

The Evolving Reference Collection: Examining Turbulent Waters

Kathleen McGraw, Information Services Coordinator ■ Diane McKenzie, Collection Development Librarian ■ Barrie Hayes, Systems Development Librarian

Health Sciences Library ■ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Electronic, Print, or Both?

Making Choices When the Budget is Shrinking: Our Process

We started with the Standing Order List and searched for electronic versions. The following checklist evolved as we made title-by-title decisions:

- ✓ Compare cost of each format (electronic may be free!)
- ✓ Arrange for trial access before purchasing an electronic product
- ✓ Consider both user and librarian demand for a particular format
- ✓ Test ease and speed of use of electronic vs. print
- ✓ Compare ability to search and to browse for information
- ✓ Compare currency of the information in each format
- ✓ Consider labor involved in print loose leaf services
- ✓ Monitor use of print titles with electronic versions. Stop purchasing those that are seldom used, except for titles with archival value
- ✓ Evaluate the archival value of print in your collection

Examples

Textbook Aggregators



Action:

- Expand titles in STAT!Ref
- Do not renew MDConsult
- Monitor use of print textbooks and review print purchase decision in one year

Decision criteria:

- STAT!Ref allows customization through the selection of particular titles
- MDConsult price increased dramatically at renewal with no ability to control content

Directory of Physicians in the United States



Action: Keep print

Decision criteria:

- Free online access
- But, print provides archival value

Facts and Comparisons



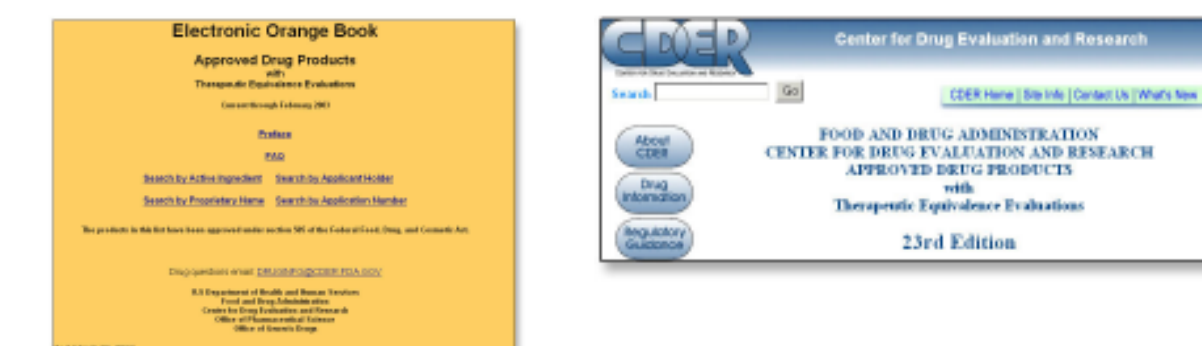
Action:

- Negotiating purchase of e-Facts
- Will cancel print

Decision criteria:

- No more filing updates!
- No archival content

Approved Drug Products with Therapeutic Equivalence Evaluations



Action: Cancel print

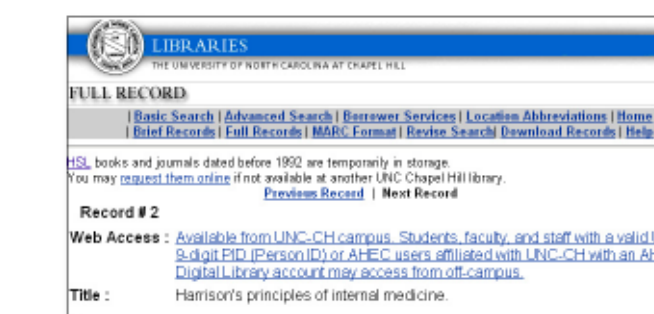
Decision criteria:

- Free online access
- Content offers little archival value

Providing Access

Integrating online resources into the collection

- Clearly label Reference volumes that are replaced or duplicated with electronic content. We decided to use a neon yellow label that says: "Content Available in Electronic Format."
- Keep the last volume of an item replaced by an electronic version in Reference to help in the transition to electronic only content.
- Link to the electronic version from the libraries' web catalog.



- Provide access to electronic titles through our new E-books list on UNCLE, HSL's database of electronic materials. Our current catalog cannot generate this list.

