

8-1-2002

Buy, Don't Borrow: Bibliographers' Analysis of Academic Library Collection Development through Interlibrary Loan Requests

Kristine J. Anderson
Purdue University

Robert S. Freeman
Purdue University, rsfree@purdue.edu

Jean-Pierre V. M. Hérubel
Purdue University, jpvmh@purdue.edu

Lawrence J. Mykytiuk
Purdue University, larrym@purdue.edu

Judith M. Nixon
Purdue University, jnixon@purdue.edu

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib_research



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Anderson, Kristine J.; Freeman, Robert S.; Hérubel, Jean-Pierre V. M.; Mykytiuk, Lawrence J.; Nixon, Judith M.; and Ward, Suzanne M., "Buy, Don't Borrow: Bibliographers' Analysis of Academic Library Collection Development through Interlibrary Loan Requests" (2002). *Libraries Research Publications*. Paper 92.
http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib_research/92

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Authors

Kristine J. Anderson, Robert S. Freeman, Jean-Pierre V. M. Hérubel, Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, Judith M. Nixon,
and Suzanne M. Ward

Buy, Don't Borrow: Bibliographers' Analysis of Academic Library Collection Development Through Interlibrary Loan Requests

Kristine J. Anderson
Robert S. Freeman
Jean-Pierre V. M. Hérubel
Lawrence J. Mykytiuk
Judith M. Nixon
Suzanne M. Ward

ABSTRACT. In 2000, the Purdue University Libraries implemented a *Books on Demand* program. Instead of borrowing books requested through Interlibrary Loan, staff purchased selected titles and added them to the collection after patron use. After two years, five subject bibliographers analyzed 800 titles acquired through the program in their subject areas and compared them with titles acquired during the same time period through

Kristine J. Anderson, BA, MLS, MA, PhD, is Associate Professor of Library Science and English and Theatre Bibliographer and Reference Librarian (E-mail: kja@purdue.edu); Robert S. Freeman, BA, MA, MS, is Associate Professor of Library Science and Foreign Languages and Literatures Bibliographer and Reference Librarian (E-mail: rsfree@purdue.edu); Jean-Pierre V. M. Hérubel, BA, MA, PhD, MLS, is Associate Professor of Library Science and Art & Design, Communication, and Philosophy Librarian and Reference Librarian (E-mail: jpvmh@purdue.edu); Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, MA, MTS, MA, MA, PhD, is Associate Professor of Library Science, the History Bibliographer and Reference Librarian (E-mail: larrym@purdue.edu); Judith M. Nixon, BS, MLS, is Professor of Library Science and Management and Economics Librarian (E-mail: nixon@purdue.edu); and Suzanne M. Ward, BA, AMLS, MS, is Head, Access Services (E-mail: ward@purdue.edu), all at Purdue University Libraries.

Collection Management, Vol. 27(3/4) 2002
<http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=J105>
© 2002 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.
10.1300/J105v27n03_01

normal selection. The bibliographers concluded that the patron-driven *Books on Demand* program is a valuable complementary collection development tool. It consistently adds a very high percentage of relevant scholarly titles to the collection which provides input from patrons who do not ordinarily have a voice in collection development decisions and fills in gaps in interdisciplinary areas. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2002 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS. Collection development, interlibrary loan, title analysis, patron collaboration, interdisciplinary study

INTRODUCTION

Background

Imagine that you are a library patron and that you need a relatively new book that your library does not own. You request it via interlibrary loan (ILL) expecting to receive the book on a short loan from another university. Instead, within a week your library delivers a new copy of the book that will now be available in your library for future use.

Interlibrary loan statistics show that patrons often request very recently published books. However, these requests are often difficult to fill because the owning libraries' copies are either still on order or already checked out. In addition, the cost of borrowing books is approaching the cost of buying them. According to the 1997 interlibrary loan cost study conducted by the Association of Research Libraries (Jackson 1998, 21), the average cost of borrowing a book is \$18.35 when all associated costs are taken into account. This amount does not include the lender's average cost of \$9.48. Taking both borrower and lender costs together, each ILL transaction costs \$27.83.

In part to solve the problem of many recently published works being unavailable for loan and in part as a collection development experiment, the Purdue University Libraries launched a pilot project in 2000 to determine the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of purchasing recent imprints rather than borrowing them. After use by the ILL patron, the books are cataloged and added to the collection. The implementation methodology and largely positive results of the experiment have been published elsewhere (Ward 2002).

However, another important set of questions remains to be answered. What effects does this method of acquiring new titles have on the development of the library collection? Will the collection be slanted toward popular titles or toward books with short shelf lives? Do interlibrary loan patrons request titles that would make useful additions to the collection? To address these questions, a group of Purdue bibliographers analyzed the on-demand titles and compared them with titles purchased in the usual way.

