SERIALS CANCELLATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF PROCESSES, CRITERIA,
AND DECISION MAKING TOOLS

by
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University libraries have struggled with rising serial costs and stagnant or falling budgets for decades. In response to this situation, librarians have conducted periodic serials cancellation projects. In 2002, the Academic Affairs Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill completed a serials review project to identify 10% of its serials and standing order budget for cutbacks. This case study, based on a series of interviews with selectors involved in this project, seeks to identify and analyze the processes, the criteria, and the tools that they used in their decision-making and to learn whether the presence of electronic resources affected these decisions. Selectors were found to use a variety of processes, criteria, and tools to make decisions mainly based on their current circumstances, the constraints of their particular collections and disciplines, and the larger university, consortial, and publishing environment, and to a lesser extent, cost and electronic access.

Headings:

      College and university libraries/Case studies

      College and university libraries/Collection development

      College and university libraries/Serial publications

      Serial publications/Administration

      Serial publications/Case studies

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Introduction

For more than 30 years, university libraries have been pressured by rising costs and tight budgets to cancel serials on a regular basis. The methods used to make decisions regarding cancellations have been well documented in the literature, but the circumstances under which these projects are carried out have changed over time. For example, advances in technology have affected the tools that librarians use to make cancellation decisions, the ways in which serial publications are delivered, and the pricing models used by publishers. The Academic Affairs Libraries (AAL) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) completed such a project most recently in Spring 2002 when it identified 10% of its serials funds – both subscriptions and standing orders – for cancellation. While there have been numerous studies about serials cancellation projects in the past, the changing climate of scholarly publishing, including the advent of electronic journals and the use of multi-title contracts that contain cancellation prohibitions, and new serials management tools, including the use of serials tracking systems, means that effective decisions about serials cancellations cannot necessarily be made using past models alone.

Studying this most recent cancellation project at UNC-Chapel Hill more closely can provide information about how selectors made their decisions, how

they used the information available to them, which tools they found effective, how cancellation projects have changed over time, and how the changing climate of scholarly publishing may have affected their cancellation decisions. Finding answers to these questions is important. As serials costs continue to rise, as publishers continue to develop different pricing schemes, and as library budgets remain flat or decrease, librarians will continue to be forced to conduct cancellation projects and will need to have effective tools and procedures in place to make these increasingly difficult decisions.

The purpose of this case study, which reports on a series of interviews with technical services staff who were involved in the cancellation project and the professional librarians who acted as selectors in the project, is to explore their decision-making processes, to determine the criteria that they used to make those decisions, to determine how they used the tools and information available to them to make decisions regarding specific title cancellations, and to understand how the larger scholarly publishing and pricing environment may have affected their decisions. It seeks to provide a snapshot of serials cancellations in the current academic environment and attempts to draw some conclusions about the influence, if any, that these tools and circumstances may have had on selector decisions.

Literature Review

The literature on the topic of serials cancellations is considerable, and the depth of the literature reflects the inflationary history of serials. Because of the extent of literature available, this review is selective rather than exhaustive. To give an idea of how much has been written on this subject, in 1996, Altmann and Gorman gathered enough information to publish a selective literature review focused on only three common cancellation criteria: usage, citation analysis, and cost (Altmann and Gorman 1996). The articles chosen for this study are ones that were found relevant to the particular situation at UNC-Chapel Hill. They include case studies dating back to the 1970s, articles on cancellation criteria in general, and articles on specific aspects of cancellation projects such as faculty involvement, cost, data management tools, and the influence of electronic resources on the serials environment.

As far back as 1977, librarians have referred to decade-long, steady price increases in serials that could not successfully be absorbed by increased budgets, but required systematic cancellations as well (Swartz 1977). Long term serials review and cancellation projects at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Swartz 1977), Georgia Tech (Williamson 1985), the University of Arizona (Tallman and Leach 1989, and Bosch and Simons 1996), and

Appalachian State University (Wise 1993) are but a few of the published case studies. While these studies reported on long-term projects, UNC-Chapel Hill's project took only a few months to complete. However, the university has undergone numerous cancellation projects over the last decade creating, in effect, a long-term history of cancellations. Further, the criteria that these studies used were similar to the criteria applied by selectors at UNC-Chapel Hill: duplication, usage, cost, and relevance, to name a few.

One of these case studies dealt with the decision-making process with respect to two specific chemistry handbooks (Knee 1992). This article considered cancellation criteria such as providing only electronic access to the resource and relying on regional holdings, two criteria also considered by some of the selectors at UNC-Chapel Hill. A workshop report of a cancellation project at Georgia State University (Munroe, Drummond and Mosby 1994) revealed a serials ranking process very similar to one sometimes used at UNC-Chapel where titles are ranked on a 1-3 scale.

A number of articles addressed journal cancellations from a broader perspective through the use of surveys and questionnaires. A 1986 survey found that in 1981 and 1982, 69% of the responding libraries had experienced cancellations (Blake 1986). A 1990 survey of fourteen schools in the Big Eight and Big Ten Conferences revealed that ten were planning cancellation projects (Harrington and Grice 1992). This survey also indicated that some of the cancellation criteria that the libraries used included use statistics gathered in a number of different ways, cost studies, and faculty involvement. Zappen (1995)

distilled her experiences with multiple cancellation projects into the "Ten Commandments of Serials Cancellations," again mentioning the importance of use studies, faculty involvement and communication, as well as using departmentally focused journal lists. Likewise, Metz (1992) offers a list of thirteen steps to a successful serials cancellation. Chrzastowski and Schmidt (1993, 1996, 1997) have reported on a number of surveys dealing with the effects of serials cancellations on academic libraries noting most significantly that many collections have canceled unique titles leading to a greater degree of duplication between collections at research libraries. While a number of these articles are older, they recommend selection criteria that are still valid and were utilized by the selectors at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Along with articles that provide global views of serials cancellation projects, many also focused on the importance of one or another aspect of the decision-making process. Sapp and Watson (1989) placed a premium on librarian-faculty relations in the cancellation process, as does Neame (1986). Faculty involvement has also been the subject of articles about best practices in library administration (Rogers 2002) and even the psychological effects of cancellations (Birdsall 1998). Madison (1999) relates the effect that a 14% serials budget reduction had on the faculty at Iowa State University (ISU). The extent of the cut mobilized ISU's faculty to appoint a committee to study the crisis in scholarly communication and to issue a report that included such recommendations as rewriting tenure and promotion policies, actively participating in and supporting alternative publishing venues such as the

Association of Research Libraries' SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), and building a nationally recognized digital library. Barstow (1992), in a study of cancellations at the University of Wyoming, emphasized the importance of both faculty involvement and the development of a database to track the process.

