

## Against the Grain

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# Biz of Acq: Managing eBooks from Multiple Vendors

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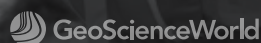
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## Biz of Acq — Managing eBooks from Multiple Vendors

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Preparing for its 50th birthday, the **University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)** is a medium-sized university with undergraduate, as well as master's and doctoral, programs. As a fairly young university, founded during the roiling 1960s, UMBC has been recognized for the past five years by the *U.S. News and World Report* as an "up and coming university."

When the Library was founded, rather than have the majority of monograph selection done by librarians, UMBC chose to allocate set monograph funds to each academic department. Academic faculty liaisons work with the Collection Management Librarian to manage selection of materials only for their departments expending their department monograph funds by a set date. Some liaisons do the majority of the selection for their departments, while others ask for input from their colleagues. On occasion, some departments agree to share the cost of a particular set or expensive item that could benefit their programs, but usually ordering is done without consulting other departments.

When eBook collections began to be commercially available it was determined that purchasing in bulk would not work at UMBC as there was not a large chunk of "general" funds available and it would be difficult to get many departments to give up "their" funds for a large general collection. We began investigating the possibility of implementing a demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) program (just-in-time vs. just-in-case selection). Having had great success with a similar ILL program, we hoped that DDA for our general collection would work as well.

In 2001 UMBC's Interlibrary Loan department began a buy-vs.-borrow program, purchasing ILL requested materials that met set criteria rather than borrowing through ILL. It was reasoned that if one patron requested the item that someone else might be interested as well, and indeed a review of Circulation records of these materials has shown that the majority of titles have circulated more than two times.

### UMBC Local DDA Programs

With this background, UMBC began to approach eBook vendors with the intent to purchase individual titles rather than collections. Vendors were not equipped at the time to sell individual eBooks due to platform needs, sales, licenses, etc. Other libraries began to ask for single titles, and eventually vendors began to move to a variety of DDA models where eBook titles would be loaded into a library catalog, users would discover the title, access it, and eventually a pre-set number of accesses would trigger a purchase. We decided to start conversations with three vendors, **EBSCO**, **EBL** and **ebrary**, in order to investigate their programs regarding such things as cost, availability of titles, licensing issues, and trigger points.

At the 2011 ALA Annual meeting we approached each vendor with a preset list of questions to ensure that we asked the same questions of each vendor. We felt this approach would help us find the right fit for our first DDA program.

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We decided to work with **EBSCO** on a one-year pilot project, due to a low platform fee, reasonable prices, and quick turnaround time. **EBSCO** provided a DDA Set-Up Form where we determined the deposit we would make, call numbers to be excluded and price range of books to be included in the DDA. In addition, we chose the publishers to be included in the profile; at that time usage triggers to purchase a title were tied to the individual publishers. **EBSCO** eventually found this trigger format to be unworkable and changed to a set number of uses triggering a purchase for all publishers.

As we had heard the horror stories of libraries' eBook funding being expended within a few weeks we decided to select mostly larger University Press publishers, as well as a few of the publishers from whom we normally purchased print materials.

Success! We began the **EBSCO** DDA in April 2012 and it took about five months for users to spend the original deposit account of \$10,000 we'd carved out of monograph book funds that hadn't been expended by the required spending deadline. Ultimately, we spent \$20,000 the first year and purchased 226 titles.

Happy with the success of the **EBSCO** pilot, **UMBC** decided to begin a second DDA program with **EBL**. This program would be different from the **EBSCO** DDA program in several ways. Not only were the triggers different, but the profile would include different publishers and different years. We chose to use those two factors to limit the number and types of titles rather than using subject areas or LC or Dewey classification schemas.

We started our **UMBC EBL** DDA program in July 2012 with 4,232 titles published between Jan. 2008 and December 2010 from eight publishers. Additionally, because we decided early in the process that we would not dedupe the titles, yet we wanted multiple DDA programs, we used this method of limiting by year and publisher to avoid too much overlap.

The chart below summarizes how this has worked for our current local DDA programs:

In our local program, the triggers are set to allow three short-term loans (STLs) before a purchase is triggered. On the fourth use, an autopurchase occurs. While the autopurchases are unmediated, we did cap the list cost per title at \$200. This means that we do not have any titles in our program with a list price over \$200. We did elect to mediate short-term loans that are above \$30. While we have not denied any of these STL requests, it is an opportunity to see what is being requested and determine if we need to make any changes to the program.