The Purdue University Libraries system consists of fourteen loosely confederated subject-oriented libraries. Each one has its own separately administered methods of collection development involving approval plans or firm orders or some combination of the two. The present study is confined to the two libraries in the Purdue system that benefited the most in terms of numbers of titles bought through the *Books on Demand* project: the Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (HSSE) Library, and the Management & Economics Library (MEL). With the exception of the management librarian, all bibliographers in the study select for the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education Library.

BOOKS ON DEMAND PILOT PROJECT

In the pilot project, Purdue's Interlibrary Loan department purchased patrons' book requests that met certain criteria:

- English language
- non-fiction
- scholarly
- published within the past five years
- maximum cost of \$100 (later raised to \$150)
- shipment within one week from an online bookseller

The project started in January 2000. By the end of the second year (December 2001) it had acquired 1,447 titles for 652 unique patrons (32% faculty/staff; 59% graduate students; 9% undergraduate students). These percentages closely mirror the distribution by patron classification of usual interlibrary loan activity. The average cost per book was \$37; the average number of books per patron was 2.23; and the average turnaround time was eight days.

The Appendix lists representative titles of books acquired during the project.

Based on patrons' departmental affiliations, the subject areas that received the most project books during 2000-2001 were:

English	231
History	138
Foreign Languages and Literatures (FLL)	88
Political Science	70
Management	67
Philosophy	58
TOTAL	652

These 652 books comprise 45% of the total 1,447 titles acquired during the project's first two years. In addition, the project added 196 books for students without departmental affiliations; many of these titles fall into the subject areas above, so this study reviewed about 800 titles (55% of the total).

For this study, the bibliographers for the disciplines above:

- analyzed the *Books on Demand* titles in their subject areas;
- compared the on-demand titles with similar books acquired through normal collection development during the same time period;
- considered the options for refining approval plans to include material similar to the on-demand titles;
- reflected on the role of the *Books on Demand* project in collection development;
- made recommendations for the future of the *Books on Demand* program.

Study Methodology

The investigators developed an Access database of the 1,447 *Books on Demand* titles (bibliographic information, plus patron department and status), enhanced with additional fields for coding each title's publisher type, appropriateness to the collection, reasons if out-of-scope, probable longevity of scholarly interest, and three-digit classification number (the Purdue Libraries use the Dewey classification system). The bibliographers then queried the database to determine numbers and percentages by a variety of factors.

Departmental affiliation information was not available for all undergraduate students nor for some graduate students. The bibliographers

compensated for this lack of information by analyzing titles not only by departmental affiliation, but also by the titles' classification ranges.

The bibliographers also reviewed lists of firm order titles (ordered against departmental fund codes) for books that the Libraries acquired during the same 2000-2001 period. Each bibliographer compared the kinds of books acquired during normal collection development activity and those acquired through the *Books on Demand* project.

Bibliographers' Analysis

The bibliographers prepared a detailed subject analysis of the *Books on Demand* titles in their subject areas for a report to the Libraries administration. For the report, each bibliographer answered the same set of questions about the titles in his or her subject area, and included additional insight into the analysis of the titles. This paper discusses their findings which are also summarized in Tables 1 through 4.

The major reasons bibliographers cited for deciding that certain titles were not appropriate included a few that were out of scope (e.g., textbooks, handbooks, popular treatment) or titles that, although requested by a departmental affiliate, were not appropriate for the discipline in question. In most cases the bibliographer then agreed that these out-of-scope titles were appropriate for the collection as a whole.

The bibliographers also considered several reasons why these books were not already in the collection at the time that patrons requested them. Reasons included:

- published so recently that the bibliographer was not yet aware of them
- from a publisher whose catalog the bibliographer does not usually see
- in an interdisciplinary area for which there are limited or no collection development funds
- on a subject relevant to two different disciplines but predominantly about neither
- narrow specialty
- insufficient funds to purchase everything of potential interest

The investigators analyzed books by both requestor affiliation and by class number for several reasons. First, internal records do not identify some students with their affiliated departments, so a review of the books in the related classification ranges was one way to include many of their requests. Second, a review by class range revealed how many of the books in each subject area were requested by patrons who are not affiliated with that subject department, thus giving insight into interdisciplin-

TABLE 1. What percentage of the on-demand books would the bibliographer have obtained for the library anyway during normal collection development if sufficient funds had been available?

Subject	Percentage
English	80%
Foreign Languages	93%
History	99%
Management	90%
Philosophy	88%
Political Science	94%

TABLE 2. What is the comparison of the number of books ordered by each discipline's constituents with number of books in the discipline's subject class ranges?