As a contrast to faculty involvement, some of the literature emphasizes the importance of journal costs in cancellation projects. Again, the volume of literature on serials costs is enormous, especially with respect to what has been referred to for many years as the serials crisis. Cost containment has been the major impetus for serials cancellation projects for decades (Richards and Prelec 1992). One example of a library's response to rising costs has been Louisiana State University, which went as far as "starting over" with its serials collection by redesigning it in response to rising costs (Hamaker 1994, and Bensman and Wilder 1998). High cost, however, has not been found to necessarily equate to high use. Schoch (1994) found no correlation between journal cost and citation frequency, but did find a high correlation between cost and publisher type. McKinzie and Godolphin (2001) debated this cost vs. quality issues with respect the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* when it was acquired by Elsevier. In a conference summary report, Hawks (1992) offers an upside to serials cancellations: the opportunity for continuing collection assessment. However, the majority of the literature on serials cancellations and costs echoes Martin (1992) who warned a decade ago of the long-term negative consequences to academic library serials collections of rising journal costs.

Another focus of the literature on serials cancellation projects is the development of technical tools to assist librarians in their decision-making. Librarians have developed and utilized a number of different tools to both streamline cancellations and provide objective data to justify cancellation decisions. From the simple – the design of effective use studies (Herzog and Armistead 1994) – to the complex – the design of a "valuative instrument for decision-making" (Schoch and Abels 1994) – deciding the fairest, most effective and most efficient criteria for cancellation has challenged librarians. Schoch and Abels (1994) identify a list of nine major factors that can provide data to justify cancellation decisions: cost, divided into four subcategories such as per subscription or per article; citedness, including Journal Impact Factor, a measure of the frequency with articles are cited (ISI Web of Knowledge 2003) and citations by department; authority, such as publisher or the composition of the editorial board; currency; language; physical characteristics; indexing; use; and availability. Many of these factors were considered at UNC-Chapel Hill as well, though not necessarily in such a formalized methodology.

Other articles emphasize how to make use of technology in serials cancellation projects. Degener and Waite (1991) created a list of weighted criteria that could be stored digitally in the library's automated serials control system. Burgard (1999) provides an overview of how libraries can create new information tools for serials management using technological advances such as the World Wide Web. Enssle and Wilde (2002) describe how to merge use data gathered internally with commercial statistics such as Journal Impact Factors and

Local Journal Use Reports. Finally, Nixon (2000) reports on how the
Management and Economics Library at Purdue used a Microsoft Access
database to aid in its cancellation project. Again, selectors at UNC-Chapel Hill
used these types of tools to varying degrees.

A final and newer aspect of the serials cancellation literature is the
growing focus on electronic resources and how their presence affects serials
management. As far back as 1992, Abbott presented the scenario of less
expensive electronic only access as a possible alternative to ever-rising serial
prices. Davis (1997) examined the evolution of selection activities, outlining a
number of criteria unique to the acquisition of electronic resources. These
criteria, especially ones such as licensing and contractual obligations and
archiving, are ones that are relevant to cancellation projects as well. Tenopir
(1999) outlined a continuum of what constitutes electronic resources and how
these variations should affect decisions to cancel print resources in favor of their
electronic counterparts. Rupp-Serano, Robbins and Cain (2002) offered
decision-making guidelines to librarians considering canceling print resources in
favor of electronic. They mentioned the unique aspects of electronic resources
that must be taken into consideration such as licensing, accessibility, archiving,
provider reliability, aggregator duplication, consortial arrangements, relevance to
the discipline/curriculum, faculty input, institutional commitment, subject matter,
user preference and technological considerations, among others.

Sprague and Chambers (2000) conducted a study that found canceling
print subscriptions in favor of full-text databases was a risky venture due to

differences in timeliness, coverage, graphics quality, and content. Further, Henebry and Safley (2002), in relating their experience at the University of Texas at Dallas, echoed both Tenopir and Sprague and Chambers in their conclusion that the timeliness, graphics quality, and content of electronic resources are not yet equivalent to their print counterparts. Jaguszewski and Probst (2000) offered one of the few case studies that related the influence that electronic resources had on serials cancellation decisions. In addition to traditional cancellation criteria such as use, cost, coverage in databases and indexes, availability, duplication, and subject coverage/peer review/relevance to the collection, they present three additional criteria that librarians should consider before canceling electronic resources: competition among vendors, consortial arrangements, and archiving options. Gyeszly (2001) found that while users were satisfied with electronic only journal access, the low quality of use statistics provided by publishers and contractual obligations mitigated against the possibility of libraries generally canceling print subscriptions in favor of electronic access.

As shown by this literature review, serials cancellation projects are complex and varied, and have only grown more so with the introduction of electronic resources. Selection criteria vary from library to library, and from project to project, and review projects vary in time, scope, and focus leading one to conclude that deselection decisions are some of the most complex that librarians are called on to make. The serials review project at UNC-Chapel Hill was no different. The librarians who participated in the project that is the subject

of this study confronted many of the issues summarized in the literature above,

and this project too reflected the ubiquitous complexity of the serials world.

Background

UNC-Chapel Hill's Academic Affairs Libraries (AAL) are divided into the main library, Walter Royal Davis Library (Main), the House Undergraduate Library, thirteen departmental libraries, and various special collections all housed in a number of buildings around the campus. In addition, the University has a Law Library and a Health Sciences Library that are administered separately from the AAL. Subject bibliographers, working in conjunction with academic department book chairs and book committees, manage the collections that are held at the Main Library. Some of these disciplines include the humanities, social sciences, and area studies. Departmental librarians, who have administrative and professional responsibilities in addition to their collection development responsibilities, manage the collections held in their respective departmental libraries. Thus, process for completing this serials cancellation project differed by discipline, based on the organizational structure of the library system and whether the collection in question is managed by a bibliographer or by a departmental librarian.

The AAL have completed a number of serials cancellations within the last twenty years, with the 2002 serials review project being the most recent. Traditionally, collection management decisions had been made using a five-point

scale ranging from 1 (essential), 2 (important), 3 (useful), 4 (marginal), and 5 (held elsewhere). One result of past cancellations is that the AAL no longer collect any materials – serial or monographic – that are considered 4 (marginal) or 5 (held elsewhere). Further, most of the serials rated 3 (useful) have also been canceled in previous projects. A number of the departmental librarians also reported using this type of scale to aid their collection management decisions; however, no one reported using a scale more extensive than a 1-3 rating.

For this particular project, selectors were initially mandated to target for cancellation 10% of their serials and standing order budgets. These cuts were proposed as voluntary, with the understanding that they could have become mandatory if university and library administrators found it necessary to do so based on the state's budget. The library's policies concerning serials acquisitions are somewhat complex. Serials are assigned specific fund codes that correspond to the relevant academic program. These funds are not flexible, and in the past, librarians were allocated a balance at the beginning of each fiscal year (FY) with which they could purchase new serials. This balance usually included unused funds carried over from the previous year plus an upward adjustment for inflation.

In FY 2002, these funds were frozen and not passed on to the librarians for new serials acquisitions. However, librarians did receive a 100% credit for funds freed by voluntary serials cancellations. Since the librarians did not receive any carryover funds in FY 2002 the only way in which they could add new titles to their collections was through the voluntary cancellations of titles.