We currently have 19,239 titles in our local **UMBC** DDA program with content from 20+ publishers. The publication dates for most of the titles are 2008-2011 with a smaller group of publishers providing content from 2011-forward. Most of our expenditures have been for short-term loans with very few autopurchases. However, the total number of titles we own includes 68 titles that we purchased as part of a special opportunity to purchase titles that had already incurred one or more STLs. Of that group of titles we elected to purchase all of the titles that had at least two uses or two STLs. In terms of autopurchases for our **UMBC EBL** DDA program, 20 titles have been triggered for purchase when a fourth use occurred, and we have had 732 STLs.

While both of these programs (**EBSCO** and **EBL**) vary in coverage, we have considered them a success. At this time we own a total of 88 **EBL** titles along with the 484 titles that have been purchased with our **EBSCO** DDA program. To us, part of the success of the programs has been that they fulfilled our desire to be prudent with our limited eBook funds.

### Consortium-wide DDA Program

In March 2012, while we continued working to get our local programs up and running, there was a growing interest within our consortium to investigate and possibly implement a consortium-wide DDA program. **UMBC** is a member of the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI), which is a consortium of 16 libraries at the public universities and colleges in the State of Maryland. The consortium has a

longstanding commitment to finding ways to share information and resources. To support that commitment, USMAI has well established programs that promote resource sharing such as a patron-initiated borrowing program, a shared integrated library system (ILS), ILLiad implementations on all campuses, and consortial licensing for some databases and e-journals. Because of this commitment, it made sense to find an eBook vendor that was interested in a piloting a consortial DDA program.

While we gathered information from several vendors, we found that **EBSCO** was not working with consortia; however, **EBL** was willing to work with the USMAI consortium to find a model that we could pilot. Discussions with **EBL** regarding the possibility of establishing a consortium-wide program and what the parameters of the program might be began in the spring of 2012. The USMAI E-book Implementation Group was formed to represent the consortial libraries, shepherd the process, and work with the vendors. In August 2013 we went live with an **EBL** USMAI DDA program. All 16 libraries are currently participating in the program. For this program, following the example of **UMBC**, the consortium committed to a very broad profile with very few subject areas and LC classification sections removed.

The desire to pilot this program fulfilled the need to see if it was possible to sustain an eBook program with content that would be accessible to all of the consortial users regardless of where they were located. This aspect was especially important as the consortium looks for ways to best support the research and teaching at the USMAI Centers (i.e., Shady Grove or Hagerstown). This past August 2014, we completed our first year with the pilot, and it was agreed that we would continue with the program. Throughout the pilot year, we did make some changes in an effort to maximize the number of resources that are available.

Initially for this program, we started with a little over 6,560 titles in our USMAI DDA program. Our trigger was set at six short-term loans with an autopurchase occurring on the 7th

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DDA Program Title	JSTOR	UMBC EBL			eBooks in EBSCOhost		
Notes			Included in profile as of May 2013	Included in profile as of May 2013		Added 4/17/13	Added 4/17/13
Vendor	JSTOR	EBL	EBL	EBL	EBSCO	EBSCO	EBSCO
Dates of Coverage	Books Published between 1/1/1945 and 12/31/2007	1/2/2008-12/31/2010	1/2/2008-12/31/2010	2011-continuing	2011-continuing	2011 only	2012-continuing
Original Publishers or Added Later	Original list of publishers	Original list of publishers	Proposed publishers to add to UMBC EBL DDA (4/2013)	Proposed publishers to add to UMBC DDA 2011-continuing	Original List of Publishers	Proposed publishers to add to EBSCO DDA for 2011 only	Proposed publishers to add to EBSCO DDA for 2012-continuing
Publishers included (listed alphabetically within each column)	Brookings Institution Press Central European University Press Columbia University Press  Cornell University Press Edinburgh University Press Harvard University Press Hong Kong University Press  McGill-Queens University Press Modern Humanities Research Association Ohio University Press Pennsylvania State University Press Princeton University Press RAND Corporation Russell Sage Foundation University of California Press University of Illinois Press  University of Minnesota Press University of North Carolina Press University of Texas Press University of Toronto University Press of Mississippi Yale University Press	Cambridge University Press Elsevier Ltd. Harvard University Press Johns Hopkins University Press  Yale University Press	Bernham Science Brill Georgetown Cambridge  NYU press Palgrave Princeton Sage US Springer Stanford Taylor and Francis U of Chicago Press University of California Press University of North Carolina Press Wiley	Brill Georgetown Indiana UP  Wiley	Cambridge University Press Elsevier Ltd. Harvard University Press Johns Hopkins University Press Oxford University Press Princeton University Press University of Chicago Press  Yale University Press	CSIRO Publishing Earthscan from Routledge Routledge World Scientific Publishing Co.  World Scientific Publishing	Cambridge Earthscan from Routledge Harvard Johns Hopkins* Oxford Princeton Routledge  World Scientific Publishing Yale

