

Adios to Paper Journals—Removed and Recycled—One Mile Long and 75 Tons

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Adios to Paper Journals—Removed and Recycled—One Mile Long and 75 Tons

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Abstract

This presentation uses Appalachian State University's experiences as a stimulus for discussing how we have, and others may, successfully remove in a single swoop several thousand linear feet of little used bound periodicals. This effort opens library areas for new services and spaces. The program will be a resource and guide to others interested in large-scale deaccessioning projects and includes three deaccessioning projects using online back files from 1) JSTOR; 2) ScienceDirect, Wiley, and Sage; and 3) journals outside of these packages.

Introduction

Space constraints limit many midsize and small academic libraries wishing to implement new services. The largest occupant of library square footage is the paper collection: a collection declining in use. With the rise of ejournals and extensive digital archives, the most dramatic fall off in use has occurred in the bound journal stacks. Can large swaths of space be confidently reclaimed by identifying and disposing of bound journal content now held in online archives? What will the campus reaction be and how can it be managed? What is involved in project planning and implementation? What content was rescued from withdrawal?

In the summer and fall of 2014, Appalachian State removed more than one mile and 75 tons of the bound paper journal collection. This is our story.

Preparation, Preparation, Preparation

Setting: Appalachian State University (ASU) is classified as a Carnegie Master's/large institution having 18,000 students, with 10% of those in graduate programs. ASU offers a doctorate degree in education, and 185 undergraduate and graduate majors. The library is only 10 years old and demand for new services and space combined with low use of the bound periodicals indicated an evaluation of those stacks was timely. The bound periodicals are shelved in alphabetical order in

compact shelving and occupy 10,000 square feet and eight linear miles of content.

Months of thorough preparation helped ensure success. The first step identified the online journal back files owned by ASU which appear stable and complete. A review of the literature indicated academic libraries engaged in similar projects had chosen JSTOR titles for deaccessioning. JSTOR digital content is redundantly archived in dispersed servers and through agreements with major universities to retain the paper holdings. Additionally, JSTOR participates in the PORTICO dark content archive. JSTOR met our criteria for stability and the extent of the JSTOR holdings would yield the significant clearing of paper volumes we sought. Appalachian State University has bought JSTOR content from the early 2000s, including all the JSTOR Arts & Sciences collections as well as other science and business collections.

After completion of the JSTOR project, further examination focused on other journal back files also owned by Appalachian State University. A second examination of the literature indicated many other libraries had completed deaccessioning projects based on owned major publisher back files. We determined our back files from ScienceDirect, Wiley/Blackwell, and Sage met our criteria for sufficient stability and extent. ASU has not yet considered any broad deaccessioning projects based on aggregator database full text holdings, e.g., Academic Search

Complete or others. The stability of aggregator title lists and holdings is unknown.

After identifying suitable candidate back files, the real work of the preparation began in systematically comparing ASU's bound journal holdings with the holdings information available from JSTOR or the publishers listed above. The following section briefly outlines the steps to remove these bound periodical sets from the collection. The steps were similar for all phases of the deaccessioning projects.

In step one, we exported the JSTOR or publisher's holdings from either their website or our license amendments. Using the print identifier (print ISSN), three students added our holdings beside the online archive holdings on a master Excel spreadsheet, what we called, "the alpha list." In the second step, the collection management librarians prescreened the alpha list for a priori "must keep" titles. The "must keep" titles were usually titles of regional interest or containing illustrations or advertisements not well captured online. A few dozen titles were removed. The third step was to reformat the master alpha list for a campus faculty review.

A fourth step was quality assurance. Student workers using the alpha list opened a full text article at the beginning and at the end of each title's online archive holdings. This assured us sufficiently that the complete content we proposed to withdraw was available online to the campus.

This thorough preparation took more than three months for JSTOR and it gave us firm footing to present the project to the campus through the dean of libraries and several outreach mechanisms including an extensive FAQ in a LibGuide built for the projects. The LibGuide contained a link to an appeal form for faculty to

ask for the removal of titles from deaccessioning. The provost sent out the notification of the project to all faculty.

After a three-week opportunity for faculty review, the fifth step removed the titles appealed by faculty from the alpha list. We were able to honor all requests; there were fewer than 15 appealed titles. The sixth step pulled the first volume of each journal title for the catalog maintenance unit's use to remove or suppress the bibliographic records and holdings.

After pulling the first volume, we indicate selected date range for the journal for removal by flipping the periodicals down on their spine. During summer and fall break, a team of student workers under close supervision by two staff members pulled those indicated bound volumes for recycling. The quantity and type of paper from the project that entered the campus recycling stream proved to be a problem for the existing system to accommodate and required negotiation with the recycling coordinator to complete the project.

The project was an overwhelming success. Approximately 1/8 of the unused or underutilized bound periodical stacks were opened up to be used in allocating new spaces for new or expanded services. Thorough early preparation around holdings and access gave the project integrity. Effective communication with Academic Affairs and directly to the faculty population reduced faculty concerns to only a handful, all of which had good resolutions.

We plan to expand this presentation into an article-level treatment presenting an in-depth discussion of concerns, detailed methods, and further outcomes. To view the LibGuide used for the project visit www.library.appstate.edu, go to Library Guides for Research, and search for JSTOR Duplicate.