This situation encouraged two types of decisions by the selectors: some canceled many or all of the titles they identified so that they could use the funds for new purchases, while others decided not cancel any titles since they had no guarantee that they would be credited with unused funds at the end of FY 2002. Which titles and how choices were made was to a large degree at the selectors' discretion.

Selectors had at their disposal an Access database first developed in 1998 by the AAL's Acquisitions Department. The database covered over 18,000 titles. It was created with shortcuts to each department's list of serials and was accessible to all the selectors via the library system's network. With this arrangement, selectors could access their own lists to query and to input information, and they could also access the lists of other departments to view their selections. They could also use this database to create reports, which sorted their journal collections by title, cost, and publisher. The database also provided information about whether or not the journal was related to other titles; for example, if it was part of a multi-year contract with cancellation caps or was tied to its electronic version.

The Collection Development Department used the database to create Excel spreadsheets to aid its faculty book chairs and book committees who might not have been familiar with or comfortable using databases. Collection Development provided the following column headings in its spreadsheets: title, cost, publisher, call number, historical ranking number (1-3), a blank column in which they could enter the order in which titles should be canceled, and a notes

column that was used extensively. Both the selectors and the Acquisitions

Department used the database to assist them in completing the project. Thus

there was much more information in the database than was made available to

selectors. For example, the Acquisitions Department needed MARC records and

payment information to complete the cancellation process. This type of

information was irrelevant to selectors and was suppressed in the forms that

were available to selectors.

Selectors could view their serial lists either using the database or the

spreadsheets. Once selectors made their cancellation decisions they either

returned the spreadsheets to Collection Development for entry into the database

or entered the information themselves into the database. These cancellation lists

were then available to other selectors who could compare their lists with the lists

of all the other selectors.

UNC-Chapel Hill is also a member of the Triangle Research Libraries

Network (TRLN), a consortium consisting of the libraries at UNC-Chapel Hill,

Duke University and North Carolina Central University in Durham and North

Carolina State University in Raleigh. These institutions are located within thirty

miles of each other, making their collections fairly accessible geographically, and

they have jointly negotiated licenses for a number of large contracts for access to

electronic resources for the member institutions. The consortium generally seeks

to enhance cooperation among its members.

In addition to these consortial contracts for electronic resources, which

bundle together large numbers of print with electronic journals and electronic only

journals, serials may be related to one another as part of print only sets, single

print titles with online counterparts that are delivered as a package, and

electronic only title packages. This variety of relatedness also has a variety of

consequences if related titles are canceled. For example, large contracts may

contain prohibitive cancellation caps that must be taken into consideration, or

canceling a print title that has an electronic counterpart may result in losing the

electronic version of the title as well. The Access database did not distinguish

between this variety of relatedness or the variety of possible consequences for

canceling these titles, but it did contain a field that showed whether a title was

related to another in some way.

A final note regarding the larger publishing environment has to do with

measurements used by selectors that they did not develop locally. Selectors had

available to them information regarding the relative importance of particular

journals and the use of particular titles by their faculty through Journal Impact

Factors and Journal Use Studies developed by a database provider. Journal

Impact Factors are a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in

a journal has been cited in a particular year. It was developed to evaluate a

journal's relative importance, especially compared to others in the same field.

The impact factor is calculated by dividing the number of current citations to

articles published in the two previous years by the total number of articles

published in the two previous years (ISI Web of Knowledge 2003). Journal Use

Studies analyze the journals actually cited by a university's faculty in their

published work.

Thus, the AAL's 2002 serials cancellation review project took place in an environment where some selectors had participated in at least three previous cancellation projects, where the collection management system is relatively decentralized and complex, but where acquisitions is centralized, where the budget situation is uncertain, where there exist a number of alternatives for library resources for some disciplines, and where information important to cancellation decisions is collected both locally and globally.

Methodology

The methodology for this study was very straightforward. The investigator, with the help of librarians in the AAL's Acquisitions Department, identified librarians – both departmental librarians and bibliographers – who acted as selectors for the project. Fifteen of these librarians were contacted, and eleven agreed to participate. Two of those contacted were not directly involved in the project, and therefore were not interviewed, and two selectors did not respond to the request. The investigator also identified two paraprofessional staff members who were instrumental in providing data management support to the project. Of these thirteen who were interviewed, six were men and seven, women. However, the feminine pronoun is used throughout the paper as an aid to maintaining the anonymity of the selectors.

These selectors and staff members were contacted by email and asked to participate in the study by agreeing to be interviewed concerning the project. Appointments for selector who agreed to participate were then set up and took place in each selector's or staff member's office. The interviews were tape-recorded. Thirteen interviews were conducted with two technical services staff members, two bibliographers, and nine departmental librarians.

The interviews ran from about twenty minutes to an hour and were more conversational in nature than highly structured. Given that the serials review project took place ten months prior to the interviews, some selectors remembered the circumstances of the project in more detail than others, which resulted in the differing lengths of the interviews. The interview questions were loosely structured and open-ended so that selectors could tailor their answers based on their particular circumstances and experiences. This interview style also allowed for the selectors to provide supplementary information about their decisions and their situations that a more structured format may not have been able to elicit.

There were a number of topics that were covered in each interview regardless of how many and what specific questions were asked. These topics included the possible influence that the presence of electronic resources and the possible influence that their knowledge of which serials were related to others had on their decisions, the extent to and manner in which selectors communicated with faculty members and any other stakeholders outside their departments, and the extent to and manner in which the selectors made use of the database provided by the AAL's Acquisitions Department.

The notes from each interview were rewritten shortly after each interview was completed, and the tapes of the interviews were used as reference tools when the notes required clarification. These notes form the basis of the Findings section below and their analysis, the Discussion section. The interviews with the technical staff members were somewhat briefer and provided some of the

background information about the project and about the serials management

database provided to the selectors by the Acquisitions Department.

Findings

Each interview began by asking the selector to describe the process they followed to compile the cancellation list they forwarded to Acquisitions. The investigator then asked follow up questions as necessary to clarify and expand responses. The responses of each selector are summarized below using the following structure: (1) a brief discussion of the review process and/or the criteria that the selector used to make decisions; (2) the type and degree of faculty involvement in the decision; (3) other influences on the decisions; (4) whether and how the selector used the database provided by Acquisitions; (5) whether the selector actually canceled any of the identified titles; and (6) other comments and observations made by the selector.

<u>Selector A</u>

This selector served as the facilitator for a group of professional librarians to create her collection's cancellation list. Despite individual subject specializations, each member of this group evaluated the complete list of titles for which the group was responsible, and which ranged across their specializations. These librarians held a number of meetings to determine the final cancellation list, and all participants had access to all subject lists and input into all decisions.

The criteria that this group used to make its decisions were the value of the title based on professional experience, low use, again based on experience, the relevance of a title to the collection and whether the information found in the title was available in an alternative resource, but not necessarily a duplicate resource in an alternate format. Cost was a consideration in the decision-making, but at a lower priority than the above criteria. Since many of the decisions were based on professional experience, and since this collection does not maintain use statistics for its print collection, input from the entire group was especially important. Some of the cancellation decisions for this group went quickly – that is, there were titles that were either deemed a definite cancellation or not, while other titles proved to be more problematic and were discussed at length.