use. As with our local program, the USMAI program capped the list price for titles in our profile at a maximum of \$200 per title. We also elected to limit the titles in the program to those that were published in 2013 through the present.

The consortium-wide program differed from our local program in a couple of ways. For the UMBC program, each autopurchased title is allowed 365 uses. Upon reaching 365 uses we can either choose to purchase another copy or access to the title becomes unavailable until the beginning of the purchase year when the use is reset. In the consortium-wide program, for each autopurchased title, the consortium has 14 seven-day loans available. When all of those loans have been used, the consortium agreed to automatically purchase a second title, or a third, fourth, etc. The chart below provides some information about the number of additional copies that have been autopurchased.

Number of additional copies	Number of titles with multiple copies purchased
2 <sup>nd</sup> copy	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> copy	1
4 <sup>th</sup> copy	1
5 <sup>th</sup> copy	0
6 <sup>th</sup> copy	0
7 <sup>th</sup> copy	1

Like the UMBC program, the consortium wanted to monitor the prices of the STLs. Initially, for the USMAI DDA program, the price at which a mediated short-term loan would occur was set at \$30. However, when there were widespread publishers' increases in the percentage of list price that was to be charged for an STL, it resulted in an increase in the number of mediated STL requests for the consortium. Because we wanted our DDA program to be as seamless as possible for our users and to not create any unnecessary workloads for staff, the USMAI E-book Group decided to raise the mediated short-term loan cost to \$45.

Because the consortium was not interested in paying a multiplier, which has been a standard model for consortium-wide programs, we were willing to pilot this alternative approach. We wanted our purchases to be based on use by our member libraries. Our consortium-wide collection currently contains 23,753 titles, and we have 363 owned titles. The consortium has been pleased with the success of the program, and the USMAI E-book Implementation Group is continuing to look for innovative ways to provide access to eBooks for users at all member libraries.

### Springer Collections

Although UMBC was not in a position to purchase large collections, we have provided access to eBooks using other models, not just DDA. Beyond a few Reference collections, the other publisher sets that UMBC has committed to purchasing have been a few of the Springer eBook packages.

Springer provides targeted collections, so we have been able to buy only those sets that we believed would be most used or most desired. From the beginning, the Springer Computer Science collection, which included *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, was one that we knew we wanted. In addition to the Computer Science Collection, we tried several other Springer Collections; however, the usage and demand for them was not enough to justify continuing our commitment to them.

Besides expanding our eBook holdings, the Springer Computer Science collection represents a collection where other factors contributed to our decision to purchase it. Until 2011, when we made the decision to purchase Springer eBooks, these titles had been purchased in print. However, the cataloging staff was finding that in many instances good usable copy for the print titles was not available. This meant the resources were not as easily processed and did not move to the shelves as quickly. What the staff had noticed was that there was generally usable copy for the electronic version. So a contributing factor in our decision to purchase the Springer

eBook collections was the fact that we could obtain usable cataloging records that could be batch loaded which would make the titles more readily accessible.

### Reference Titles

As e-Reference books became available UMBC began to purchase single e-titles. It was very labor intensive and expensive to have to set up license agreements and pay platform fees for individual titles; and often it was determined that it was just easier to purchase a title in print. We still weren't that interested in purchasing collections, and one successful model for us has been the Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL), which allows libraries to select and purchase individual titles. The titles are cataloged for the online catalog and are also available as part of the virtual reference library; just one or two clicks to get there from the library homepage. As new titles are purchased they are added to the library's GVRL collection. The Reference department has also purchased a few Oxford, Cambridge, and Sage e-collections of dictionaries, handbooks, histories, and encyclopedias that we can add to as desired. This method of selection allows us to select only the Reference materials we want and store them in virtual libraries where our users can browse the collection or go directly to a title.

