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Rightsizing Access to Journals and Databases

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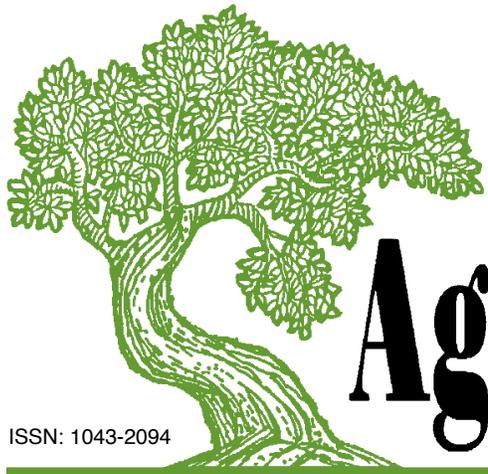


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Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

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Rightsizing Access to Journals and Databases

by **Robin Kinder** (Retired, George Washington University Libraries, 2130 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20052; Phone: 202-604-1171) <rckinder@gmail.com>

This special issue of *Against The Grain* examines the continuing challenges of managing library budgets in an environment of spiraling serials costs. Though serials review appears as a constant and ubiquitous theme in collections management, the work described here by the authors is anything but the usual familiar story. The authors provide important historical background, new and alternative approaches in their processes, and conclusions that reveal both surprising outcomes and critical questions still to be addressed.

Rather than outline each author’s approach to a seemingly annual ritual — serials cancellations — it is more pertinent to note their common themes and valuable insights. First, communication and engagement with faculty is essential to on-going deliberations on the library budget. Second, data is not only a critical component, but the essential means of communicating complex scenarios for cancellation. Third, librarians



are the essential bridge in communicating the library’s role in the research community. Each author provides critical intelligence into approaches taken.

In communication, **Davis, Raschke** (*Data-Informed and Community Driven: Using Data and Feedback Loops to Manage a Journal Review and Cancellation Project*) and **Robertshaw, Hooper, Goergen-Doll** (*Finding the Silver Lining...in the Serials Budget Crisis*) outline intensive efforts to inform their campus communities of the current fiscal challenges impacting not only the library, but also the scholarly research environment. **North Carolina State University Libraries (NCSU)** provided multiple approaches to faculty engagement, including critical analytics undertaken several months prior to engagement, a timeline and strategies for communication, and multiple rounds for feedback. Elucidating the role of the library in faculty research and the role of faculty in the

publishing cycle — as authors, editors, peer reviewers and consumers — became the major focus of **Oregon State University Libraries (OSU)**, through multiple conversations with faculty; the six lessons learned by OSU are essential reading. **Gagnon** (*Journal Publisher’s Big Deals: Are They Worth It?*) and **Killian, Bezanson, Kinder** (*Divide and Analyze: GW’s Approach to Serials Cancellations*) address their communication efforts in conjunction with concomitant serials cancellation projects — the former addressing the issue of Big Deal pricing at the **Bibliothèques de l’Université de Montréal (UdeM)** and the latter addressing each category of the serials review — individual subscriptions, packages and databases. **Ziegler** (*Big Deal Whack-A-Mole*) describes **Florida State University Libraries (FSUL)** early insistence that the serials review process be faculty-driven with participation by the Facul-

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If Rumors Were Horses

In another life I was a medical nursing, reference, and audiovisual librarian at Duke University Medical Center. In my days as a reference librarian, I had to verify hundreds of interlibrary loan requests. *Science Citation Index* at that time was only in print (very small) and it was an excellent way to verify interlibrary loans — “quite a task, only persevering people would do it.” Yes! Really! That’s when I became acquainted with the name **Eugene Garfield**, the creator of citation indexes and the impact factor and many similar innovations. Read **Nancy Herther’s** remembrance on this incredibly humble and gentle giant of a man. This issue, p.66.



Moving right along to the innovative present, **Monika Sengul-Jones** has been appointed by OCLC as **Wikipedian-in-Residence** for their “Wikipedia + Libraries: Better Together” project led by OCLC’s **WebJunction program**. **Sengul-Jones** is a communication and media studies scholar, educator, organizer, web developer and Wikipedian. Her passion for media literacy and community engagement guides her work with **Wikipedia**. **Sengul-Jones** has

a master’s degree in gender studies from the **Central European University** in Budapest,

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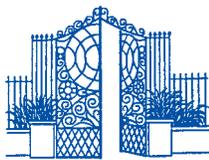
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Rightsizing Access to Journals ... from page 1

ty Senate Library Committee, Vice President for Research, and academic faculty recruited to join the Library Materials Budget Task Force. Each author in the issue — whether as a primary focus or as a critical component of success — stresses communication with the campus community.

