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# Strategic Reinvestments of Journal Packages at Pennsylvania State University

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## Abstract

In the face of budget challenges, organizational strategy changes, and the new open access (OA) policy, the Pennsylvania State University Libraries (PSUL) are reevaluating negotiations and collections of Big Deal journal packages. While a growing number of libraries are considering cancelling subscriptions to Big Deals, PSUL has been taking a careful approach in containing costs and making sure that faculty and students have access to resources that they need. Current efforts include renegotiating Big Deals; cancelling low-value titles in title-by-title agreements; obtaining single agreements for the entire Penn State system; promoting green OA for future subscription negotiation purposes; and renegotiating OA-related licensing terms. To achieve greater efficiency of acquisitions workflows and increase university-wide purchasing power, reallocation of the collection budget will be discussed in the near future. Auto deposit of accepted manuscripts from any Penn State author into ScholarSphere, Penn State's institutional repository, as well as exploration of other OA models are also under consideration.

## Why Reevaluate Journal Investment?

There are a few reasons for PSUL to reevaluate their journal acquisitions practice. First, the "One Penn State 2025" vision, announced in September 2018, promotes collaboration and coordination across the university. Its goals are to achieve greater institutional efficiency to address affordability for a high-quality education; direct resources for Penn State to become more integrated, flexible, and responsive as an institution; and provide students with seamless 24/7 online access to services and resources across all 24 Penn State campuses (Pennsylvania State University, 2018). Penn State Libraries' collections budgets are currently fragmented with over 70 subject and local campus funds, making it difficult for the libraries to make university-wide purchases of electronic resources and support the new "One Penn State" vision. Second, the new OA policy, which requires that Penn State researchers, including faculty, students, and staff, deposit accepted manuscripts of any scholarly article into an open repository such as ScholarSphere, Penn State's institutional repository, will become effective January 1, 2020 (Pennsylvania State University, 2019b). Penn State librarians will actively publicize this new policy and promote OA mostly through various green OA initiatives, which will impact journal negotiation strategies as OA content grows. Third, Penn State recently announced an across-the-board reduction of 1% from unit budgets university-wide so that Pennsylvania resident tuition is kept at last year's levels (Pennsylvania State University, 2019a). This cut impacts the collection budget as well, and the libraries will need to search for cost savings.

## Penn State Environment

With \$968 million in annual research expenditures, Penn State ranks among the top 25 U.S. research universities (Pennsylvania State University, 2019c). It offers more than 275 baccalaureate degree programs across 24 campus locations—including a medical college, two law schools, and a school of graduate professional studies, plus an online World Campus (Pennsylvania State University, 2019d). Penn State librarians hold faculty status and go through a rigorous promotion and tenure review process. This environment guides our collection development decisions.

Penn State has both title-by-title and package agreements with major publishers. Some contracts are handled through consortia, such as the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) and the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc. (PALCI). Penn State has not made any commitment on transformative agreements due to financial and other concerns.

## Changes Being Made at the Penn State Libraries

PSUL has reached a point where the existing model for collection development and allocating the collections budget needs to adapt to enable the library to respond to the changing landscape of scholarly publishing. In moving toward that goal, PSUL has made some changes to achieve cost savings, promote OA through the new OA policy, and increase efficiency to support the One Penn State vision.

First, some of the title-by-title journal purchasing models established earlier turned out to be more expensive than journal package Big Deals, and Penn State Libraries have renegotiated with those publishers to sign a Big Deal when appropriate. Although there are risks associated with Big Deals such as lack of flexibility in terms of title selection, longer-term commitment, and larger financial commitment, there are also benefits such as the following if negotiated successfully: reduced cost per title, decreased processing time, expansion of content, predictability for budgeting purposes through negotiated annual price increase caps, cancellation allowance, and more comprehensive licensing terms. Big Deals provide a guaranteed revenue stream for the publisher, usually at a high overall dollar value, and libraries are likely to be able to renegotiate licensing terms when they sign up for such deals. At the same time, Big Deal purchases involve careful collection analysis to make sure that the deal delivers the value that the library expects. A recent example of such an analysis examined PSUL's title-by-title arrangement with one publisher and compared the historical spend and cost per title with a proposed Big Deal. The analysis showed that the proposed Big Deal would save PSUL money over the three-year contract period while it expanded its desired collection.

For title-by-title agreements, low-value titles have been evaluated and cancelled annually to achieve additional cost savings. For one particular publisher this year, Penn State librarians took a collaborative approach in achieving this goal, with a science librarian as the lead. This leader initially presented the Penn State authorship and citation data to all selectors and followed up with usage and pricing data provided by the Acquisitions team. Many librarians contributed to the process; for example, a single file was created incorporating all data points to facilitate the review process. Based on the comprehensive data analysis, subject librarians provided cancellation recommendations with justifications. They also obtained feedback from relevant academic departments, considered unique subject strengths of Penn State such as mushrooms and other related collections, and reviewed duplicated electronic access. Through this analysis, it turned out that some titles were available via arXiv.org and other channels. ILL cost estimates were also considered because it sometimes costs less for Penn State to have the subscription than to obtain copies through ILL. The final cancellation list included titles that were in general low use, had low Penn State

authorship and citation, and were high in cost per use. The project leader communicated with relevant selectors frequently and reported the outcome with justifications. The process was perceived to be fair and reasonable, and led to successful cost savings (about \$60K) within the contractual allowance without major disruptions.