	Number ordered by constituents	Number in subject class ranges
English	231	153
Foreign Languages	88	74
History	138	178
Management	67	117
Philosophy	58	75
Political Science	70	56

TABLE 3. What percentage of titles were from university presses? Scholarly presses? Popular presses?

	Univ Press	Scholarly/ Professional	Popular
English	53%	28%	19%
Foreign Languages	55%	34%	11%
History	64%	29%	7%
Management	36%	52%	12%
Philosophy	50%	50%	0
Political Science	40%	60%	0

TABLE 4. What percentage of books in a particular discipline was requested by patron category?

	Faculty/Staff	Students
English	14%	86%
Foreign Languages	45%	55%
History	62%	34%
Management	17%	83%
Philosophy	30%	70%
Political Science	31%	69%
AVERAGE	34%	66%

ary use. And third, conversely, reviewing titles ordered by a discipline's constituents also revealed interdisciplinary interests.

Because of these reviews by both departmental affiliation and by classification range, some titles were analyzed by more than one bibliographer. In one call number range, two bibliographers reviewed the titles; both the English and the Foreign Languages and Literatures (FLL) bibliographers analyzed titles that fell into the linguistics call number range.

The Philosophy bibliographer noted that more on-demand titles were requested by patrons from other departments than by those from the Philosophy department. In History, however, patrons from that department ordered 77% of the titles that fell into the history classification numbers. The Management bibliographer reported the largest number of constituents from other departments, but this finding reflected the overall use of that collection by patrons from other areas that routinely use management material, such as from the supervision, hotel management, and consumer sciences programs.

The Management bibliographer observed that patrons requested significantly more university press and fewer scholarly press books than are normally acquired. The other bibliographers did not observe any large discrepancies.

The normal overall distribution of interlibrary loan requests is 30% faculty/staff and 70% students. The distribution for all 1,447 on-demand requests was very similar to this, as is the average for these six departments. It is only at the single department level that major variations may occur. For History the statistics are reversed; 62%/34%. This confirms an expected pattern as history faculty are heavy book users.

Additional Bibliographic Analysis

In each bibliographer's judgment, what was the anticipated longevity of books ordered through Books on Demand?

The bibliographers agreed that in general the *Books on Demand* titles in their disciplines had the same potential longevity as the ones they firm ordered. For history and English, for example, the books were judged likely to hold the interest of researchers for a long period of time. In political science, however, these books will probably have a shorter useful life, as is true of most political science titles.

In general, how did the books acquired through the project compare with those selected through traditional methods?

A very important trend was observed for all disciplines. Patrons' selections repeatedly demonstrated the impact of interdisciplinary studies and interests. The bibliographers realized that while they tended to order titles that fell into their traditional classification ranges, patrons affiliated with their subject areas displayed a much wider range of interests. The English and FLL bibliographers noted the most unexpected results: in each of these disciplines, the second highest category of titles fell into the sociology call number range. By analyzing the differences between titles in the traditional call number ranges with the call numbers of books requested by constituents, the investigators also uncovered some startling results. For example, of the 74 titles within the range of FLL class numbers, only 18 (24%) were requested by FLL constituents; patrons from the English department ordered 33 titles (44%). And of the 88 titles requested by FLL constituents, only 20 (23%) fell within the range of FLL class numbers.

The Philosophy bibliographer noted that some of the normally acquired books covered more general and newer fields of scholarship, as well as non-western philosophy, than did the on-demand titles. In addition, 41% of the on-demand Philosophy books were published by only two scholarly press publishers, an indication that fine-tuning the approval plan to include more Philosophy books from these publishers might result in having similar books already in the collection when patrons need them in the future.

In Management a similar and strong corresponding pattern was evident with 65% of the *Books on Demand* titles falling into the four major Management call number ranges, a percentage almost identical with the 64% of titles added during normal selection activity. However, the majority of the books were requested by non-management patrons.

In Philosophy and (by definition) Foreign Languages, foreign language material is frequently acquired during routine collection development; the *Books on Demand* selection criteria were limited to English language titles. Political Science selection includes many titles from national and international organizations (e.g., Unesco, Amnesty International), but the *Books on Demand* selection criteria did not include these types of publishers.

SUMMARY

The *Books on Demand* project extends collaborative collection development from the traditional bibliographer/faculty relationship to include Interlibrary Loan users, most of whom (59% overall) are graduate students. Not all faculty members—and in many departments, not even most of the faculty—offer suggestions to bibliographers for collection development. The project supports collection development influence by many serious scholars who would otherwise have little input on building the collection.

