther along, as well as further expansion of openly-available content (especially regarding textbooks). But we will still be providing the same basic services of monographic and serial content, as well as access to more digitized primary sources. I hope audiovisual streaming will be opened up, but I'm not holding my breath. 🌱



To communicate the data to the liaisons, we simplified the measures previously described. The overlap and usage trends measures were omitted and the remaining measures were

re-labeled more explicatively. These slightly revamped measures allowed us to organize the data about our purchased resources to more

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