Once the cancellation list was decided, this group posted the list on the Web for faculty review. Members of the group also consulted with faculty members on a number of specific titles, but did not rely heavily on faculty input for their decisions. The holdings of other libraries in the consortium did not influence the cancellation decisions of this group of selectors; however, this group did check the holdings of other libraries on campus to ensure they did not cancel the final copy of any title currently available. The group did not encounter any problems rank ordering their list, despite the fact that the group is responsible for several widely varying disciplines. The cancellation list was ranked within the department on the one through three-point scale, and the entire group felt comfortable with where individual titles fell within this scale.

With respect to electronic resources, the selector observed, that generally speaking, once a resource is available electronically, its print version becomes a low use item. Further, in this collection, preserving a print copy of a resource is secondary to user preferences. The cancellations for this department did include some electronic resources in the form of CD-ROMs since this format provides only limited access to patrons. Further, some print titles were canceled in favor of their electronic counterparts, especially since for some resources the electronic versions have become the preferred format. This department, despite the voluntary nature of the cancellation, decided to cancel about 57% of its targeted budget to have the ability to add a few new titles to the collection.

This selector and her group used the database provided by Acquisitions only minimally. She used it to retrieve the initial list of current serials and standing orders for her department, and then migrated this list to a spreadsheet for her group to use in their decision-making. She also used the list to mark titles for cancellation taking advantage of the running total feature built into the database. Finally, the selector used the database to note any duplicate cancellations.

This selector has had experience with at least two other forced cancellation projects, including one in which the goal of the cancellation was to weed out print resources for which the library had reliable electronic alternatives. Given her past experience, she was satisfied with the cancellation list her group forwarded to Acquisitions. Further, this selector thought that serial review projects should be undertaken on a regular basis, regardless of whether or not

budget realities make them mandatory, since they keep collections relevant to faculty, programs, and patrons.

Selector B

The selector in this library identified duplication as the major criterion in her decision-making. The selector prioritized her journals according to three criteria: those duplicated at other libraries on campus, those with high cost, and those with low use. This library allows its journals to circulate and has struggled with space constraints for years and has, as a result, extensive use statistics on which to rely. She then compared her consideration list with those of other selectors whose libraries held duplicate titles to determine which titles were used the most at each library. The other libraries whose holdings she checked for usage have developed an informal group, which has collaborated in its collection management for a number of years. In this way, the last copy of a duplicate title would continue to be held at the library that used it the most. This selector also used an ISI Journal Utilization Study, which reports what journals her faculty have cited in their papers as an aid to identifying subscriptions that should not be canceled.

Once relative usage was determined, the selector created a consideration list and circulated it to her department for faculty comment. Faculty freely shared their priorities concerning the titles on the list, and the selector based her final decisions on this feedback. The faculty members of this department were highly supportive of this decision-making process. The selector reported that they have

a good understanding of the necessity of cancellations, and supported the efforts of libraries in this informal group to maintain the strength of the collection across the group instead of focusing on each particular departmental collection.

Since this selector consulted closely with other selectors on campus, she did not closely consult with the consortium. This selector reported that some efforts have been made in the past to work more closely with colleagues in the consortium, but that these efforts had not developed into any type of long-lasting cooperative collection management effort.

This selector did take into consideration some of the issues involved in today's serials climate. She did consider canceling some titles that were part of multi-year contracts and/or had electronic only alternatives. However, none of the titles on her final list were tied to prohibitive contracts. This may be due to the fact that so many of the titles in her core collection are those that are part of these contracts.   Moreover, she did cancel one print title in favor of an electronic only version. With the high degree of collaboration between this library and others on campus, a growing number of titles important to this department are in reality available to the department in an electronic only format since their print counterpart reside in libraries elsewhere on campus.

While this selector was satisfied with her cancellation list and very satisfied with the degree of collaboration both between librarians and with her faculty, she reported that further cancellations would be harmful to her collection. She and the librarians in her group already rely on each other to shore up one another's collections to guarantee that at least one copy of a core journal is

maintained in the library system. Further, this selector took advantage of the voluntary nature of this project to cancel some of the titles on her list to make room for new titles identified as important by her faculty. Finally, she did not use the database in any meaningful way beyond creating the rank order list to send to Acquisitions for further processing.

Selector C

This selector used a set of criteria very similar to that of Interview B and was part of the larger group of collaborating libraries mentioned above. This selector also focused first and foremost on minimizing duplication among the subset of the departmental libraries, then considering online access to the resource and finally, looking closely at use statistics. Again, in a manner similar to Selector B and other departmental libraries, use statistics have been compiled at this library for decades. After applying this set of criteria to the complete list of both serials and standing orders provided by Acquisitions, the selector created a consideration list for her faculty members. The faculty members of this department are and have been highly involved in serials cancellation decisions and have expressed a long-term commitment to the collection. The selector believed that their responses to the consideration list were made with a great deal of thought and care. This selector noted that there are differing levels of review. Since selectors knew that this cancellation project was voluntary, this selector sent her consideration list only to the department's library committee; if

the cancellation had been mandatory, this list would have been sent to the entire faculty for their feedback.

This library, as one of the group of campus libraries that collaborate closely in their collection management, treats its separate collections as part of a single large collection and actively seeks to minimize duplication and to coordinate projects such as this one, as well as sometimes shares costs for those electronic resources that are essential to more than one department. This selector also surveyed recent cancellations in the consortium's other libraries to ensure that she did not cancel any title that was the last copy in the area. Other factors that this selector took into consideration, but which did not affect any final decisions were journals that were part of contracts, and the availability of electronic versions in lieu of print. This selector also took into consideration the issue of access (via inter-library loan) versus ownership, as well as mentioning that cost was considered an indirect and minimal factor in her decision-making. The selector did not use the database provided by Acquisitions as an aid to her decision-making.

This selector noted that her discipline has changed dramatically in the last twenty years and that her collection has had to reflect this change. This situation has been an ongoing challenge in her discipline. This selector also observed that this cancellation project cut very close to her core collection; however, she believed that as a responsible member of the university community, it was necessary to cancel the titles she had identified.

<u>Selector D</u>

For this selector, use statistics were the most important criterion in her decision-making. Journals in this library circulate for two hours at a time, and this circulation data from the OPAC, along with data found on circulation cards in the bound journals, provide many years worth of use statistics on which to base cancellation decisions. This selector also took into account use statistics of electronic journals made available by the Main Library. After gathering these use statistics, she then factored the cost, the reputation of the publisher, and the subject matter of the journal into her decisions. In examining cost, the selector did specifically target titles that were part of large, expensive, commercial packages. This focus was mainly due to their high cost and not necessarily because they were part of a package. For example, she examined cost per page viewed of one publisher's electronic journal titles. Some of these titles were then given a higher priority for cancellation than less expensive titles. In examining subject matter, this selector found a number of journals pertaining to a sub-discipline either no longer being taught in her department or those of minor importance to the department, so journals pertinent to these subject areas were added to the cancellation list.

