Against the Grain

Manuscript 8224

Being Earnest with Collections — User-CenteredCollection Development: Using Library Service Design Tools to Evaluate Open Access Funding Opportunities

Michael A, Arthur

Erin Gallagher

Being Earnest with Collections — User-Centered Collection Development: Using Library Service Design Tools to Evaluate Open Access Funding Opportunities

by **Erin Gallagher** (Director of Collection Services, Reed College, 3203 Southeast Woodstock Boulevard, Portland, OR, 97202-8199) <egallagher6431@gmail.com>

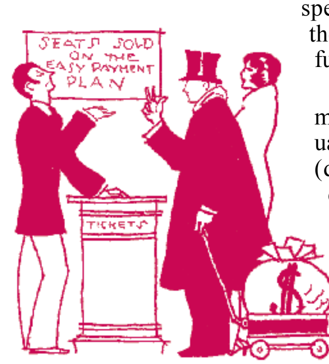
Column Editor: **Michael A. Arthur** (Associate Professor, Head, Resource Acquisition & Discovery, The University of Alabama Libraries, Box 870266, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487; Phone: 205-348-1493; Fax: 205-348-6358) <maarthur@ua.edu>

Column Editor's Note: *This edition of* ***Being Earnest with Collections*** *explores the concept of library service design, and its focus on design principles and heuristics, as a means to evaluate collections through the user perspective.* ***Erin*** *has provided a brief review of the concept and discusses her current research into ways this model can continue to develop. I believe readers will have particular interest in how* ***Erin*** *has explored traditional collection evaluation models and found them lacking for determining the viability for current Open Access models. She encourages readers to consider user perspective and the larger institutional and library mission when considering support of OA initiatives.* ***ATG*** *readers will find this a valuable thought provoking article. Hopefully it will lay the groundwork for future conference presentations or panel discussions leading to best practices for the evaluation of OA models. —* ***MA***

Collection development has been the focus of my professional career so far. In grad school, I was tasked with analyzing a massive approval plan with then-operational Blackwell. This led to four years on the vendor side as a Collections Consultant with **Ingram Coutts** (now **ProQuest Coutts**) before jumping the fence back in to libraries. If I've learned one thing so far, it's that collection development is never an exact science, particularly when it comes to how we allocate precious library funds.

Traditional methods for evaluating new acquisitions in libraries are all over the map. Most of us rely on an initial expression of user need. We may conduct trials, evaluate trial usage, and gather user feedback. Some libraries use checklists or rubrics or lively democratic discussions. Some may purchase whatever faculty ask for when funds are available, regardless of how well a resource "performs." I have swallowed my pride and acquired new resources that I would not have approved if not for compelling faculty arguments. These traditional methods work well enough in most cases, but they often assume a baseline similarity among the content being acquired. Our evaluation methods must evolve along with the rapid shifts in how content is packaged and acquired.

By "rapid shifts," I refer to the deluge of acquisitions models now available to libraries, all of which were developed by our vendor and publisher partners because we asked for them — DDA, STL, PPV, POD, EBA, trusty approval plans, one-time versus subscription purchasing, access versus ownership, etc. Pick your acronym; if you can dream it up, there is a good chance it exists. We also see rapid shifts in collecting from the inside-out, focusing our efforts on making local collections more accessible while relying on interlibrary loan and consortial partnerships for unowned content. We are leaning toward pragmatism in rightsizing and refreshing our collections through continuous and systematic reviews. We are collecting with an intentional eye toward diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the moral imperative behind global information sharing. We are breaking up with our Big Deals and supplementing the loss of subscription access through a variety of methods (see acronym soup above). We are rethinking the "collection" as a group of items we can conceive of, count, measure, and hold; rather, our collections include an immeasurable network of content available on the open web.



