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Beyond Demand Driven: Incorporating Multiple Tools in a Consortial Collection Strategy

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Abstract

OhioLINK has a long history of sharing print resources among its members. When e-books began to enter the market, OhioLINK was an early adopter of the new format. However, as e-books grew in importance and OhioLINK institutions began buying them individually in large numbers, we realized that our existing methods of acquiring e-books for the consortium were not completely meeting our needs. In April 2013, OhioLINK began a pilot project with Yankee Book Peddler (YBP), ebrary, Ashgate, Rowman and Littlefield, and Cambridge University Press to purchase e-books for our members. The pilot combines automatic purchase of titles that fit two separate profiles and a demand-driven component. It is our hope that this model will be sustainable for both our members and our publisher partners.

Introduction

OhioLINK is a consortium of over 90 academic libraries in Ohio. Its members include:

- 16 public universities,
- 50 private colleges,
- 23 community and technical colleges, and
- The State Library of Ohio.

However, this breakdown does not fully reflect our diversity. Our public university members include The Ohio State University with over 50,000 students and Shawnee State University with about 4,000 students. Private college members include Case Western Reserve University (a research-intensive institution); Oberlin College and Wooster College, both highly selective liberal arts colleges; and smaller specialized institutions like Mercy Theological Seminary. Community and technical college members include large institutions like Sinclair Community College in Dayton and much smaller ones like Hocking Community College in Nelsonville.

A Tradition of Cooperation

Since its founding in 1992, OhioLINK's members have been committed to sharing resources. Besides being an academic library located in Ohio, having a physical collection and being

willing to share it is the fundamental requirement for membership in OhioLINK. Patrons at an OhioLINK library can search the OhioLINK central catalog, request an item from another institution, and have it delivered by courier in 2–3 days. Patron-initiated circulation, or P-Circ, continues to be one of OhioLINK's core services; in 2012, P-Circ delivered over 600,000 items at a cost of just under \$1 million.

Because of the success of P-Circ, OhioLINK librarians think of member libraries' print collections as a shared state resource. Furthermore, OhioLINK member libraries have grown comfortable with considering existing holdings in the state when developing local collections. Most OhioLINK libraries use YBP as their primary vendor, and it is common for selectors to use GOBI and the OhioLINK central catalog when making purchasing decisions. Most libraries employ a "soft cap," a number at which they will not purchase an additional copy of a particular title. If, for example, a library's number is four; they will not purchase the fifth copy in the state. The soft cap number can vary from library to library, and while the process is voluntary, it has proven effective in reducing duplication in our print collections.

Emergence of E-Books

OhioLINK was quick to recognize the importance of e-books as well as the challenges they presented for our consortium. We have

experimented with various methods of acquiring e-books including demand-driven acquisition (DDA [NetLibrary]), subscription (Safari Technical Books), and purchased publisher packages (Springer, Oxford, and, most recently, Wiley). These methods met the needs of the consortium for a few years; however, wider availability of e-books, the use of aggregators that allow title-by-title selection, and the widespread use demand-driven purchasing models have led us to re-examine our current practices.

Searching for a New Model

OhioLINK's collection development committee recognized the ramifications of individual institutional purchases of e-books quickly: they cannot be shared with other members of the consortium. We knew that we needed to explore other models of acquiring e-books that would be accessible to all of us because many of our members were purchasing e-books locally. Accordingly, OhioLINK issued an ITN for e-book content in 2011. The purpose of the ITN was to "explore mechanisms to purchase e-book content that would be available to all consortium members." Our intent was to combine community funds to create a funding pool for the project.

There were about 30 responses to the ITN, but most of them offered publisher packages similar to what we were already doing with Oxford and Springer. We awarded one contract from this group to Wiley, but we were really interested in finding a new approach. YBP's response to the ITN was unique in that it offered to work with publishers and/or one of the major e-book aggregators to acquire e-books for OhioLINK. Their response was attractive for a number of reasons:

- YBP is the primary monograph vendor for most OhioLINK members,
- We could acquire titles from multiple publishers,
- We could approximate title-by-title selection, and

- We could experiment with demand-driven purchasing.

Taken together, these factors addressed many concerns that had been raised by our members:

- Members wanted to avoid purchasing titles locally that were going to be purchased by the consortium. Since YBP is our primary vendor (operating over 200 approval plans in Ohio), we could modify approval profiles as needed and use GOBI to avoid duplicative purchasing.
- Some members saw purchasing publisher packages as equivalent to the journal publisher's "big deals" and wanted to move away from that model.
- We wanted to add new publishers to our portfolio.
- Some members wanted to move aggressively to a demand-driven model; others had reservations about using a demand-driven methodology at the consortial level.

After we decided to work with YBP, we polled OhioLINK members to gather funds. Given the budget climate in Ohio, not everyone was able to participate, but we did gather a pool of funds that was sufficient to begin a pilot project on a small scale.