### UMBC JSTOR DDA Pilot

In 2013, as UMBC moved forward with the EBSCO and EBL trials, JSTOR approached us with the idea of a DDA that would integrate with the JSTOR databases we already had and

would be searchable in both the library catalog and the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS). As we had done previously, we limited to particular earlier dates and included only academic press publishers that would not overlap with the publishers previously selected for the other DDAs. As of this date approximately 73 titles have been purchased, and many more have been used as short-term loans.

### Single-Title Ordering Through YBP's GOBI

As eBooks have become available through our approval vendor, Yankee Book Peddler, the library liaisons have been encouraged to purchase single-title eBooks through the GOBI system. At this time only EBSCO and EBL titles are available for individual purchase.

Some of the liaisons have selected a few eBooks, while others are still wary of eBooks in general due to downloading issues and difficulty with the complex/convoluted instructions, preferring to select print titles. Particularly irksome is the variety of accesses provided by different publishers. One publisher may allow printing of a set number of pages; others won't allow any printing at all. The vendors have not made this information prominent as users use the eBooks, and they have to seek help from librarians to access their books.

Users have become familiar with the Amazon Kindle/iBooks model of easy usage and balk at the restrictions and hoops they have to jump through in order to use an academic eBook. Unfortunately too, Springer and Oxford only sell their eBooks as parts of collections, and so titles that we would like to purchase as single eBooks may only be purchased singly in print.

### ILL Purchases of eBooks

As mentioned above, the Interlibrary Loan department began a buy-vs.-borrow project to purchase current ILL-requested titles meeting set criteria, an early precursor of the DDA. The idea was to rush purchase and catalog books for users in approximately the same amount of time it would take to borrow the book from another library. In 2012 ILL began to experiment with purchasing eBooks for ILL-requested titles. A line was added to the ILL request form asking users to check a box if they would accept the requested material as an eBook. If the titles were available through either EBSCO or EBL, and the price was similar to the print price, we would purchase the title as an eBook. Access to the eBook would come within a couple of days, and the URL would be forwarded to the user to access, before the book was cataloged and available through the online catalog. Users have been pleased to get their books in a few days rather than a few weeks. At the time of this writing approximately 25 ILL requests have been filled with eBooks.

### Statistics

With such a variety of programs, the data gathering has at times been a difficult task. When we have had to make changes to our programs, we have not wanted decisions to be completely cost-per-use based. However, it is

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# From A University Press — What's Working?

Column Editor: **Leila W. Salisbury** (Director, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS 39211; Phone: 601-432-6205) <lsalisbury@ihl.state.ms.us>

I am often asked to talk and write about the challenges facing scholarly publishing. I'm used to thinking about the issues in a very broad sense as I try to explain the environmental factors and technology evolutions that have brought us to the exciting if uneasy predicament we in scholarly communications perceive today. For a recent questionnaire, however, I was asked more specifically about how my own operation is working to meet these challenges. This was a very useful exercise and a reminder of the fact that while university presses share many things in common, we are also each the product of our own particular place, conditions, and values. Those shaping factors may not always be universal, but they help us create our own responses. We incorporate them into the fabric of our operations and use them to best advantage.

The **University Press of Mississippi (UPM)** is very fortunate in several respects. We are a consortium press, which means that we are aligned with all of our eight state universities, and our institutional allocation is split among them. This has proven to be a sustainable solution for our campuses, taking our press through the rocky recession with the necessary support as we weathered poor sales and an ecosystem in chaos. I am a staunch advocate of this type of consortial

arrangement for university presses, especially those located in states with small populations and limited resources. Collaboration seems to be the buzzword du jour, but I give a hearty (and daily) thanks to those individuals who had the foresight 45 years ago to structure our operation in this way.

University presses and their staff should regularly look to their campuses for ideas and relationships, and we at **UPM** have not one but eight centers of learning from which to draw. Since we are not on any one of the campuses but in a central location within the state, sometimes it is a bit of a juggling act to be on each campus at least once a year for a formal visit (and at other times for lectures or conferences or more informal meetings). The benefits, however, far outweigh the logistical challenges. Each of our campuses offers different strengths, and we are able to learn about the guiding principles and challenges of campuses of very different sizes (ranging in enrollments of 2,000 to more than 20,000). This in itself has been a reminder that "one size fits all" thinking about content and its access and use is insufficient. Each campus has its own approach to course material, and acquisitions specialists handle things differently for each library.

