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## ATG Special Report-Tale of Woe

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# ATG Special Report — Tale of Woe

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**M**y tale begins on October 3rd, 2011. I had just graduated library school and had accepted my first professional job as a tenure-track librarian at **East Tennessee State University**. I was hired as the Interlibrary Loan Librarian and I loved it. Being acutely involved in someone's research made me feel like I was on top of the academic library world. **Brian Mathews** of *The Ubiquitous Librarian* blog wrote about interlibrary loan (ILL) in a post from 2015 and even now it perfectly encompasses my feelings. His story was about a friend, **Tara Patterson**, who worked in interlibrary loan. When **Mathews** asked her to describe her work, she called it "forensic bibliographic reconstruction, which she defines as the use of Google Scholar (or other tools, usually in multiples and/or in creative ways) to track down missing or incorrect pieces of a bibliographic reference, due to printing errors or human errors in compiling Works Cited lists" (Mathews 2015). As soon as I saw this description, I knew it was perfect and I began telling people this is what I did for a living. For two years, I lived in ILL-Land (as some of us call it) and enjoyed every moment of it. When you receive a bowl of candy from a graduate student at the end of semester because she knows you worked hard to find materials for her or when a faculty member thanks your ILL department in the acknowledgements section of his new book, you cannot help but feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in your job.

Fast forward to Summer 2013. Some of my colleagues were retiring and as is the case with most of academia at this time, they were not being replaced. Our acquisitions librarian of over 20 years had actually officially retired a few years earlier, but she was working part-time as a temporary librarian to cover her work until we figured out how to replace her. When she decided to leave Tennessee in December 2013, my supervisor asked me if I would be willing to learn acquisitions with her before she left for good. I will admit to feeling hesitant in that moment because math is not my strong suit and I was loving my interlibrary loan work. As most academic librarians probably know, when you sign a contract with your university, you basically tell them that you will work in whatever capacity they need you, so I felt it was my duty as a good employee to say yes. However, I was terrified. After looking through course offerings of most of the library schools in the United States, I realized that there are no acquisitions courses to take. In many of the collection development course syllabi I read, acquisitions was discussed for maybe a week and that is it. In my academic library class at the **University of Tennessee Knoxville**, I do remember that we talked about acquisitions, but we never went into great detail. I never in a million years thought I would be working in that department so I never inquired further about it. Here is where my happy tale turns into one of woe.

In the Fall semester of 2013, **ETSU** administration informed our dean that we needed to

cut 1.5% out of our collections budget. Even though our collections budget at the time was very small (and still is), this was a sizeable chunk. Since we had no official collection development librarian, we decided to form a committee where we would discuss our electronic/print collections and make decisions together. Because I was under the tutelage of our acquisitions librarian, our dean asked me to co-chair the committee with our assessment librarian. We met every week and painstakingly went through our standing orders, electronic journals, and databases. We spent weeks looking at usage statistics, cost per use data, and more. As a result of our meetings over the course of the next 1.5 years, we canceled **Biological Abstracts**, **Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period**, **VAST** streaming video collection, **Sage Research Methods**, **ATLA Religion Database**, and our **Wiley** subscription to eJournals. Unfortunately, canceling just those databases was not enough. We also had to cancel 30 electronic journal titles and 74 print journal titles that had little to no use.

The aftermath of those cancellations was rough. While I was not on the receiving end of most of the complaints, rest assured there were many. Even after sending a mass email out to the entire university campus explaining our situation, we were still inundated with emails and calls from upset faculty and students. Even today, almost two years later, we still hear from departments regarding **Biological Abstracts** and **Wiley**. I do not blame them, of course. If we could have kept them, we most certainly would have. I still look for ways of cutting from our budget here and there in the hopes we can scrape up enough funds to purchase **Biological Abstracts** again.

Here is the part of my tale where we see light at the end of the tunnel. As a result of my days as an Interlibrary Loan Librarian, I still keep up with the latest commercial document delivery options. Over the past two years we have implemented two new commercial document delivery services as a way to help supplement the loss of our **Wiley** eJournals package. We knew faculty were using those journals, especially recent years, but the cost of the entire package was prohibitive. One of our solutions was to implement the unmediated Get it Now service through **Copyright Clearance Center**. Their Website says that the service works "by providing library patrons with the immediate fulfillment of full-text articles from unsubscribed journals — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — through a cost-effective and easy-to-use service integrated into your ILL workflow and/or OpenURL link resolver" (Copyright Clearance Center 2016). About a year previous to the unmediated option, I implemented mediated Get It Now by integrating it into our Interlibrary Loan software, **ILLiad**. Mediated Get it Now uses add-ons specifically created for **ILLiad** in order to control how often you use (and how much you spend on) the service. Unlike the mediated option, the unmediated

service is integrated directly into a library's discovery interface. The service can be tailored to specific needs meaning that we are now able to provide unsubscribed content from **Wiley** directly to faculty through our discovery service, **Primo**. Content from other publishers provided by **Get it Now** can be made available by tweaking settings in **Alma**, our library management system. But for now, this works for us. One of the best features of this document delivery option is that it also gives faculty a choice. We have inserted language into the results screen that tells faculty how much it will cost the library if they choose the **Get it Now** option which comes with two to eight hour delivery. The results screen also tells faculty that they can use interlibrary loan (which is usually free to the library), but the delivery time might be much slower. For the most part, faculty choose interlibrary loan; but for those times when an article might be needed now instead of later **Get it Now** is there for them and our costs are much lower as a result.

Another solution we found was to use some of our new **Library Student Fee** money to put into a **Books at JSTOR** deposit account. Most of the student fee money is currently being used for renovating the library and making the space better for students, so this was a small way we could supplement our collections with extra resources. We started out with \$15,000 in the deposit account and have sporadically added to the account over the past 1.5 years. The collection gets used quite a lot and as a result, we have purchased almost 500 eBooks. This quasi-solution gives us the flexibility to add money when we have it and it also gives us peace of mind knowing that every dollar is going towards a resource that someone actually needs. While we have not been able to dedicate continuous funds for it every year, we hope to keep adding to the account when we have extra funds at the end of every fiscal year.

Even with the two solutions we came up with, my tale is not complete. I hope to come up with more ways to supplement lost databases and other resources. These opportunities to put a positive spin on the problem are very popular with faculty/staff and students, so we hope to continue taking advantage of them as long as we can.

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