She also examined the holdings of the libraries in the consortium to check for duplicated titles. This proved to be a painstaking process as there were no readily available lists of TRLN library holdings in her discipline. Duplicated titles were more likely to be added to the cancellation list. From these criteria, she created an overly inclusive consideration list that she circulated to her faculty for

their input. She asked her faculty to divide the titles on this list into three groups: those that could be canceled, those that were questionable candidates for cancellation, and those that should not be canceled.

Electronic availability was of minor importance to this selector, but one cancellation was made based on the fact that an electronic version was available. This selector was concerned about the growing homogeneity of collections since it is the smaller and more specialized journals that are more likely to be canceled due to low use. Further, she, like Selector H, found it easier to add foreign journals to her cancellation list. This selector used the database more extensively than the three prior selectors to sort titles and to send the consideration list to her faculty members. She also used the database to juggle some titles in and out of the list to hit her final target. At the end of the project, this selector was satisfied with the list she sent to Acquisitions. She felt that her department had not yet been adversely affected by serials cancellations and that there was still some leeway for further cuts if necessary. One way that her collection is unique is that journals in this collection retain their usefulness over a long time period.

Selector E

This selector primarily used a combination of Journal Impact Factors and users statistics to compile her cancellation list. Like many of the departmental librarians at UNC-Chapel Hill, this selector has many years worth of use statistics available to aid her decisions. Each journal that had an Impact Factor of less

than one was automatically added to her cancellation list. Titles were also weighted with respect to their use, both print and electronic. Once these objective factors were applied to the list, the selector used her professional experience to finalize a consideration list. She has an educational background in one of the disciplines for which her library is responsible and has made a conscious effort to maintain an awareness of the research interests of the faculty members in the other disciplines served by her collection.

She then divided this list by discipline and sent the lists, along with a detailed explanation of her criteria and of how to interpret Journal Impact Factors, to the faculty members of her departments. Along with the consideration list, she also forwarded the complete journal lists to the departments so that they would have accurate information about the canceled titles in relation to the larger collection. She received a response from her entire faculty for this project. This has not always been the case, and had she not received a response from some faculty members, she would have assumed that her decisions were acceptable and canceled the titles in question without further discussion. If a faculty member considered a title important, even though its Impact Factor was less than one, the selector did not cancel the title. However, this occurred in only a few cases.

Some other considerations that this selector took into account were the availability of a title within the consortium. She did not cancel any title that was the last copy in the consortium. She also coordinated her cancellation list with a number of the other departmental libraries to avoid both duplication and canceling the final copy on campus. She did not consider canceling any print

journals in favor of electronic only versions for this project, but has already begun

created an electronic-only environment for a number of her library's disciplines by

storing their print journals that have electronic versions. This decision, made with

the approval of the faculty in the affected disciplines, is in anticipation of a time

when the library may have to opt for a single electronic copy of a title.

This selector also considered and canceled some electronic resources

including little used databases and a CD-ROM product that had a Web-based

version available. She considered and decided to cancel two titles that were part

of multi-year contracts with cancellation caps. Given the objective criteria that

she had established for her decision-making she felt confident in canceling these

titles despite the contractual risk involved. This departmental library has sought,

in its collection management, to favor professional society journals as a way of

slowing its budget erosion since society journal subscriptions are generally less

expensive and experience slower inflation rates. This selector also felt that this

2002 project was tenable, but that any further cuts would begin to erode the

quality of her collection since the collection has been weeded a number of times

since the 1980s. She found the database helpful when checking the cancellation

lists created by other departments.

This selector was interested in seeing more information collected about

database usage on a nationwide level, and better, more refined use statistics that

accurately reflect how electronic resources are used. Finally, she commented

that libraries should rethink their definition of collections to move beyond the

notion of volumes to include electronically accessed information.

<u>Selector F</u>

This selector used two major criteria to create her cancellation list: cost and duplication. Use was a third, but less important criterion since this selector limited her review to her collection's standing orders where use statistics are not systematically collected. She was able to meet her target within this limit. To compile her list, this selector had to first document the existing reference collection. This aspect of the project took the most time and effort, since the reference collection seemed as though it had not been reviewed in the recent past. She then reconciled her complete list of standing orders with those of two other libraries to identify duplicate titles that could be added to her consideration list. Given the specialized nature of her collection, she did not examine the collections of the other libraries in the TRLN. Once she had compiled a list of possible cancellations, she rank ordered them before she forwarded her choices to the faculty with some explanatory notes (for example, if an electronic version of a resource was available or if the title was one duplicated at another library). The faculty members were very supportive of her list, and she voluntarily canceled the entire list to use the available funds to collect new titles. The faculty members in this department already use a ranking system to purchase materials and so were comfortable using it for cancellations.

Given the circumstances that this selector faced, she felt that electronic resources had a minimal effect on her decisions, since she did not consider any electronic resources for cancellation, nor did she consider for cancellation any

journals that might have had related to electronic counterparts. Also, in this selector's discipline electronic resources play a less important role in general than in other disciplines. This selector found the database of limited usefulness since her focus was on her standing order budget. Finally, the selector voiced concerns about any further cancellation projects that may have to be undertaken in the future, since the serials collection in this library is one of the strongest in the entire Southeast and has a lot of depth that would make cancellations difficult.

Selector G

This selector's primary criteria in her cancellation review were as follows. (1) Cost – she found that she could most easily meet her target by canceling a few expensive journals. (2) Use – this library, like many at UNC-Chapel Hill has an ongoing use study that provides this selector with many years' worth of data. This library conducts a use study each March that was initiated due to space constraints. The journals in this library, again in a policy similar to other libraries on campus, circulate for two hours, so librarians have both shelving and circulation statistics. This wealth of data makes it easy to identify low use journals. (3) Online availability and scope of holdings – these two criteria were equally important to this selector. If a journal was available online, it was more likely to be added to the cancellation list. The selector contacted Acquisitions about print titles that were bundled with their electronic counterparts, but did not receive a response in time to distinguish for her faculty between titles that would

continue to be available in electronic only format and those that were tied to print subscriptions, which would be canceled if the print version were canceled. The selector simply included on her consideration list all the journals she had initially identified and noted if electronic versions were available. (4) Faculty input – after compiling a consideration list using the above criteria, the selector forwarded it with justifications to her faculty for their evaluation and feedback. The faculty members supported her decisions. She commented that this faculty support and input is invaluable.

Her collection is somewhat unique at UNC-Chapel Hill, so she did search the catalogs of the TRLN libraries to ensure that she was not canceling the last copy of a title in the consortium. However, she found that the most expensive title on her cancellation list was indeed the last copy in the consortium. She exercised her professional judgment and canceled it anyway. She also consulted a listserv in her discipline and a recommended core collection document maintained by her professional organization.

She, like some of the other selectors, canceled her whole list despite the voluntary nature of the review. She has not received any complaints from her faculty despite the fact that some of the journals to which she thought she would retain electronic access were bundled to their print counterparts and have been canceled as well. She found the database to be a helpful tool in her decision-making because it allowed her to juggle titles that were under consideration on and off the cancellation list to most closely hit her target.

