

## Against the Grain

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### Being Earnest with Collections – Collection Development from the Library Services Vendor’s Point of View

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# Being Earnest with Collections — Collection Development from the Library Services Vendor's Point of View

by **Ashley Fast Bailey** (Director, Collection Development and Workflow Solutions Central U.S., GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO) <abailey@ybp.com>

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**Column Editor's Note:** *In this issue of **Being Earnest with Collections**, readers will get the perspective of a librarian working for a library services provider. I have worked with **Ashley Bailey** on a number of projects related to collection development as we have transformed our monograph operations. Moving from a large approval plan profile toward an almost complete reliance on demand driven acquisitions, **Ashley** provided guidance and detailed reporting that resulted in an efficient transition to DDA. Now, as we reach year two, the DDA program has benefitted from several changes to profiling and **EBSCO** enhancements designed to improve the user experience and help us manage the overall process. I am grateful to **Ashley** for the great customer service she has provided. I believe **ATG** readers will enjoy her perspective on how a library services vendor can help libraries build collections that meet the needs of students and faculty. — **MA***

When I graduated from library school, I didn't take a job at an academic library. My first job as a librarian was as a Collection Development Manager with what was then **YBP Library Services**, now **GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO**. Over the last decade I have worked on the vendor side of the library world, partnering and working alongside my colleagues in academic libraries to make collection development and the collections aspect of library workflows as efficient and effective as they can be for the needs of their library. As I embarked on my professional career, I dove head first into learning all I could about collections needs on the library side, as well as what that entails from the vendor side. As a librarian, I work to meld the two together to help create efficient and effective workflows for libraries. Being a librarian on the vendor side requires the wearing of multiple hats, just as librarians wear many different hats in the academic library. My goal is to ensure that the work I do creates better workflows, more effective ways to discover and acquire content, and more efficient ways to complete the monograph acquisitions process.

The key to my work with libraries is the consultation process. No two libraries are alike. Each has its own challenges and specific set of needs. While many can be similar, just like snowflakes, no two are identical. There is, however, an overarching set of tools that a library can employ to make their monograph

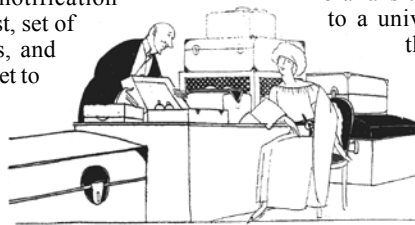
collections process most efficient and streamlined. It's my role to make sure that each library I work with understands those options and how to leverage the acquisitions, technical services, and workflow support we provide in the way that fits their unique needs.

Central to our work are Approval Profiles, a mechanism that allows for an automatic shipment of books or notification slips, based on a press list, set of Non-Subject Parameters, and LC Class specifications set to meet a library's needs.

A library can use an Approval Profile to bring in automatic shipments, electronic notification slips, or underpin a Demand Driven Acquisitions Program (DDA). This is a key part of the monographic acquisitions process on the vendor side. No two Approval Profiles are the same. By consulting, listening, and using the knowledge and experience I have with **GOBI's** profiles, I can work with a library to make sure their collection development areas are covered in a way that meets their library's goals by surfacing the specific content that addresses their profile requirements while filtering out content that's not relevant for their needs. This vetted content is then made available to the library through the automatic shipment of core materials, and/or through notification slips of newly published content. In addition, core content can automatically be sent to a library to ensure the most efficient way of delivering that needed content.

Many librarians think automatic shipment approvals are only for large libraries, but that is not the case. A profile can bring in core content from a very targeted set of publishers or specific LC Classes, or it can employ a very broad set of guidelines to bring in thousands of books on an annual basis. For example, a community college can craft a profile to bring in core undergraduate materials that are very practical in nature to meet the needs of their users, or a large library can set up a broader set of parameters to allow for automatic shipments of the core materials for their undergraduate user base, in addition to materials needed by their graduate level researchers. A well-written profile can serve the library well and allow for librarians to focus on other priorities. It is a big part of our role on the vendor side to aid in this process. We are here to help make selectors' jobs easier, freeing those librarians

up to work on projects and services they would not be able to focus on otherwise. By working with librarians to keep their profiles relevant and up to date, the partnership between vendor and library is a valuable one. Bringing in content automatically and providing a stream of relevant new titles to review via the notification slips, the vendor's approval profile saves librarians time and brings awareness to a universe of relevant content they might not otherwise discover.



Beyond Approval Profiles, part of my role involves working with libraries to keep them informed of industry changes

and discuss ways to adjust and enhance their collection development strategy. For instance, there are niche aspects of collection development that fall into the realm of profiling, such as DDA (Demand-Driven Acquisition). While DDA doesn't work for every library, a DDA program takes a subset of content and moves it into a pool of titles for patrons to discover and use. The library then incurs charges based on use. Many libraries aren't aware that the books made available via a DDA model represent a relatively small percentage of the overall universe of scholarly publishing, so relying exclusively on this model will result in gaps in a library's collection. The Approval Profile can underpin this process. The Approval Profile allows the DDA model to work in tandem with an auto-shipment and notification slip plan providing libraries with a well-rounded collection development strategy. With this seemingly ever-changing model and other models being made available to libraries, an important part of my partnership with a library is to make sure they are informed of changes so their profile can evolve with the shifting landscape.