All of these shifts are further complicated by our desire to transform traditional methods of scholarly publishing by supporting open access (OA) in its diverse incarnations. Enter library service design. Here I give enormous credit to my two colleagues at **Reed College** who introduced me to this concept: **Annie Downey**, Associate College Librarian and Director of Research Services and **Joe Marquez**, Social Sciences and User Experience Librarian. They are truly the experts in this area and have written the seminal works[1] to prove it. **Annie** and **Joe** define service design as "…a holistic, co-creative, and user-centered approach to understanding user behavior for creating or refining services." Service design takes a systems approach to the user experience, viewing everything in the library as a service, and it focuses on the user experience over the service provider/librarian experience. **Annie** and **Joe** developed a set of library service design heuristics to aid in evaluating library services. Unlike my initial impression, heuristics are not a class taught at Hogwarts, but rather a series of questions designed to get us thinking about a service from the user perspective. They differ from the traditional checklists and rubrics that originate from the acquisitions/technical services perspectives in that they are grounded in user-centered service design. Library service design has thus far been used to assess and evaluate services like websites and physical spaces within the library. I was impressed by the possibilities; what if we applied library service design principles and heuristics to *collections*? What if we used them to help decide how to spend our materials funds? And more specifically, what if we applied them to evaluating open access funding opportunities?

I harken back to the traditional methods used by libraries to evaluate potential new acquisitions (databases, journal packages, etc.). When used to evaluate OA funding opportunities, they are severely lacking. It's a bit like trying to program a Smart TV with a VCR manual. Our checklists and rubrics fail to ask the kinds of questions needed when considering the unique elements involved in supporting OA initiatives. When considering new database subscriptions, for example, we are most often dealing with familiar content providers and platforms. When considering supporting a new OA initiative, the platform may not even exist yet or may not be fully realized. In many cases, libraries are asked to fund speculative OA ventures that generate more questions than answers. Traditional content evaluation methods do not adequately address the risk involved in funding OA, and they also fall short in placing the user at the center of all decision-making. This is not to say that the user is invisible when evaluating new acquisitions, but we often focus on back-end technical specifications and how a new resource will fit into our workflows without intentionally placing the user at the center of our deliberations.

On a practical level, I decided to rework **Annie** and **Joe's** library service design heuristics to align more closely with "collection development-speak" and the kinds of questions we consider when acquiring new resources. A significant benefit of the heuristics is their adaptability; they can easily be adapted for audience, local cultural factors, and the services being evaluated. We are still in the exploratory stages of this mash-up between library service

continued on page 65

Being Earnest with Collections
from page 64

design and collection development funding, and we are actively seeking feedback on the heuristics themselves and their viability for use in evaluating new resources and OA initiatives. **Joe** and I sent a survey in February 2018 to a few targeted lists. We asked respondents to review the reworked heuristics and then apply them to a theoretical OA funding opportunity. We quickly realized that a survey was not the best instrument for this venture, as the logistics were complex and confusing. We found more success in taking the show on the road, presenting our ideas at the **Electronic Resources & Libraries**[2] conference and the **Oregon Library Association**[3] conference. Feedback has been positive so far, but we have yet to test the heuristics ourselves at **Reed College**. I am happy to share our fluid document[4] on reworking library service design heuristics for collection development and encourage readers to comment.

I am confident that library service design heuristics have the potential to play a significant role in helping us make decisions on which OA initiatives we should support, and at what level. Even if the ultimate decision is to refrain from funding an OA opportunity in order to see how it unfolds, or to support the initiative as "free riders," we must evaluate OA differently. You may wonder why this is so important. Why should we care? Our institutional and library mission statements say we should; they champion concepts like lifelong learning and global citizenship. Our researchers and institutional stakeholders think we should care, as proven by the passage of institutional OA policies and the development of institutional repositories. With OA funding, we are not only considering local benefit and ROI, but how our support impacts global research and access to information beyond the walls of academia.

While service design heuristics hold particular value for OA funding decisions, they can also be applied to collection development decision-making in general. They help us to think differently about our collections, not just as products or items to be purchased and consumed, but as a service that lives and breathes and operates within the larger functioning system of the library and the institution. They reposition our focus from the product to the user, allowing us to strengthen our commitment to service and illuminating a solid connection between our user community and the oft-invisible work done in collection development.

Faithful ***ATG*** readers, I welcome your thoughts. I am happy to share my working document on reworking library service design heuristics, as well as a brief list of further reading. Librarians at **Yale University** published a recent article in *College & Research Libraries* on collections as a service (citation in reading list), but this is still a burgeoning area of research. This proposition is not a means to an end, but rather another evaluation tool that can evolve and adapt along with the shifting collection development terrain.