OhioLINK's Pilot Project:

OhioLINK's vision for the pilot was clear—the books purchased had to be accessible to all consortium members. We wanted unlimited use, title-level selection, and a demand-driven component. We also wanted to work with multiple publishers. Getting there was not easy. We decided to work with ebrary as an aggregator because many OhioLINK libraries already worked with them. Identifying publishers who were willing to work with us was difficult given the size of our consortium, and we relied heavily on YBP to identify publishers who would consider the project. Finally, after a lot of work, the pilot began in April 2013.

In the pilot, OhioLINK is working with three publishers:

- Ashgate (including the Gower imprint),
- Rowman and Littlefield (including the Altamira and Scarecrow imprints), and
- Cambridge University Press.

Ashgate and Rowman and Littlefield titles are hosted on ebrary's platform, and Cambridge titles are hosted on Cambridge's platform. OhioLINK pays a multiple of list price for titles purchased from each of these publishers; that multiple is based on our collective purchasing history with the individual publisher.

In addition to deciding which publishers we would work with, we had to define the subject areas we would include. Deciding on the subjects was important because, in order to get buy-in from our membership, the books purchased had to be seen as useful for everyone. Having Yankee as our primary vendor proved to be invaluable because they were able to look at our purchasing patterns and see what subject areas were purchased broadly across our membership. Based on their analysis, we were able to define three levels of collecting for the pilot: the digital collection, the "e-approval" collection, and a demand-driven component.

Titles in British and U.S. history, business, economics, sociology, and music literature (Library of Congress classes DA, E–F, HB–HD, HF–HJ, HM–HQ, HV, and ML) are purchased automatically as part of the digital collection. OhioLINK libraries buy many titles in these areas, and we tend to buy multiple copies of each title. Titles must be categorized as general or advanced academic content and fall into the YBP select categories Basic or Research Essential or Recommended. For the Gower imprint, professional- and supplementary-level content is allowed. There are very few additional restrictions placed on the content in this collection. Reference content is excluded, and non-US coverage is limited for titles in business.

The e-approval collection employs a more restrictive profile. Content must be general or

advanced academic, and additional restrictions are applied based on format, reference, aspect, and literary type. Non-US emphasis is also restricted in certain subject areas. Titles in religion, geography, political science, and literature (Library of Congress classes BL, BP, G–GV, JC, JF, JK, JZ, PR, and PS) are purchased automatically as part of the e-approval collection. OhioLINK libraries also buy many titles in these areas, but they tend to buy fewer copies per title.

The demand-driven component of the project has only been implemented for Ashgate and Rowman and Littlefield. Basically, all of their content (in any subject area) that was not purchased automatically is made available for DDA. Since this is on the ebrary platform, standard ebrary triggers (10 page views, 10 minutes in the content, any download or print) apply. When a purchase is triggered, it is paid for out of the pooled funds. Although we may consider short-term loans in the future, we did not try to implement them as part of this project. We are still working on structuring a demand-driven component for Cambridge. They are unable to support DDA on their site, so we will probably use an evidence-based selection model, but we have not identified an appropriate pool of titles.

Early Findings

The pilot project was implemented in three phases. Automatic purchasing of Ashgate and Rowman and Littlefield titles in the digital collection and e-approval collection began in April 2013, and DDA with these two publishers began in June 2013. Automatic purchasing of Cambridge titles began in July 2013, and DDA with Cambridge is pending.

Through the end of October, OhioLINK has purchased 364 titles as part of the pilot. In the digital and e-approval collections, we have purchased 180 titles from Ashgate, 75 from Rowman and Littlefield, and 66 from Cambridge. There are 205 titles in the DDA pool; 43 have been purchased: 19 from Ashgate and 24 from Rowman and Littlefield. Usage through the end of September looks promising. We are seeing expanding use as the collection grows.

Month	Titles Available	Views	Copy/Print/Download	Sessions
April 2013	53	164	0	49
May 2013	74	289	0	96
June 2013	96	557/180	32/22	140/43
July 2013	142	2054/819	10/2	213/77
August 2013	186	1387/373	70/66	415/72
September 2013	385	3185/1059	211/9	549/100

Table 1. Usage to Date: ebrary Platform (Total/from DDA)

Month	Titles Available	Downloads (Counter BR2)
July 2013	8	12
August 2013	10	11
September 2013	58	20

Table 2. Usage to Date: Cambridge Platform

Our usage on the ebrary platform is difficult to analyze because any use that originates in the OhioLINK central catalog is counted as OhioLINK use. We can see institutional use when it originates from a local catalog and early usage is spread across a number of institutions. However, not all of our members load the records to local catalogs, so any analysis of usage at the institutional level will be incomplete until we can see use by IP address. It is too early to draw any conclusions about usage at the Cambridge site because they came into the project later, and as of the end of September had very few titles available.

Conclusions

At the end of the pilot, we will evaluate usage and expense. We will need to determine if this project is sustainable for our consortium. Likewise, our publisher partners will need to evaluate the project to determine if this model is sustainable from their perspective. We hope that the mixture of automatically purchased titles and the demand-driven component will meet the needs of both groups. If the pilot proves to be an effective means of acquiring e-books for the consortium and a sustainable model for publishers, we hope that additional publishers will be willing to join.