This selector found this project to be a useful one. The review provided her with a way of confirming previous collection decisions, and the subsequent cancellation provided a way in which to meet the needs of new faculty in her department and the shifting research interests of other faculty members. She observed that periodic serials reviews are a valuable way to critically examine her collection, and she found it wise to cancel her targeted amount for this review based on her current circumstances. However, and again, similar to other selectors, she judged this 2002 serials review as the last she could perform to refine her collection. Any subsequent cancellation projects would start cutting into the foundation of her library's collection.

Selector H

This selector began by double-checking her physical collection against the list provided to her by the Acquisitions database. She also used this list to compare her collection with those of the other TRLN libraries, especially Duke's. At this point, if one of her titles was the last copy available in the consortium, she deleted from the list of possible candidates for cancellation. Then she used her professional experience to identify a tentative list of core journals for her discipline and subdivided these core titles by topic within the discipline. She also contacted the faculty members and graduate students of her department by email to ask them to identify titles that they believed comprised the core collection or that were indispensable to the academic programs of the department. She used these responses as a double check against the list of

core titles she had already identified. She also examined her collection to identify titles that her library had historically collected and for which the collection had a complete run. All the titles that fell into these categories were also deleted as possibilities for cancellation.

She also completed a brief survey of journal holdings at some of the other schools within the University of North Carolina system. While this survey was not rigorous, it did allow her to identify possible titles for cancellation that could be obtained fairly quickly through inter-library loan. The journals in this collection do not circulate, so the selector did not have any use statistics available to aid her decision-making. For this selector, faculty input, maintaining her core collection, and the availability of the journals within the consortium were her primary criteria for decision-making, and she was not concerned with the lack of use statistics.

Once she identified a list of titles that would not be canceled, she created a list of possible candidates for cancellation organized by topic within her discipline. She then examined the cost of these titles, how extensive her library's holdings were of the titles in question, and whether they were held at any other libraries on campus. She noted the language used by the journal and if it was a foreign title, whether it provided such helps as English language abstracts. She also identified one duplicate title held by the Main Library, and one reference work that was available in an alternate format. Once she had compiled a list of possible cancellations, she forwarded this consideration list to her faculty for their input. Given that she had already polled faculty for their input on core titles, she found that there were only a few titles on the consideration list to which the

faculty objected. She removed these titles from her cancellation list. The faculty in this department had two opportunities to offer their input – once to identify their core titles and once to comment on the consideration list.

This selector used the database provided by Acquisitions extensively to sort titles by cost. The database kept a running total cost of the titles selected so the selector could easily move titles in and out of the cancellation list. Since this selector subdivided her journal list by topic, she had a number of titles of equal value to her faculty, but which covered diverse topics. Using the database, she could balance her cuts across the interests of her faculty members creating a cancellation list that was equally divided among her collection. Given the topical organization that this selector used, her biggest challenge was creating the rank order list required by Acquisitions.

In her discipline, some of the unique issues that this selector confronted with the project were the existence of newsletters and tabloids whose format makes them hard to collect and to preserve and easy to cancel, the existence of a number of excellent foreign language titles that are important to a collection, but less used, and the relative importance of monographs. Electronic access and the availability of electronic journals were not a consideration for this selector, based on the needs of the discipline for which she collects. Finally, after completing her cancellation list, she shared it with her peers in the consortium. Based on their comments, she decided to maintain the final paper subscription of a journal that allowed the consortium its electronic access.

<u>Selector I</u>

For this selector, this serials cancellation project was relatively easy since it corresponded with the retirement of one of her faculty members who had very specialized research interests. She consulted with this faculty member to identify titles to which the library subscribed specifically for him and in canceling those titles, plus one print standing order that was available electronically, met her target. Also, since the selector knew that the cancellation was voluntary, she did not find any compelling need to conduct a thorough review of all her holdings. She also consulted with the faculty chair to confirm her cancellation list. The selector decided to cancel all the titles on her list so that she might have some money to fund the research interests of the new faculty member. The availability of electronic resources and whether journals were related to other journals did not affect this selector; however, she did find the Access database useful because she could check her list against those of other departments on campus.

This library had a number of special circumstances in play with this cancellation project and with its administration in general. First, only a small percentage of its budget is made up of state funds (i.e., the funds that underwrite the journal collections under review for this project); therefore, its target amount was relatively small compared with its entire serials budget. Second, the patron base of this departmental library includes many users from outside the discipline and outside the university community. These patrons pay fees to use the library's resources. Third, this library is somewhat more independent than others

in the AAL. It has its own contract with a subscription agent and with other vendors, but relies on the Main Library for cataloging and binding services.

Since this selector's circumstances for this project were somewhat opportune, she discussed her collection in general and prior projects in which she and her library participated. She believed that the collection in her discipline, one more dependent on monographic literature than on serials, has already suffered due to budget cuts and the increasing percentage of the budget that is reserved for serial purchases. Further, the biggest issue she sees in her discipline is the consolidation within the publishing industry, which has encouraged monopolistic pricing. She feels that there are gaps in her monograph collection from previous cuts. She stated that she had in past projects checked the holdings of other libraries at UNC-Chapel Hill and the TRLN libraries, especially Duke. She has completed numerous cancellation projects, which began in the late 1980s, and mentioned a FY 1999 project that was particularly harsh. This selector commented that during that project a number of print indexes were canceled in favor of electronic versions. Since that time, she and her staff have found that the electronic versions have been less efficient to use; however, the cost of returning to the print versions is prohibitive. She also explained that even during the economic boom of the 1990s, the state's budget was tight, exacerbating the effects of the current state budget crisis.

<u>Selector J</u>

This selector identified titles for cancellation by sharing the responsibility with faculty members in the disciplines for which she is responsible. For this selector, her responsibilities were more in line with providing support and advice to faculty members who compiled the cancellation lists for their departments. The specific criteria that the faculty members applied and how they prioritized the information with which they were provided were unknown since no faculty members were interviewed for this paper. The cancellation decisions for these departments were made in any of a number of ways along a continuum, beginning with the entire department making cancellation decisions, to the department book committee, to a small designated group of faculty, to the department's book chair in communication with the department's library liaison.

The faculty members in these departments were provided with the Access database created by Acquisitions and with Excel spreadsheets created by this selector's staff to simplify the process. The selector determined that the faculty information needs included the serial title, subject, usage levels, language, editorial board members, Journal Impact Factor, and cost. This selector found the database an acceptable source of information even though it did not contain information regarding all of the factors listed above. Historically, faculty members of these departments have rated titles on a scale of 1-5, which has been scaled back to a 1-3 ranking with repeated serials cancellations over the last twenty years.

This selector commented at length about the general situation of serials at UNC-Chapel Hill. Since UNC-Chapel Hill's library system has undertaken serials cancellations projects regularly due to budget constraints, this selector considered most of the collections very lean. No new subscription money was budgeted for FY 2002, but given the historic annual rates of inflation that serials experience, this selector believed that a stagnant budget results in a decline in the number of titles in the collection since some subscriptions must be canceled to make up the difference created by inflation.

