Heard on the Net: Library Resources A La Carte and Prix Fixe, Selection in the Age of Budget Scarcity

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Not going too terribly far back in history, in most academic libraries, we have just moved from a land of scarcity (print resources) into the land of abundance (online resources). How? It is how availability has moved academia from a land of scarcity to a land of abundance.

We’ve all heard presentations on how the explosion of information, on 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.

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.


**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 from 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 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 re-
source 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 Silver-
light. 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 go-
ing on. So, for those who cannot come at all, they can inter-
act 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 con-
ference access, they can do both of these things. Since archived
sessions will be posted almost immediately after the confer-
ence, attendees can show their colleagues while ideas are fresh
in their minds or can check out a sessions that others are talk-
ing 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 pro-
gram proposals which is a record for us. The 2012 conference is go-
ing to be one of the most innovative and exciting events offered.