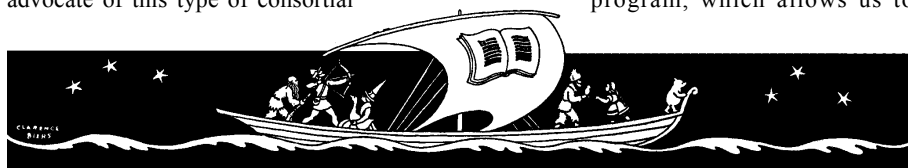
We also have a very cohesive editorial program, which allows us to

dig deeply in certain fields and to work in a concentrated way to create an identity for ourselves and relationships with scholars in those disciplines. The **Press** also works consistently to cultivate our regional publications, which include Mississippi and Louisiana and sometimes the South more broadly. This is part of our service mission to our state and region, but these books also have appeal to a more general audience. We are careful, though, to maintain a balance of the general interest and scholarly books. Our marketing director sometimes jokingly refers to ours as a well-diversified portfolio, but it's an apt analogy. Operational stability for **UPM** stems in large part from the tuning and maintenance of this delicate balance. Each type of book has its role to play as part of our larger list, and the wider portfolio provides some cushioning when sales in certain disciplines fall off.

Finally, my staff and I spend a lot of time thinking, in essence, about the money that sustains our mission. Where will we get the best and most meaningful return on investment, whether that investment is one of staff time or cash spent? What are the most promising book projects that fall within our areas of strength, and do they make sense for us financially? What efficiencies can we find in inventory management, printing, and electronic workflow and distribution solutions? What pricing strategies are both sustainable and attractive even as we make our books as accessible as possible?

A coaching professional recently pointed out to me that the way in which our organi-

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## Biz of Acq from page 57

one factor that needs to be considered as we want to be conscientious money managers with the funds dedicated to purchasing eBooks. One of the obstacles to gathering and evaluating the data is the disparity in what vendors offer. Some vendors are able to provide very detailed usage data along with **COUNTER**-compliant statistics. Others only provide one or the other. Because we recognize that vendors are evolving in their thinking about how and what statistical data they are able to provide, each year we try to evaluate our data needs and determine what we should be doing.

### eBook Web Page

In order to assist users with, and keep track of, the variety of eBook vendors, platforms, and means of access, we created a Webpage <http://lib.guides.umbc.edu/ebooks>. We've included information on downloading eBooks to readers, how to borrow eBooks, with instructions for each vendors' materials, and explained the philosophy of DDA purchasing.

## Ongoing Issues

There are still a few problem issues, notably getting all eBooks to display in discovery systems. As discovery implementations become more the norm the ability to connect seamlessly to eBooks via discovery services will have a major impact on their complete acceptance in academic libraries. A smaller, but no less minor issue is when the vendors pull e-titles from the DDA listing without notifying us or when there is significant lag time between when the title was pulled and when the notification is received. The record is still in the catalog and/or in the discovery tool, which creates a problem for users. Several librarians may be in on the conversation to determine if the eBooks have been pulled or if the catalog record is incorrect; an inconvenience and frustration to the user and a problem for the librarians, who expect, regardless of method of discovery, the collections to be accurately represented. Part of maintaining our various eBook collections means continuing to have an open dialogue with the publishers regarding issues such as this so that local workflows are



sustainable and our users can consistently access the titles we say we have available.

## Conclusion

At **UMBC** we continue to strive to smartly use the funds that we are able to dedicate to eBook purchases. The DDA programs have been successful. We have not depleted those accounts so quickly that we ran out of funds to continue the programs. The specific collections and the reference titles that we have purchased have been thoughtfully selected to meet the needs of our faculty, staff, and students. Those of us in the library recognized that there is still a learning curve for using eBooks, but use seems to be increasing. As we do more to promote the use of eBooks and provide information to address issues when they are encountered, we expect this to be the norm. On the administrative side of things, having multiple platforms and programs does mean we need to devote extra effort to monitor and store information for those involved. However, perhaps in this case, the end does outweigh the means. 🌱