Against the Grain

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Biz of Acq -- Budget 101 or Here We Go Again

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As summer draws to a close, we can look forward to several annual events: fresh local produce, the upcoming football season, and those follow-up emails and phone calls from all of the sales representatives who we met at the summer library conferences. One other event that we await with some trepidation is when the administration has set the new tuition levels and determines the new library budget allocation.

The moment of truth? A healthy increase means you can cover inflation with some new resources. Anything less means big problems: cancellations. To make matters worse, most of us are part of big deals and consortia agreements that limit our available cash.

At the 23rd annual **NASIG** conference in Phoenix, I heard depressing horror stories from institutions across several states of slashed budgets, forcing emergency decisions. Paper journals and microform titles were being cancelled. One library decided to stop commercial binding of its journals. Another institution was cancelling their book approval plan and not buying any paper books this year.

In Michigan the collection development librarians from the fifteen public universities meet twice per year to discuss common purchases and issues. One of the favorite topics is when we all share our current budget situation, since what occurs at one may affect the others. As you
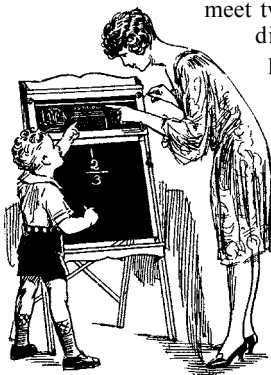
know, Michigan has been having its shares of financial woes.

How to divide the library budget has been the topic of numerous articles and book. A recent question posted on the listserv, collib-l, in August brought out various suggestions with formulas. It again demonstrated that there isn't one right answer.

At **Eastern Michigan University** the budget is divided by format (book/approval; bindery; electronic resources; gift accounts; journals; media; microform; supplies, services, and materials; standing orders), then divided into funds by subject. The subjects are fields of study and do not correspond necessarily into an equivalent department at **Eastern**. While every department is assigned a librarian as their liaison, a fund is not owned by a single department, and more than one selector may spend it. Each selector is responsible to make sure that all areas of their liaison departments are fairly covered.

To cover interdisciplinary topics, we have set up two subsets of additional funds. One subset is for broad topics, which we call basic science, basic humanities, and basic social sciences. For instance any item that covers general science (call number Q) would be assigned to the basic science fund instead of arbitrarily spending one of the specific science funds such as chemistry or biology. A second subset is to cover multicultural studies. We have designated funds for such areas as Latino American, Asian American, Native American, and Gay and Lesbian Studies to make sure those areas are represented in our collection since these fields are covered in the humanities and social sciences.

Finally we often set money aside for a new program to help it get underway. For instance the **College of Technology** created an **Aviation**

Management Program. Since it was a unique field of study for our institution, we designated a separate fund in order to build a collection. After a few years the fund was absorbed into the Technology fund.

How much gets allocated to a specific book fund is a combination of the negotiations between the individual selectors and the Collection Development Librarian and past practice. Allocations will vary some from year to year.

For example at **Eastern Michigan University**, the librarians are included in the new course/program development procedure. We receive copies of all new proposals. The selectors/liaisons are encouraged to comment about how this proposed course/program is already complimented by the collection and the additional resources that would be needed to adequately support it. The selector would therefore have evidence to back their need for supplementary money for journals, books, or any other format

As undoubtedly yours does, our institution continues to expand. During the last decade our institution has added doctorate programs in clinical psychology and technology. There is another doctorate under negotiation. Nearby **Oakland University** will be creating a medical school in 2010, the **Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine**.

Past practice remains an essential ingredient to the budget picture. Certain programs carry more prestige and have large enrollments. A higher percentage of the budget must be held for them. **Eastern Michigan University** has evolved from a teacher's college and it remains one of the largest producers of elementary and secondary school educators in the country. The **College of Education** figures strongly when we review the budget.

Possible Remedies:

How can you prepare for the budget challenges? You need contingency plans:

1) Usage data. The majority of electronic resources have been great with providing usage data. If you haven't been collecting data on your paper resources, you need to start. To compliment our electronic journal data, we have been tallying the paper use. It has started a project to make sure all of our bound journals have barcodes, so we can just scan them in order to collect the data. Our Assessment and Systems Librarians have also run circulation reports on the book collection, so we can tell what call numbers (subjects) have been getting use.

For instance, our book and journal data showed us that the physics collection (QB, QC) was being underutilized per the cost of their titles. This gave a basis for us to initiate

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ing the library get sorted by acquisitions staff according to the following criteria: Because our faculty need the video materials they order for their teaching, any video title requested by a faculty member gets priority cataloging. Because we often get a short interval between the time a request is made by faculty and the time they need to use the item, priority cataloging sometimes becomes "rush" cataloging. In rare cases, it becomes "slapping a barcode on it so it can be checked out immediately and worrying about cataloging when the item is returned". Anything that I order as a matter of collection development takes less priority

(though I do sometimes bump a DVD or two into the priority pile if I know people will be wanting to use it), and gifts and freebies go to the bottom of the heap.

Relying on existing **OCLC** records for cataloging as much as possible; making minimal local modifications to those records; having an efficient, experienced acquisitions and cataloging staff and student workers who enjoy ripping shrink wrap off of DVDs means that all new materials get processed quickly and no backlog stacks up. Every day or so, I go through all of the new DVDs and notify faculty personally if items they requested are ready to check out, and every week, I post a list of all new DVDs to the library Website. And then I go back to buying more DVDs. 🐗

And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — 8th Annual Mid-South E-Resource Symposium

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8th Annual Mid-South E-Resource Symposium, "Play Your Cards Right" — Mississippi State University Libraries, Mitchell Memorial Library, Starkville, MS, August 8, 2008.

