

November 2013

A Closer Look at Issues

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Against the Grain

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Recommended Citation

Strauch, Katina (1992) "A Closer Look at Issues," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 7.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1169>

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A Look at Issues

From Your Editor

Serials pricing. As we delve deeper into the nineties, this is still the hot topic it was way back in the eighties. Of course, Marcia Tuttle's excellent *NOSPI* is full of this issue. Recently, we saw a flare up between Marcia and Faxon regarding the late loading of Pergamon title pricing. The story seems to be that Faxon had the tapes but they weren't (necessarily) in the right format so, rather than key in the prices individually by hand, Faxon held off. The *NOSPI* for April 12, 1992 (NS 26) contains a letter by Joel Baron about the issue. It seems doubtful that Faxon did the late tape loading on purpose or that any of our serials vendors would do such a thing. What seems a lot more likely is that librarians are paying a lot more attention to price increases than they once did. The *Newsletter on Serials Pricing* (NS 25 for April 11) contains a clarification of the Pergamon/Princeton correspondence regarding the cost to Princeton of the 130 journals invoiced to Princeton on September 1, 1991. It still looks like things are changing, especially regarding the necessity for libraries knowing if they are liable for increased serials billing for the same title in the same year. This could

(maybe) make current year budget projections easier.

Aqueduct. Along pricing lines, you should check out the April 8 *Chronicle of Higher Education* (pp. 33-34) because a hardworking group of librarians got together recently and made up an **Action Agenda** for all of us out here in the grassroots. **Aqueduct** is a conference center in Chapel Hill. The Action Agenda is printed below.

The implications of research by federal employees and copyright. Frequently researchers produce articles when they are employed by the federal government and their research is not subject to copyright. Also frequently the results are currently published in scholarly commercial journals. This is an emerging area for exploration by many librarians.

Surveys, service, and customers. Many of you may have gotten a survey sent out by Academic Book Center to be returned in early March. The anonymous survey asked librarians to rate ABC vis-a-vis their competitors regarding timely delivery, discounts, customer service responsiveness, pro-

fessionalism of the sales rep and overall service quality. It also sought other information from customers regarding services required. The survey has raised some controversy on ACQNET because the names of competitors have been used. There seems to be a pretty even split among librarians about whether this was good or bad.

Prepayment stretches your dollars. This seems to be an increasing trend. Serials vendors may have always had prepayment schedule options, but they now seem to be getting more aggressive about marketing it. On March 21, Blackwell's Periodicals Division sent a letter regarding their prepayment schedules for 1993. The bottom line is that the service charge goes down based on how much and how early you pay. Faxon, also, has announced an interest earning period that starts April 1 and ends August 31, 1992. Other companies like Swets and Harrassowitz have prepayment plans. This is worth remembering as you try to stretch your materials budget. Just because the company doesn't promote it like the above-named companies doesn't mean that they won't give you prepayment credit. ☛

Aqueduct Action Agenda

The April 8 Chronicle of Higher Education (pp. 33-34) carried information regarding Aqueduct. The entire agenda as printed in the *Newsletter on Serial Pricing* and ACQNET is reproduced here.

Introduction

From February 7-9, 1992, nineteen serials, acquisitions, and collection development librarians met in Chapel Hill, N.C., for a retreat at the Aqueduct Conference Center. They discussed pressing issues in regard to serials acquisition and scholarly communication. Participants in the retreat came from ten states and the District of Columbia.

After fifteen hours of intense discussion on five topics (strategies for

countering high prices, the library's role document delivery, library treatment of electronic journals, serials cancellation projects, and copyright), the retreat participants developed the following action agenda. The points are directed to individual librarians and their libraries, and to library organizations. The issues must be addressed at a grassroots level, as well as by organizations.

The Aqueduct participants urge all librarians to discuss, adopt, and promulgate the points in this Action Agenda.

1) Examine carefully all of the implications and ramifications of the access versus ownership debate. Access and ownership are both critical library functions. While access has many advantages, a critical mass of library ownership must be maintained as ownership is the ultimate form of access.

2) Article delivery services using research libraries' journal collections are becoming highly effective. If libraries are to maintain a competitive role in information and article

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