Aside from acquisitions, libraries lean on vendors to provide additional workflow support. This includes both selection and ordering support, but also shelf ready services and invoicing efficiencies. Once a book is profiled and allocated against an Approval Plan, a library can receive an automatic shipment or firm order that title (print or eBook). The ordering process is streamlined via **GOBI** and there are pieces of the technical services end that can aid in efficiencies. For instance, Electronic Order Confirmation Records (EOCRs) for firm orders can save valuable staff time entering order

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# Biz of Digital — Exploring Digital Librarianship and Defining Library Digital Services

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With paragraphs about their positions as digital librarians by:

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## Introduction

Library digital services and digital librarian are amorphous terms that may seem to represent a jumbled set of disconnected activities. The lack of a clear understanding of them muddies communication because the terms are understood in different ways by different people. Meshing research, general information, and specific information from practicing librarians, library digital services and digital librarians are defined, allowing for shared meaning when communicating about them.

The transitional column wrapping up “**Biz of Acq**” and beginning the “**Biz of Digital**” mentioned some of the digital services that libraries offer and provided a broad definition of library digital services. This issue’s column goes to the literature and to practicing digital librarians to find out what digital librarians do and the characteristics and skillset that a digital librarian needs. Based on the information discovered, the definition of library digital services provided in the previous column is broadened to be inclusive of all the different types of work that digital librarians do.

The definition of digital services that we used in the last the column stated that library digital services includes providing the following, or providing instruction and support for the following:

1. Building a digital collection of information for further study and analysis
2. Creating appropriate tools for building digital collections
3. Creating appropriate tools for the analysis and study of digital collections
4. Using digital collections and tools for their analysis and study to generate new intellectual products
5. Creating authoring tools for these new intellectual products<sup>1</sup>

This column will provide evidence and the rationale for further modifying that definition, broadening its specific focus on digital collections to focus instead on *digital content and technology*.

## The Literature

Research on digital librarianship is limited to job advertisement analyses, but these analyses provide a great deal of information. Other articles and a couple of blog posts offer additional perspective on digital librarians, and one book chapter provides a broad overview of digital librarianship. The focus here will be on those works that were most helpful in understanding digital librarianship in a broad and inclusive manner.

A 2002 article by **Croneis and Henderson** reports on an analysis of advertisements for electronic and digital librarian positions. They analyzed 223 ads published in *College and Research Libraries News* from 1990-2000. They looked at position title, functional area, institution, and the year the ad was first published. They found that for jobs with “electronic” in the job title, the most common duties were reference, website/webpages, instruction/training, and collection development. For jobs with “digital” in the title, they found the most common responsibilities were administration, supervision, digital projects/initiatives, instruction/training, and partnerships. Digital projects and initiatives, leadership in the field, and production were unique to ads for digital positions.<sup>2</sup>

In 2009, **Choi and Rasmussen** published an article on their analysis of 336 job advertisements published in *College and Research Libraries News* from 1999 through 2007 with the word “digital” in the job title or in the position description, duties/responsibilities, or qualifications. They found that these positions have many variants, but divided them into 5 groups: 1) Digital in the job title, focusing on managing digital projects and initiatives, 2) A title related to services, e.g., Digital Services Librarian, Digital Services and Scholarly Communication, etc. 3) Administrative positions to manage a special unit or project. The remaining ads were for various positions ranging from technical services, systems, tech support, and resource management and services. The most frequently mentioned competencies were technological knowledge

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records when using this service. Upon shipment, a print or eBook MARC Record can be provided. This would overlay the EOCR and allow for staff to check in a title more quickly by allowing valuable order data to carry over from the vendor system into this record. It makes the receiving process of a print book much more efficient and provides a vendor specific MARC record that contains library local practices for eBooks. When a title is invoiced, physical processing (full shelf ready or partial shelf ready) can add in the speed that a book gets to the library shelf. EDI invoicing, also known as Electronic Invoicing, provides the final purchase data needed for a library’s ILS,

making the process of ordering a monograph from start to finish as efficient as possible.

A library can make the back end of their acquisitions workflow more efficient by taking advantage of these value-added services. While these services can often bring real fiscal saving to libraries, quite often the opportunity costs that these services eliminate are a key driver for libraries. These support services allow staff to focus on those tasks that cannot be outsourced, ranging from the processing of special collections materials to the provisioning of metadata services. Exactly which services a library may want or need to employ will vary based on their individual circumstances. My role is to work with libraries to identify the options and services that best align with their libraries’ needs.

After spending the first eight years of my career working directly with specific libraries on their individual plans, I now lead a team of Collection Development Managers in crafting solutions for the libraries in our territory. From this vantage point, I have an even greater appreciation for the importance of the librarian/vendor relationship. As a librarian, I see how consulting with your vendor partners can lead to developing collaborative collection development solutions. As a librarian who has worked on the vendor side for the last ten years, I have seen the myriad of ways a vendor can bring greater efficiency to libraries of all shapes and sizes. From both angles, the mission remains the same — we are all working toward the same goal of ensuring library users have access to the quality materials they need. 🌱