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ADVISOR REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Heard on the Net

Library Resources A La Carte & Prix Fixe, Selection in the Age of Budget Scarcity

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By Jill Emery *(Collections Librarian, Portland State University)* <jemery@pdx.edu>:

A Charleston Report of Sorts

At the 2011 Charleston Conference, I was sharing a few stolen moments away from the maddening crowd to catch up with an old friend and we were talking about what we were working on and doing lately in libraryland. One of the things I mentioned was the Orbis-Cascade Alliance Demand Driven E-Book pilot being run and how there was some local opposition by the subject selectors at my home institution to de-dupe what was purchased in this program with what we were receiving on our approval plan. My colleague replied with the question: "When did being a subject specialist get defined as being part of a buying club?" It was a flippant statement but it has stuck with me and I've been thinking about how this attitude has developed in libraryland.

We've all heard presentations on how the explosion of information now available online has moved academia from a land of scarcity (print resources) into the land of abundance (online resources). However, I'd like to posit that this new era of abundance of information is just a new era of continuous wave pattern. Paul Duguid touched on this recently during his ARL/CNI Fall Forum 2011 presentation (1). Not going too terribly far back in history, in most academic libraries in the 1960's and early 1970's in the U.S. A., libraries purchased many things in bulk plans and packages because there was not an endless supply of money but a pretty good supply of money to support numerous resources so bulk print purchasing was a norm both for monographs and for subscriptions. Then there was an energy crisis followed by an energy bust in states which were once considered very oil rich. Suddenly, there was a need to tighten belts and scrutinize expenditures and suddenly librarians were cancelling bulk packages and bulk orders and ordering single print titles and firm orders instead of approval or bulk purchasing. Flash ahead to the technology boom years in the late 20th century and we find ourselves again at a point where budgets were seen as somewhat adequate and we spent a lot of time converting single print journal titles into electronic journal package deals that became known as the "big deals." We moved most of the monographic title purchasing into approval plans that were reviewed weekly just to oversee consistency with the set parameters and were settling into the world of packaged resource supply both in print and in electronic access. Then came the most recent budgetary crisis and we now find ourselves back to evaluating electronic journal "big deals" at the single journal level and re-negotiating our spend on these packages based on these incremental elements within them. This is where I think the belief that we must review every title and fully guide every acquisition purchase a library makes arises. This attitude runs counter to how most e-book plans work; especially in the demand driven plans.

At the same time we're asking subject selectors to identify individual journal subscriptions for impact and relevancy within a subject area, we're also asking them to let the monograph and media purchasing in print or DVD and electronic formats go demand driven and continue in a very pre-packaged way from most of the book and media providers. Any money for single firm ordering has been eaten up either by the subscription inflation costs or by ILL fees and ever growing technology support costs. Herein lies the schizophrenia the subject selector is grappling with and the job of collection managers is finding how to better balance and better direct what it means to be a subject specialist or subject librarian in the second decade of the 21st century. How do we arrive at selection criteria and collection development policies that provide for both a la carte ordering and prix fixe purchasing? This will be one of the questions I'll be grappling with in 2012.

Duguid, Paul. "Scholarship and Scholarly Resources in the 21st Century." <http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/fallforumproceedings/forum11.shtml>

Terms

Many of you are probably aware that I have been working with a colleague from the UK, Graham Stone, to arrive at what we're calling Techniques for Electronic Resource Management (TERMs). Based on the electronic resources lifecycle, we've outlined a series of best practices for the six areas of the lifecycle and have been presenting these on a blog and to a Facebook group for feedback form our colleagues. By the publication of this column, all six TERMS will be posted.

The blog can be found here: <http://6terms.tumblr.com/>.

The Facebook group is known as: TERMS

And we have a twitter feed at: 6terms

We've had some really great feedback from other electronic resources librarians. We currently have 14 direct followers of the blog, 118 followers via twitter, and 141 members of our Facebook group. We will be posting monthly specific questions starting in January 2012 to the blog and Facebook group to seek a few more refinements to what we've drafted thus far. We hope to hold one in-person focus group meeting in Europe in the summer of 2012 to see what else we may need to cover as well as have a hosted webinar towards the end of the summer or beginning of fall 2012 to garner further input. Graham and I will then be putting together a final draft of the TERMS and associated workflows for publication as a Library Technology Report in April 2013 and hope to hold a pre-conference on the final publication prior to the ALA Summer Conference in Chicago in 2013. In many

ways, we envisioned this to be a living blog that would continue to gather input from others as practices changed and new electronic resource acquisitions are developed.

ER&L 2012

Another recent activity has been reviewing proposals for the 2012 ER&L Conference to be held April 2-4 in Austin, Texas. This year, ER&L will be offering a new and different conference experience. In the words of Bonnie Tijerina:

> We will be using awesome, interactive software called Silverlight. The software records the presenter and the slides and synchs them. It divides them into chapters so you can move to the exact slide you want to listen to. We will be webcasting sessions live and archiving sessions. This means people can participate, ask questions, etc. while the session is actually going on. So, for those who cannot come at all, they can interact with the conference and presenters. We also have an option for those who are attending the conference in Austin. We often hear that people wish they could play a session for colleagues back home or that they could attend more than one session at the same time. If attendees buy the registration + online conference access, they can do both of these things. Since archived sessions will be posted almost immediately after the conference, attendees can show their colleagues while ideas are fresh in their minds or can check out a sessions that others are talking about.

To learn more about the registration options, see here: <http://www.electroniclibrarian.com/conference-info/registration>.

It will be really interesting to be taking a section of the conference completely virtual in 2012. This year ER&L received over 100 program proposals which is a record for us. The 2012 conference is going to be one of the most innovative and exciting events offered. ■

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