June 1999

Book Pricing Update-Online Selection Tools

Marguerite K. McNair
Blackwell Book Services, maggie.mcnair@blackwell.com

Dan Miller
Blackwell Book Services, dan.miller@blackwell.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

 Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Book Pricing Update — Online Selection Tools

by **Marguerite K. McNair** (Manager, Product Development, Blackwell Book Services) <maggie.mcnair@blackwell.com> and **Dan Miller** (Manager, Approval Systems, Blackwell Book Services) <dan.miller@blackwell.com>

Our colleague **Bill Kane** recently observed in this column that "use of online electronic notifications is catching on, albeit slowly. Whereas some librarians are fully wired and confident of the benefits of paperless notification products, other libraries want or need to keep the slips coming."[1] Bill is, of course, referring to the offerings of book vendors to view, select, and order titles online, based on online new title announcements, and the reluctance of some librarians to rely on such systems in lieu of paper notifications. In a recent paper presented at a conference in Oklahoma, **Jack Walsdorf** provided data about the many vendors that provide online review of announcements.[2] Most vendors now support Web-based announcement systems and are eager to invest dollars into their further development—dollars which, in the past, have been invested in production and distribution of paper announcements; but to increase investment in these systems requires greater reliance on them, in contrast to reliance on conventional paper forms. So, why do some librarians cling to paper announcement forms even as Web-based announcement services provide an overflowing well of information and ease not found in paper forms? Why is it that guiding selectors and bibliographers to the new systems is not as easy as it would seem?

One frequently heard argument in favor of paper forms is their portability. It is true that one can take paper announcement slips to [insert your favorite location here, e.g., on a bus, in a bathtub, to the reference desk]. Of course, most reference desks and many homes now have the equipment and Internet connection to support online review of new title announcements, but until computers and Internet connections are more transportable, there is no arguing with the superior portability of paper announcement forms. Another argument in favor of paper forms focuses on the continued reliance on manual files (e.g., shelf lists and/or order files) or on a workflow that relies on manual files. A twist on the workflow issue involves the need for a signature on paper announcement forms/orders for auditing purposes; this remains a requirement for some libraries, but how long can the attendant costs justify the practice?

What are the reasons one would forsake paper announcement forms for virtual announcements? One frequently heard reason is their immediacy. Librarians relying on Web-based announcements can browse titles immediately upon publication, rather than waiting for paper announcements to be shipped, received, sorted and distributed. As **Bill Kane** pointed out, "although the notification slips are generally provided to the library free of charge, libraries spend plenty of time and money receiv sorting, distributing, sharing, and mailing back paper slips,"[3] begging the question of whether there is a better, less expensive way to review new titles.

Some systems also allow for advanced review of titles yet to be published, including reviewing expected dates of publication, which can go a long way towards assuaging concerns about whether and when a vendor will be treating a given title as part of its Approval program. This is a benefit that paper forms, distributed upon publication, simply cannot match. Depending on the configuration of the vendor's paper and electronic announcement systems, the latter may facilitate interdisciplinary review of announcements while the former may not; that is, the Web-based systems may allow more than one selector to evaluate the suitability of a title for purchase while, in contrast, only one paper form is generally created and sent to a library for review.

Another reason for relying on Web-based announcements is the additional information they provide. More information can fit on a virtual announcement form than on a paper form, and some vendors take advantage of this fact by including book jackets, MARC records, alternative (e.g., paper/cloth, US/UK) editions, tables of contents, and other information pertinent to a purchase decision. Keyword searching of tables of contents can enable librarians to find titles on subjects that aren't retrievable

Media Minder — To DVD or Not To DVD

Column Editor: **Philip Hallman** (Ambassador Book Service) <phillip@absbook.com

To DVD or not to DVD, that is the question facing many media librarians at the moment. And while Shakespeare would appear to be in love these days, (not to mention winning Academy Awards) and therefore too busy to resolve the dilemma with a nice rhymed couplet, it is up to the rest of us mere mortals to decide if DVD, the highly-touted, highly-publicized new media format, is the Betamax of the new Millennium or the real thing. Now that I have had a chance to see and experience it for myself, I'm betting that DVD is here to stay.