Data and analysis provide the second common theme to approaching serials review as a process of informing and raising awareness of stakeholders, including faculty, administrators and librarians. NCSU's approach to communicating includes data on high impact research and interdisciplinary journals, most downloaded journals, peer comparisons of collections expenditures, providing infographics and, for the campus community and readers of this issue, website access to the efforts undertaken. **Gagnon** outlines the process of data gathering to address the issue of Big Deals with feedback from faculty on essential journals, downloads and citations of periodicals across major fields and final analysis of titles in large bundles. **George Washington University (GWU)** employed usage and cost per usage in determining possible cancellations scenarios in its review. Three of the authors provide differing conclusions on the efficacy of bundled journals, including **UdeM**, **GWU** and **FSU**. **Raymond** (*Canceling Serials Based on Their Availability in Aggregated Full-Text Databases*) outlines early efforts to evaluate and address the issue of cancelling individual subscriptions when access via AFTDs is available in the **Santa**

Clara University Library (SCU) experience. With business and economics as the test case, **Raymond** outlines the issues of overlap and embargoes and cost savings achieved by reducing journal subscriptions with AFTD overlap, as well as the obstacles in doing so.

None of the work and effort undertaken by libraries is insular and hermetic, but librarians play the pivotal role in each project outlined in the articles. In serving on permanent or ad hoc task forces, talking and listening to faculty, and gathering and evaluating data, librarians are adopting new roles in their efforts to create alternative dimensions to stale serials reviews. **Watson** (*Taking New Aim at an Old Problem: Serials Management at the University of Oregon Libraries*) discusses the enhanced role subject librarians play in serials management with a changed budget model requiring continual evaluation and assessment of serials rather than acquiescing to a boom-or-bust cycle of serials review. Indeed, what is most striking is the unison in which the authors address the need for librarians to provide consistent and on-going communication with faculty, building relationships across their campus communities, and intensifying expertise in analytics and serials management. In each article, despite multiple serials review projects over years, libraries face still declining budgets, and the need to render serials reviews less reactive is emphasized. To keep this introduction to a minimum is to elicit interest where it belongs - in these seven articles. Each author affirms the necessity of creating a serials review process that withstands the annual budget allocation, exhibiting creativity and advocacy in their efforts and critical intelligence to libraries in similar and familiar settings. 🐼

Rumors from page 6

Wolters Kluwer, among other organizations. **Michael** holds a Master of Science degree in Publishing from **Pace University**...

Two librarians in the big news recently! Not CNN but even better! Our Librarian of Congress, **Dr. Carla Hayden** was recently profiled in the *New Yorker*, February 19, 2017 by **Sarah Larson**. It is inspirational to see what **Dr. Hayden** has accomplished and we are sure that there is much more greatness to come! <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/sarah-larson/the-librarian-of-congress-and-the-greatness-of-humility>
www.against-the-grain.com/

Another Librarian in the news! Our 2016 keynote speaker and the president elect of ALA, had an op ed in *The Hill* about fair use, entitled "Balance is Everything." <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/320390-balance-is-everything>

There is a series of **Penthouse interview Podcasts** on the **Against the Grain NewsChannel** and one of them is with **Jim Neal**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUPH-k4HMeBE&feature=youtu.be>

I was fascinated by the **podcast interview** with **Anja Smit**, Library Director, **Utrecht University**, The Netherlands. **Anja** was interviewed by **Erin Gallagher** and **Matthew Ismail**. There was discussion about whether or not we need library collections or library catalogs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RI-jKIQ7YRDM>

I was very sad to learn that the wonderful **John Riddick**, retired Head of Technical Services at **Central Michigan University**, passed away on March 13th at the age of 75. **John** attended the **Charleston Conference** many times and I believe that he and his group hatched the idea of **NASIG at Charleston!** **Tina Feick** reminds us that **John** was the co-Chair (with **Becky Lenzi**) of the initial **NASIG Study Group** and the first **NASIG President**. Without **John's** leadership and determination, **NASIG** would not exist. **John** made it happen. As part of the **NASIG Study Group**, **Tina** says that **John** selected the members of this committee ensuring that there were representatives from all parts of the information chain. **John** was a quiet powerhouse and a great motivator and very important to the **NASIG** organization. May he rest in peace.

<http://www.charleslux.com/obituaries/John-F-Riddick?obId=1437431#obituaryInfo>

"**Doomsday Library** opens in Norway where the world's most precious BOOKS will be stored in digital form to protect them from the apocalypse." This was the headline that caught my eye. Reportedly, a second **World Arctic Archive** has opened in Svalband, Norway. Representatives from Brazil, Mexico and Norway will be the first to save files. A firm

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