Reported by **Cris Ferguson** (Electronic Resources/Serials Librarian, James B. Duke Library, Furman University) <cris.ferguson@furman.edu>

a conversation with the Physics-Astronomy Department. Why are they not using the collection? What resources do they need instead?

While having complete runs of series is preferred, we discovered that too many series had parts that were never used. Cancelling low use standing orders and unblocking the series within our approval profile has allowed the selectors to purchase only the most relevant titles.

When we moved into our new library ten years ago, we created a very pleasant newspaper reading room to accommodate the heavy usage that we had in the old library. Today the paper usage has plummeted. Our holdings have decreased to a few local and popular dailies as the Internet has replaced the paper newspaper.

2) Have a list of possible cancellations in advance. Since many of the teaching faculty are not readily available during the spring or summer, it is essential to discuss the possibilities earlier in the year (though email has made it easier to stay in touch). While paper journals have been an obvious target, we have also reviewed and cancelled databases. The cost of interlibrary loan versus ownership should be considered.

3) Wish lists. While we have been able to support most of our faculty's individual book requests, we have not always had the funds to initiate the annual expense of journal subscriptions or electronic resources. Separate databases have been created for these formats. We ask that the faculty prioritize their requests. This allows us to add titles as additional money becomes available. Past interlibrary loan requests is almost always required before a new subscription is considered.

4) Keep with the new technologies/trends in the profession. It is important to periodically check to see if your vendors are giving you the best possible financial deal by comparing the rates of their competition, either formally with a **RFP** (if required by your state) or informally via sales visits. Is it time to outsource functions of technical services?

Having a tighter budget does have a positive side: it has forced us to become better managers of our library's resources. Anyone can spend money; only the creative can manage it successfully and keep your clientele happy.

Here's hoping that your budget news was good this year and may your favorite football team have a successful season. 🌿

On August 8, 2008, **Mississippi State University Libraries** hosted the *8th Annual Mid-South E-Resource Symposium* at **Mitchell Memorial Library** in Starkville, MS. The theme of this year's program was *"Play Your Cards Right."* Drawing on the fact that this 8th annual symposium took place on 8-8-08, images of four playing cards with the number 8 on them peppered the program. Sponsored by the **Mississippi State University Libraries**, **EBSCO Information Services**, **Serials Solutions**, and the **North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG)**, there were 100 people in attendance at this year's symposium. The day-long workshop featured four speakers, each from a different walk of librarianship.

Jane Burke, Vice President and General Manager of **Serials Solutions**, gave a stirring, if somewhat unsettling, presentation on how the traditional library OPAC is headed towards extinction. Entitled "The OPAC is Dead; Managing the Virtual Library," her presentation emphasized the need for libraries to think both critically and creatively about the services they provide. Library collections are no longer destinations; libraries need to imbed their services where students are, such as in university courseware and in **Google**. **Burke** stressed that librarians should align their priorities and behavior with their reality. If the majority of the library budget goes toward electronic materials, then the majority of the library's manpower should go towards providing access to those electronic materials. **Burke** sums it up with this statement, "You can do anything, but you can't do everything." We need to carefully identify what our priorities are and make sure that the majority of our efforts are going towards those priorities.

In his presentation, "Publishers, Agents, Users and Libraries: Coming of Age in the E-World," **Dan Tonkery**, Vice President of Business Development at **EBSCO Information Services**, outlined the hand that has been dealt to each of the players (publishers, agents, users, and libraries) in the game of electronic resources. Ultimately, the users are the big winners in this game. The electronic content available to them is increasing exponentially, and there are a plethora of tools for searching and mining these electronic resources. Publishers are also fairing well; they are taking print content, repackaging it in an electronic format, and reselling it to libraries. (They are getting additional revenue without producing additional content.) Libraries are in a more difficult position. Users expect online access to everything they want and need, but they often don't understand the cost libraries incur to provide electronic access. In addition, **Tonkery** pointed out, many libraries are stuck with staff and workflows that are primarily geared toward supporting their print resources. According to **Tonkery**, the agents have drawn the Dead Man's Hand in this game. Agents have to adjust their own print-oriented workflows to adapt to electronic resources. The role of the agent is changing as libraries require assistance with authentication and registration of electronic resources.

Maria Collins, Associate Head of Acquisitions at **North Carolina State University Libraries**, spoke on the evolution of workflows within libraries. Her presentation "Evolving Workflows: Knowing when to Hold'em, Knowing when to Fold'em" outlined four phases for adapting workflows for the management and administration of electronic resources. First, she emphasized the importance of good planning prior to implementing any changes. She says, "Don't implement for implementations sake — understand what you will gain and what you have to give." The second phase, after planning, is the creation of efficient workflow strategies and processes through careful evaluation. **Collins'** third phase is the adjustment of staffing and other resources to accommodate the workflow. Lastly, she recommends the use of electronic resource management and communication tools, such as A-Z lists, link resolvers, ERMS, and MARC record services.

The last presentation of the day was "Promoting and Marketing E-Resources" by **Emily Alford**, Reference and Technology Librarian at **Michigan State University Libraries**. **Alford** highlighted a number of eye-catching ad campaigns, and encouraged librarians to think creatively when advertising their services. She emphasized the importance of branding library services to make sure that users know when a resource they are using has been paid for by the library.

A common theme across all of the presentations is the fact that many libraries have not been able to adjust their workflows as quickly as they have adjusted their purchasing habits. While libraries have been spending more money on electronic resources, many of the workflows within the library are still focused on print resources. Some suggestions that were made to improve workflow include eliminating check-in of print journals, ceasing the binding of print journals, cancellation of print sub-