Further Reading

Dollar, D., **Linden, J.**, & **Tudesco, S.** Collections as a Service: A Research Library's Perspective. *College & Research Libraries*, 79(1). *https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/16612/18463*

Marquez, J. J., & **Downey, A.** (2017). *Getting Started in Service Design: A How-To-Do-It Manual For Librarians (Workbook, Supplement edition)*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Marquez, J. J., & **Downey, A.** (2016). *Library Service Design: A LITA Guide to Holistic Assessment, Insight, and Improvement.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Marquez, J. J., & **Downey, A.** (2015). Service Design: An Introduction to a Holistic Assessment Methodology of Library Services. *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience*, 1(2). *https://doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.201*

Endnotes

1. *https://www.luxservicedesign.com/publications/*
2. *https://erl18.sched.com/event/Crh8*
3. *https://orlib18.sched.com/event/DYfg*
4. *https://docs.google.com/document/d/15I-uXnkjod76_efx2vUyysWFvnKaHpQ-fYRT7i1PHVJaw/edit?usp=sharing*

Rumors
from page 50

Buzzy Basch tells me that **Prenax's** U.S. company has let their CEO go and have now put the young man who was running their Australian company in charge. **Prenax** was established in 1993 and has responded to the demands of the market with flexibility and attention to detail. **Jan Boonzaier** is the managing director at **Prenax Pty, Ltd**. in Melbourne Australia. I feel like I know him already since he went to **Graduate School of Business** at the **University of Cape Town** and **Stellenbosch University**. I remember visiting Cape Town for a conference in the 1990s with the awesome **Digby Sales** who regularly attended the **Charleston Conferences** until his retirement several years ago. **Digby** knows all about good wine — how to find it, what it should taste like, and what it should cost! We miss him and he needs to make an appearance if not in person, perhaps virtually? Meanwhile, look for our interview with the delightful **Nancy Percival** <Nancy.percival@prenax.com> with **Prenax**. I met her in Charleston at the Vendor Showcase! *www.prenax.com*
https://www.against-the-grain.com/

The alert **Nancy Herther** sends news of this interesting collaboration: "Google's computer brains are helping *The New York Times* turn a historic archive of more than 5 million photos into digital data that'll appear in the newspaper's features about history. The newspaper's 'morgue' has 5 million to 7 million photos dating back to the 1870s, including prints and contact sheets showing all the shots on photographers' rolls of film. *The Times* is using Google's technology to convert it into something more useful than its current analog state occupying banks of filing cabinets." More is available at *https://www.cnet.com/news/google-ai-helps-nyt-get-a-handle-on-5-million-photo-archive/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+webware+%28Webware.com%29#ftag=CAD590a51e.*

Congratulations to **Lindsay Wertman** (**IGI Global**) and her husband **Erik Wertman** on the birth of their son, **Kendrick**, born September 14th.

Like wow! Corey Seaman says he has started up a number of series of blog posts on the **Golden Age of Radio** — or old time radio. He has focused on Christmas, Thanksgiving, diet, baseball, African-Americans, world travel and lighthouses. He is starting a new series that he has been planning for some time. As a librarian (13+ years at the **University of Michigan**), he has long wanted to match his love of old time radio with his profession. So he is starting up the new series — **Librarians on Old Time Radio**. **Corey** is going to feature programs that have librarians and related information professionals in key roles in the story. These might be fairly straight forward — or only tangentially related to librarianship. Maybe there is a minor part of a librarian in the story. Anyway, **Corey** should have a good number of episodes to feature over the upcoming months. (He hopes to feature one entry a week.) Let's enjoy them! *https://cseeman.blogspot.com/2019/01/librarians-on-old-time-radio-damaged.html*

Some great news from **Jill Heinze** who you will remember wrote the **Charleston Briefing** — ***Library Marketing: From Passion to Practice***. **Jill** was invited to conduct a workshop on marketing for the **Lamar Soutter Library**. One of the attendees at **Jill's Charleston Briefings** presentation found the session so helpful that she invited **Jill** to her institution! Like awesome! I'm sure **Jill** will share some reflections about this workshop in an upcoming ***ATG*** article since she is a new column editor!

Speaking of the Briefings (see p.71 this issue), did you attend the session during the

continued on page 69