Another major advantage of the *Books on Demand* project is that it smoothly bypasses potential obstacles to acquisitions in interdisciplinary studies. At the Purdue University Libraries, bibliographers are assigned to constituents in departments, schools, and interdisciplinary programs, but regular funding is allocated strictly along departmental and school lines. Despite occasional funding in support of selected interdisciplinary studies, constant disciplinary funding tends to draw attention and efforts in directions that may overlook some interdisciplinary areas. The *Books on Demand* project, under no such influences, has clearly demonstrated that it facilitates the acquisition of titles in interdisciplinary studies, based on point-of-need patron requests.

The *Books on Demand* project is cost effective. On the premise that about 20% of the collection receives about 80% of the use (Trueswell 1969), it would not be cost effective to increase the approval plan allotment, for example, in an effort to acquire all the books that might be requested through ILL. Because of the way approval plans are set up and the way bibliographers use them (approval plan for broad subject categories and firm orders for relatively narrow, specialized areas), bibliographers would still have had to firm order many of the requested, specialized titles even if approval plan funding were greatly increased.

Of the on-demand books, the bibliographers judged that a few titles were not good acquisitions (2% to 20% depending on the subject area). The cost of these few titles, however, is far less than the cost of broadening the approval plan profiles (at greatly increased funding levels) so that they would include most of the requested books.

The *Books on Demand* titles have also proven themselves valuable in terms of further use by other patrons, at least in the short term. Subsequent circulation figures show that 68% of the *Books on Demand* titles acquired during the project's first two years have circulated at least once after the initial use by the original ILL patron (42% have circulated more than once); in contrast, 36% of titles normally acquired during the

same time period for the HSSE Library have circulated at least once (16% have circulated more than once). The figures for the Management Library are even more dramatic: all *Books on Demand* titles had at least one checkout, whereas only 48% of the books selected and purchased with library funds had circulated one or more times during the same two years. These figures should be viewed cautiously, however, as normal collection development follows different criteria and objectives than the *Books on Demand* project. It will be interesting to track these percentages over time to see if or how they change.

Based on these observations, the bibliographers recommended that the Libraries administration continue to fund the *Books on Demand* program, and the program's funding has been extended as a result.

REFERENCES

- Jackson, Mary E. (1998). *Measuring the Performance of Interlibrary Loan Operations in North American Research and College Libraries*. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries: 21.
- Trueswell, Richard L. (1969). Some behavioral patterns of library users: The 80/20 rule. *Wilson Library Bulletin* 43 (5): 458-461.
- Ward, Suzanne M. (2002). Books on demand: Just-in-Time acquisitions. *The Acquisitions Librarian* 27: 95-107.

Received: 11/24/02

Reviewed: 12/10/02

Revised and Accepted: 12/23/02

APPENDIX. Representative Titles Acquired Through the Books on Demand Program

Title	Publisher	Patron Department
Cognitive task analysis	Erlbaum	Psychology
Contrastive rhetoric revisited and redefined	Erlbaum	English
Converging cultures: art and identity in Spanish America	Harry Abrams	Foreign Languages
Domestic space: reading the nineteenth century interior	Manchester University Press	English
E-commerce security: weak links, best defenses	Wiley	Consumer Science
Epistemology: a contemporary introduction to the theory of knowledge	Routledge	unknown
Florence Nightingale: letters from the Crimea, 1854-1856	St. Martin's	unknown
Foreign women in British literature: exotics, aliens, and outsiders	Greenwood	English
Gender and consumer culture reader	New York University Press	History
High-yield microbiology and infectious diseases	Lippincott	Audiology
Illusions of immortality: a psychology of fame and celebrity	Palgrave	English
Interpersonal process in psychotherapy	Wadsworth	Education
Introduction to linear optimization	Athena Scientific	Civil Engineering
Jackie Robinson: race, sports, and the American dream	M.E. Sharpe	History
Lewis Carroll in Wonderland: the life and times of Alice and her creator	Harry Abrams	Foreign Languages
Neuro-fuzzy pattern recognition: methods in soft computing	Wiley	Electrical Engineering
People and forests: communities, institutions, and governance	MIT Press	Political Science
Practical meta-analysis	Sage	Pharmacy
Psychology of survey response	Cambridge University Press	Political Science
Rethinking architecture: a reader in cultural theory	Spon	Foreign Languages
Small group and team communication	Allyn & Bacon	unknown
Spectacular narratives: Hollywood in the age of the blockbuster	Tauris	English
Suburb of dissent: cultural politics in the United States and Canada during the 1930's	Duke University Press	Foreign Languages
Winning strategies in a deconstructing world	Wiley	Management