This selector stated that the consortium holdings are no longer a relevant issue in UNC-Chapel Hill's serial review process since she believes that the collection has now been whittled down to its core. This selector has also observed that through these periodic cancellation projects the distinctive strengths of the collection have diminished, and in response, the university has tried to create and maintain special funds for its special collections, effectively removing these titles from the cancellation risks incurred by titles funded through the state budget. This selector believed that the large multi-year, multi-title contracts have – with their prohibitive cancellation caps hovering around 1-2% of titles/year – limited the university's flexibility regarding its serial collections. Only a few of these titles were canceled during this project, and it is unknown if more would have been canceled if less prohibitive contractual obligations existed.

With respect to the effects that electronic resources had on this project, this selector commented that the bundling of electronic journals with their print counterparts mitigated the effects that electronic journals may have had on

cancellations. However, the presence of electronic resources did add this new aspect to the project: an Electronic Resources Committee identified 10% of the general electronic resources budget – mainly electronic indexes and databases – for possible cancellation. However, canceling any of these resources was deemed unreasonable given that each discipline now has major electronic databases and indexes relevant to it. These resources enjoy high use, so none were actually canceled.

This selector advised the departments in her purview not to cancel any of the titles identified in this review. Her rationale for this advice was that there was no guarantee that the department would be able to use the funds freed by cancellations to add new titles since they did not receive any carryover from the previous fiscal year. Further, by keeping titles that had been identified in this project, the departments would enjoy the annual inflation adjustment added to its budget, akin to periodic interest earned on a bank account. By maintaining its investment in all its titles during this voluntary cancellation, a department would, in a possible future mandatory cancellation, have to cut fewer titles to reach its target.

Selector K

This selector, like J, was responsible for coordinating the cancellation lists of a number of disciplines. Having participated in several cancellation projects, she and her staff used a methodology they had developed over the past two decades. The selector sent spreadsheets containing complete serial lists to

was a mismatch between the goals of the project and the financial circumstances surrounding it, which did not encourage voluntary cancellation.

This selector did not consult the TRLN libraries about their holdings. She did, however, consult with other departmental libraries in the AAL, especially concerning some of the general titles that were geared toward undergraduates, which were marked for cancellation. Another outside source that she consulted before approving the final lists were full text electronic resources such as Project Muse and JSTOR. Given the number of disciplines for which she was responsible, use statistics were unavailable to her as a decision-making resource. A unique aspect of this selector's collection management responsibilities is the university's newspaper subscriptions. Newspapers – especially foreign titles – are expensive and have a very limited lifespan, they are generally preserved on microform, and now many patrons simply read their hometown newspapers on the Internet. Based on these factors, this selector did recommend that some of these newspaper subscriptions be canceled.

This selector echoed others in her concern over what may happen if the library is forced to undertake another cancellation. She felt that this was the last serials review in which the faculty could meaningfully participate. The library has pared its serials collection down to predominantly priority 1 and priority 2 titles, with a very few remaining priority 3 titles. She mentioned that now only priority 1 monographs are purchased with state funds. To further complicate matters, some of her departments are under-funded due to administrative reorganizations that combined a number of different programs. She would like to see a better

balance maintained between the monographic and serials budgets, since many of the disciplines for which she is responsible emphasize monographs in their scholarly communication. She also mentioned the Electronic Resources Committee's work in identifying electronic resources for cancellation, and the challenge of choosing between resources that overlap in their coverage, but whose content are not exact duplications.

This selector also made a number of more general comments about the situation at the university. She too mentioned that the funds in question during this review were limited to departmental funds provided by the state. She spoke about the large degree to which faculty are involved in the both the selection and cancellation process through the organizational structure of book chairs and departmental book committees and through the existence of an active Library Administrative Board. Though this selector recommended that her faculty book chairs forgo the voluntary cancellations identified for this project, she thought that as a matter of policy, serials should be reviewed on a regular basis – about every 5-10 years – so that collections could reflect changes in a discipline or a department.

Discussion

Despite the highly qualitative design of this study, a number of observations can be made about how the cancellation process functions at UNC-Chapel Hill, about the criteria that selectors used, and about the influences of faculty involvement, of journal cost, of available management tools, and of electronic resources. This study also points out how varied the circumstances surrounding serials management can be even within a single institution. By examining more closely these aspects of the project, a picture of the current state of serials cancellations can be seen.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, three principal management strategies were used to complete the serials cancellation review. In the first (Selector A), a group of librarians applied a set of criteria to their departmental list of serials, made the cancellation decisions, and posted their consideration list on the Web for faculty review and consulted with a few individual faculty members about specific titles prior to sending a final list to Acquisitions. In the second group (Selectors B through I), librarians applied a set of criteria to their departmental list of serials, created a consideration list for faculty, forwarded this list to their disciplines' faculty for discussion and then after considering faculty input, sent a finalized list to Acquisitions. In the third group (Selectors J and K), librarians forwarded their

disciplines' book chairs and/or book committees a complete list of serials for review and deselection, and the departments then sent their finalized lists back to these librarians who checked the lists and consulted with faculty over individual titles. All three of these processes were completed on a timely basis, and the librarians who participated in the reviews were satisfied with the final cancellation lists that these processes generated.

In the first two processes, however, librarian involvement seemed to be greater. Librarians made the initial cancellation decisions and faculty reviewed the consideration lists generated and commented on specific titles. In the third group, the situation seemed reversed with faculty generating the consideration lists and librarians commenting on them. This situation seemed to be a function of the number of disciplines for which selectors had responsibility. The selectors who were responsible for many departments did not generate cancellation lists but only reviewed the lists generated by faculty. While this third type of strategy may be the only reasonable one given the labor constraints and the organizational structure of the library system at UNC-Chapel Hill, it seemed to de-emphasize the professional judgment, the objectivity, and the more balanced and global perspective that experienced librarians bring to a cancellation project, since faculty members may have applied criteria to suit personal needs rather than departmental ones. This possibility can be seen in the comments by Selector K who consulted with faculty about not canceling titles important to undergraduate patrons.

The criteria that were used by the departmental selectors varied from library to library. While a number of criteria, such as use or cost, were repeated from selector to selector, the importance that each selector placed on the criteria she used differed. The selectors who coordinated their projects with other libraries on campus emphasized duplication, while others emphasized use or faculty input, and others targeted specific areas of their collections, such as standing orders or the titles used by retiring faculty. Some of this variation can be explained by the variation between disciplines; for example, the emphasis that one selector put on Journal Impact Factors can be explained by her discipline's emphasis on objective measurements.

But other explanations that exist for the variation among selectors are the larger university and consortial environment in which each departmental library functions, the state of the individual collections, and the circumstances that confronted individual selectors. For example, the growth of multidisciplinary research interests in a number of departments, coupled with the existence of corresponding departmental libraries, allowed those selectors to give primacy to canceling duplicate titles on campus. Some of the selectors whose collections were more unique to the university applied this criterion on a consortial level by surveying the holdings of other TRLN libraries. Finally, two selectors were able to limit their cancellations to standing orders or a few specific titles based on their circumstances.