The "One Penn State" vision was incorporated in the libraries' acquisitions workflows as a strategic priority. For example, when there are opportunities to revisit license terms during renewals, Acquisitions librarians and others negotiate new licensing terms that ensure access for all Penn State faculty and students regardless of their geographical locations. This university-wide approach involves reviewing existing license terms, assessing needs across the university, reviewing alternatives, and renegotiating with publishers, vendors, and sometimes consortia. In one case where a vendor did not agree with the "One Penn State" approach and insisted on a multisite format resulting in a higher fee, the contract was not signed. Although this meant that Penn State was not able to purchase the subscription that a consortium had offered, Penn State's integrity and consistency in applying the new vision of the university was preserved. In the end, Penn State was able to obtain access to the same resource by dealing directly with the producer of the licensed product, without compromising its organizational values.

Promoting green OA is another area that Penn State has focused on to better negotiate subscription pricing in the future. The Scholarly Communications & Copyright Office, as well as subject libraries, Collections Strategies, and Acquisitions, report to the associate dean for Collections, Research, and Scholarly Communications at Penn State Libraries. This organizational structure facilitates coordination among collection development, acquisitions, and OA initiatives. Librarians at the Scholarly Communications & Copyright Office have a legal background and engage in a variety of outreach efforts, such as the following workshops: "Negotiating Publishing Contracts," "Complying with the NSF Public Access Policy," and "Copyright for Scholarly Authors." By informing Penn State authors on these topics and increasing green OA effort, Penn State Libraries encouraged those authors to retain their rights and promoted OA to their research outcomes. These efforts will hopefully reduce reliance on subscriptions in the future, given that subscription pricing is often negotiated based on usage data of subscribed content.

Additionally, OA content in journal packages and Penn State authors' publication patterns are tracked more carefully so that subscription fees are reduced as OA content grows. Penn State license negotiation now includes OA terms. Learning from the California Digital Library and others' model licenses, PSUL has started incorporating publisher OA reporting requirement in their licenses when the publisher offers an OA publishing option. The new term requires that the publisher reports annually (1) the number of works (such as articles) published under the OA option by all authors, and (2) the number and list of the works by title with full citation by Penn State authors. The new licensing term further requires that, if the ratio of the number of OA articles to articles published under the traditional subscription model increases in comparison to the previous year, the publisher will reflect such increase by way of a proportional reduction in the subscription price for the current subscription year.

## Outcomes and Next Steps

Penn State Libraries have achieved significant cost savings through renegotiation of Big Deals, title-by-title analysis and cancellations, and the "One Penn State" approach. Green OA promotion and tracking of OA content in journal packages will hopefully lead to cost savings in the future.

Collection budget reallocation is another upcoming project. Currently PSUL's budgets are based on disciplines and subjects, as well as campus locations, with, in total, over 70 funds. This structure might have worked well in a print-oriented world. We will soon need to reallocate collection budgets to allow for university-wide strategic electronic resource purchases. The Collection Budget Allocation Group was formed earlier this year and made specific recommendations to change the collections budget structure. Implementation of these recommendations will require a shared understanding of budget structure problems and collaborative problem solving, and will likely lead to efficiency in acquisitions, flexibility to support interdisciplinary research, and increased purchasing power for Penn State. Additionally, once the new OA policy becomes effective on January 1,

2020, PSUL will promote auto and manual deposit of accepted manuscripts by Penn State authors into ScholarSphere, Penn State's institutional repository. Harvesting all openly available copies into ScholarSphere as well as working with publishers to obtain a feed of preprints for auto deposit into ScholarSphere are under consideration. Penn State authors can also manually deposit their work either directly or will be prompted to do so through Digital Measures, an online software tool for faculty Promotion and Tenure (P&T) dossiers and annual reviews. These automated processes will save time for Penn State authors and further enhance the PSUL's green OA efforts, which will hopefully help the libraries with future subscription negotiations as OA versions' usage grows, reducing reliance on subscriptions.

Finally, PSUL will spend more time performing collection analysis, particularly prior to renewals, and explore opportunities for different OA models. Penn State currently does not have transformative agreements due to financial and other concerns. Research-intensive North American research institutions, including Penn State, are expected to pay more for scholarly journals in a fully article processing charge (APC) funded journal market, that is, a gold OA APC model, although this cost increase could be covered by grant funds as the University of California's Pay It Forward study suggests (University of California Libraries, 2016). Coming up with acquisitions workflows that incorporate grant funds is another challenge with this model. Additionally, some transformative deals suggest expansion of the size of the Big Deals or backfile purchases, which creates financial challenges for libraries. Regardless of the model chosen, PSUL could evaluate OA content in journal packages, Penn State authors' publication and citation patterns, and usage trends more carefully to make sure that the collection budget is spent wisely. It would also help to work with consortia so that APC discounts could be negotiated more systematically, and model licenses for transformative agreements with sample workflows could be created for consortia members. It is PSUL's intention to transition to OA as much as possible within the libraries' budgetary capacity, while supporting the content the Penn State faculty and students need.

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