For the typical media librarian, the question still unanswered is: Is it nobler to jump onto the band wagon and begin to put dollars from a tight acquisitions budget towards an untried format, or play a wait and see game before laying your hand down? I'd like to present some of the frequently asked questions and try to give some reasonable answers to them so media and acquisition librarians themselves can determine if the time is right for them to DVD.

What is DVD, anyway?

According to the experts, DVD is the next wave of optical disc storage and is similar in shape and size to the CD that we now use to listen to recorded music. The difference is that it can hold audio, video and computer data on one disc and its storage capacity is bigger and faster than either the CD or CD-ROM. Some believe it stands for Digital Video Disc, while others call it Digital Versatile Disc. The long-term goal is to have DVD replace the audio CD, videotape, laserdisc and CD-ROM and possibly even the video game cartridge formats with one single format. Currently there is DVD-Video (generally referred to as DVD) and DVD-ROM. As with the CD and the CD-ROM, the new computers being produced will be made with DVD-ROM drives which will enable them to play both DVD and DVD-ROM. The DVD-ROM also features options which will enable users to record material.

How did DVD come about?

DVD is the result of the convergence of the computer and audio/video industries and is a child of compromise. Initially, Sony and Philips were the first to demonstrate a DVD product. Toshiba, in collaboration with Time Warner responded with their version of a new DVD item. Sony/Philips countered with another version and Toshiba/Time Warner countered again. IBM entered the race and surprisingly urged both sides to consolidate and use the best of both formats in order to create a unified for-

Book Pricing Update
from page 58

with a simple title or subject search, let alone through manipulation of paper announcement forms. While weekly shipments of paper forms are usually sorted by LC class, Web-based systems can sort virtual announcements by other data elements such as treatment date, subject, publisher, publication date, or series title, or by a combination of these elements, giving librarians a different perspective on purchasing decisions, or the performance of their vendor's announcement program.

Once titles are identified by selectors for purchase, Web-based announcement systems allow electronic transfer of requests, complete with fund accounting information and local notes, from selectors to the Acquisitions department for processing; this expedites the acquisitions process and provides controls not previously available through conventional transfer of this information. Once requests are made, or orders are placed, some systems display these completed transactions, making it possible for colleagues throughout a library or within a consortium to know that the title is coming. Finally, the ability of some systems to show what was not delivered as an announcement is another advantage; this feature is valuable in verifying whether the library's announcement profile has the intended coverage.

There are several compelling reasons for reliance on Web-based announcement systems rather than on conventional paper announcements, reasons that are consistent with the mandate under which libraries and vendors both operate in these lean times: doing more with less. And let's not forget that we can save some trees in the process! 🌳

Endnotes
[1] William P. Kane, "Online Acquisitions Tools and Price," *Against the Grain*, April, 1999, p.54.
[2] John J. Walsdorf, "How booksellers are employing electronic innovations to enhance collection development procedures," (paper presented at a conference sponsored by the University of Oklahoma Libraries and University of Oklahoma Foundation, Oklahoma City, OK, March 4-5, 1999).
[3] William P. Kane, "Online Acquisitions Tools and Price," *Against the Grain*, April, 1999, p.54.

Media Minder
from page 60

studio-quality video and better-than-CD-quality audio. Unlike the laserdisc format, it can support over 2 hours of high-quality digital video on one side (and over 8 on a double-sided, dual-layer disc). It has numerous other features including menus and interactive features which allow users to search by scenes (divided into chapters). It can include up to 8 tracks of digital audio which will enable viewers to watch the film dubbed into another language or participants/critics/historians to discuss the film simultaneously to its viewing. It allows the viewer to watch the film from up to 9 different points of view during playback by selecting different camera angles than those originally filmed. It features instant rewind and fast forward, is not susceptible to magnetic fields, is resistant to heat, is durable and is not worn out from playing, only from physical damage, and is compact in size, easy to handle, store and transport, and is cheaper to replicate. According to one source, DVD's cost is approximately $1.00 per unit to manufacture as compared to $2.75 for a typical video and $6.00 for a laserdisc.

The main aspect, though, is the quality of the image. Recently, I had an opportunity to watch DVD versions of **Fritz Lang**'s "M" and **Jane Campion**'s "The Piano." Both demon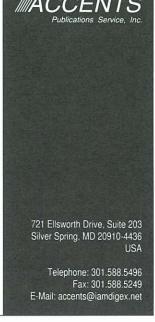-