Faculty involvement was important to all the selectors interviewed. Each one specifically mentioned the solid support and understanding they received

from the faculty about their cancellation decisions. And those faculty members who worked with bibliographers to identify titles for cancellation bore the majority of the responsibility. One selector mentioned that she thought this cancellation project would be the last that faculty could meaningfully participate in given how lean the collections are. However, it seems that the leaner the collection, the more faculty would want to be involved in the process, perhaps even creating a strategic vision for the library in a vein similar to that reported by Madison (1999) at Iowa State University (ISU) where a 14% serials budget reduction resulted in a faculty-led committee, which recommended 27 action items that ISU could pursue to lessen the impact of the cuts.

Cost, interestingly, was a less important criterion to most of the selectors. It was a factor for some specific titles, but by and large, the selectors listed cost as a secondary criterion in their decision-making. One selector mentioned that most of her core titles were relatively expensive, while another mentioned that hers were uniformly less expensive and therefore cost was not a distinguishing factor for these selectors. Only two selectors reported finding single high cost/low use titles that they were able to cancel. Canceling these two titles (in one instance, the title made up almost 20% of the target) made a significant difference to the selectors since it meant that they had fewer total titles to cancel. Titles such as these, however, were the exception rather than the rule, and this could be expected given that the numerous cancellation projects prior to this one would have already weeded out these types of titles.

The selectors made inconsistent use of the management tools that were provided to them by Acquisitions. Some selectors used the Access database to move questionable titles on and off their cancellation lists. Others exported the data to spreadsheets maintained by their departments or used the spreadsheets created by Collection Development. However, most of the selectors mentioned using the database to check the lists of other selectors to verify that the last campus copy of a journal was not canceled. Despite the variability with which the database was used, it remains an essential tool to the AAL because it is a way in which both selectors and Acquisitions Department personnel can share cancellation information. Its lack of use by other selectors may be tied to individual comfort levels with using Access and with the prior development of local serials management tools used in previous cancellation projects.

The presence of electronic journals and other electronic resources in this project had little effect on individual selector decisions. Many electronic journals are tied to their print counterparts so that by canceling the print title, access to the electronic journal is lost as well. The existence of an Electronic Resources Committee and their decision to identify 10% of the library's electronic resources budget for cancellation was a new and sobering aspect to this project. Even though the library was able to safeguard most of these resources from cancellation, the fact that a list was compiled caused some consternation. Selectors noted that canceling these types of resources would be especially difficult since most disciplines now have electronic indexes and databases that

focus on their subject and canceling one program's resources over another's would be especially difficult to justify.

Another aspect of the electronic publishing environment also played a smaller role than might have been expected. One selector, in commenting on large multi-year, multi-title contracts with cancellation caps, observed that most of her core titles were in these packages, and she could not cancel them even if she wanted to. A number of selectors also made similar comments to the effect that they would have liked to cancel a few high cost titles in lieu of canceling many lower cost titles, but they felt that these high cost titles were essential to their collections. Selectors' decisions to keep titles was less motivated by the cancellation caps and more motivated by the value that their faculty placed on the package titles.

There were other comments made by the selectors that are worth noting despite the fact that they fall outside the original parameters of the study. First was the concern that all the selectors voiced about the possibility of further budget cutbacks and further cancellations. Some felt that their collections – particularly their monographic collections – were already eroded by previous cuts, while all felt that any more serials cancellations would begin to affect the quality of education and research that faculty could deliver. Most spoke about being very close to cutting what their faculties would consider core titles for their disciplines and titles necessary to effectively teach their curricula.

A second point that a number of selectors mentioned has to do with the level of effort necessary for this project. Since selectors knew that these

cancellations would be voluntary, their level of review was not as in depth as it would have been if the cuts had been mandatory. This attitude speaks volumes about the effects of repeated cancellations over the last two decades. Some of the selectors – mainly those who had worked at UNC-Chapel Hill for many years – saw this project as almost routine. Some also mentioned that they would like to see future serials reviews as a regularly scheduled project, instead of as a reaction to the state's budget situation.

Third, use studies were an important aid to decision-making, despite the fact that the review was completed over the course of only a few months. At least six of the selectors interviewed have use statistics that go back decades. These studies were originally started because space constraints forced the departmental libraries to place lower use titles in storage. Now, these librarians have a wealth of use data to utilize for other collection management decisions. A fourth observation about the project was the generally positive attitude with which the selectors viewed the project. The general tone of the comments was that serials review projects are good for the overall health of the collections, and they allow librarians to shape their collections to meet the needs of their users. Further, the selectors who had worked at UNC-Chapel Hill for fewer years saw this project as an opportunity to learn more about their collections and in greater depth than they had up to this time.

Finally, there was an interesting contrast in the decisions by the selectors to actually follow through with the cancellations despite their voluntary nature. One set of selectors (A through I) canceled some or all of their titles anyway, with

the idea that the funds freed by the cancellation would be used to buy new titles or could be set against a future cancellation. A second set of selectors (J and K) advised their departments not to cancel any of their titles. They viewed holding onto titles as a way of preserving their budgets – including the annual budget increases allotted to cover inflation – in the face of possible future cuts that may be mandatory. Given these somewhat contradictory actions, the selectors and the library administration might begin to consider creating a more consistent cancellation process based on the strategies used by the selectors who created cancellation lists prior to faculty review in their respective disciplines. This model seemed to best utilize the professional experience and objectivity that librarians bring to collection management. A more consistent model may also result in more consistent cancellation decisions while continuing to allow for the autonomy exercised by the selectors in this project.

Conclusion

As evidenced by both the literature and this study, there is no one best way to cancel serials; however, some best practices have emerged with experience. First, create and nurture supportive relationships and good communication between the faculty and the library. Second, leverage the knowledge of experienced librarians to respond with flexibility and creativity to their particular circumstances and to construct the most objective and thoughtful cancellation lists allowed. Third, if at all possible, track use over the long term. Fourth, consider options beyond the decision of subscribing or not, such as analyzing consortial availability, moving standing orders to approval plan purchases for greater discounts and more precise subject collecting, favoring society publications over similar commercial publisher titles, and investigating electronic only options for both journal titles and other resources (e.g., indexes and abstracts) with an emphasis on similar coverage rather than exact duplication.

While this study highlights the practical aspects of the serials review process, the criteria and the tools that selectors at UNC-Chapel Hill applied in their most recent cancellation project, the larger question of how many more cancellations the University serials collection can bear without damage was also

answered: none. Sadly, at the present time, there are no easy answers to how the University might be able to avoid those future damaging cancellations. Sweeping systemic changes in the traditional scholarly publishing model seem to be necessary to prevent further cancellations, and these changes could become a reality by building on the supportive relationships and good communication that already exist between the faculty and librarians at UNC-Chapel Hill.

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