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ILL as Acquisitions: Implementing and Integrating POD in a Research Library

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Abstract

This paper describes Virginia Tech's implementation of a purchase-on-demand (POD) program designed to complement the traditional interlibrary loan workflow. POD can offer a way to obtain otherwise unavailable or unlendable content or to get many items at lower cost than a typical borrowing transaction. POD also offers another means of building the collection through purchases of materials we know will get at least one use. We share key details of our program from pilot phase to its broader integration into the acquisitions workflow.

Background

As a comprehensive research university, with over 225 undergraduate and graduate research programs, Virginia Tech regularly relies on interlibrary loan (ILL) to meet our patrons' needs and to supplement existing holdings and subscriptions. In May 2013 the University Libraries at began a pilot purchase-on-demand (POD) program for articles. This soon expanded to include books. The primary reason for implementing the program was to reduce the number of ILL transactions that were cancelled because they could not be filled through regular channels. In addition, all books acquired in this way are reviewed for the collection, making the POD program an integral part of our collection building.

The Collection Management unit moved to the Technical Services Department in July of 2009. By becoming integrated with acquisitions and serials, there is now a more centralized role for Collection Management in overseeing funds and making major purchasing decisions. This move also allowed for more cohesive and data-driven decisions based on assessment of cost, usage, and other metrics.

The University Libraries adopted an e-preferred policy in April 2012 that applied to all disciplines. While print books are still acquired for a variety of reasons, the default preference for new orders is to get an ebook version when available. Purchase strategies have changed in other ways including the acquisition of more ebook packages and a

migration to demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) for many titles (Stovall, Lener, & Gilmore, 2013).

The Interlibrary Loan unit moved in early 2013 from Access Services to the Collections and Technical Services Department. There was a reduction in staff and this move entailed significant reworking of space and hardware. All ILL staff now report to the Head of Acquisitions. The service philosophy for the unit has changed to reflect their new place in the organizational structure by enhancing their ability to get materials by whatever means works best, including purchases where appropriate.

Launching Purchase on Demand

The University Libraries already had precedents for buying materials for Virginia Tech patrons at the point of need. For example, many engineering standards are acquired in this manner, with policies in place to cap the total cost of such expenditures per patron each year. Purchase on demand has resulted in considerable savings relative to our previous subscriptions to engineering standards. Similarly, POD is used to supply NTIS documents to our users when needed and also to acquire an occasional data set.

Interlibrary Loan decided to build upon these initial forays and launched a purchase on demand pilot program in May of 2013. The initial focus was on difficult to fulfill article requests (see next section for some examples). When ILL requests from our patrons couldn't be fulfilled by other channels, then POD was used to fill the need and reduce the number of cancelled transactions.

The POD pilot was soon expanded to include books. Again the focus was on titles that could not readily be borrowed through interlibrary loan such as new imprints or titles that were not widely held. Purchases included both e-books and print copies, with preference given to the electronic format when available. Since one goal was to match the speed on article delivery, print books were initially given directly to patrons rather than first passing through the cataloging process. This practice led to many questions and a mixture of patron reactions from delight to bewilderment.

Phase II of the POD pilot began in January 2014. A key goal at this time was to bring other units from the Collections and Technical Services Department into the process but to do so without slowing it down. Several changes were implemented following a discussion with a broader group from the CTS Department and regular meetings of key stakeholders. First, a process was put in place to have all print titles reviewed by Collection Management to determine in advance what to retain for the collection. Next, procedures were implemented to facilitate expedited ordering, processing, and fast cataloging of such materials. The stakeholders group also reviewed and updated the purchase criteria to make it as straightforward and simple to apply as possible. Finally, to facilitate better tracking, a new POD fund code was created for books and e-books beginning with fiscal year 2015.

What Gets Purchased?

For articles, certain types of requests have often proved problematic to fulfill through normal ILL channels. These included ahead-of-print articles, embargoed aggregator content, and recently cancelled journal subscriptions. Adding POD has provided a means to fulfill ILL requests from Virginia Tech patrons that otherwise might have been cancelled. The Get It Now service from the Copyright Clearance Center is the first choice for fulfilling these kinds of requests. There is a limit of \$100 per request for all patron types although higher cost items may be approved at the discretion of the Head of Acquisitions.

For books, requested materials may be unavailable from another library (new imprints,

limited holdings, etc.) or they may simply be less expensive to purchase outright than to borrow through Interlibrary Loan. As with articles there is a limit of \$100 per request for all patron types. Higher cost items may be approved by the Head of Acquisitions or the Associate Director for Collection Management. In some cases these more expensive requests may be charged to a specific subject fund code rather than to the generic 1POD fund.

The following represents a simplified version of the workflow shown in Figure 1 that we use now:

- ILL request arrives from VT patron.
- If available—fulfill normally.
- If unavailable for loan—use GOBI, Amazon, & Alibris for books or Get It Now for articles.
- If not available as POD or does not meet criteria—request cancelled.
- If available as POD:
 - Articles?—ordered and sent to patron,
 - Ebook?—ordered and added to collection.
 - Print?—retention decision made, then order is placed.

For books, an email template with bibliographic and patron information is generated by Illiad when a purchase on demand transaction is initiated by ILL staff. The request is reviewed by the Associate Director for Collection Management to determine what to keep for the collection. These decisions are usually made the same day and conveyed back to ILL and to the acquisitions staff. Most print books are kept but some items including celebrity biographies, religious instruction, travel guides, etc., may not fit our collection profile as an academic library. Print copies are ordered with rush shipping. Upon receipt, print books ordered via POD go through the “fast cat” process to add them to the collection or are routed directly to circulation so the patron may pick them up.

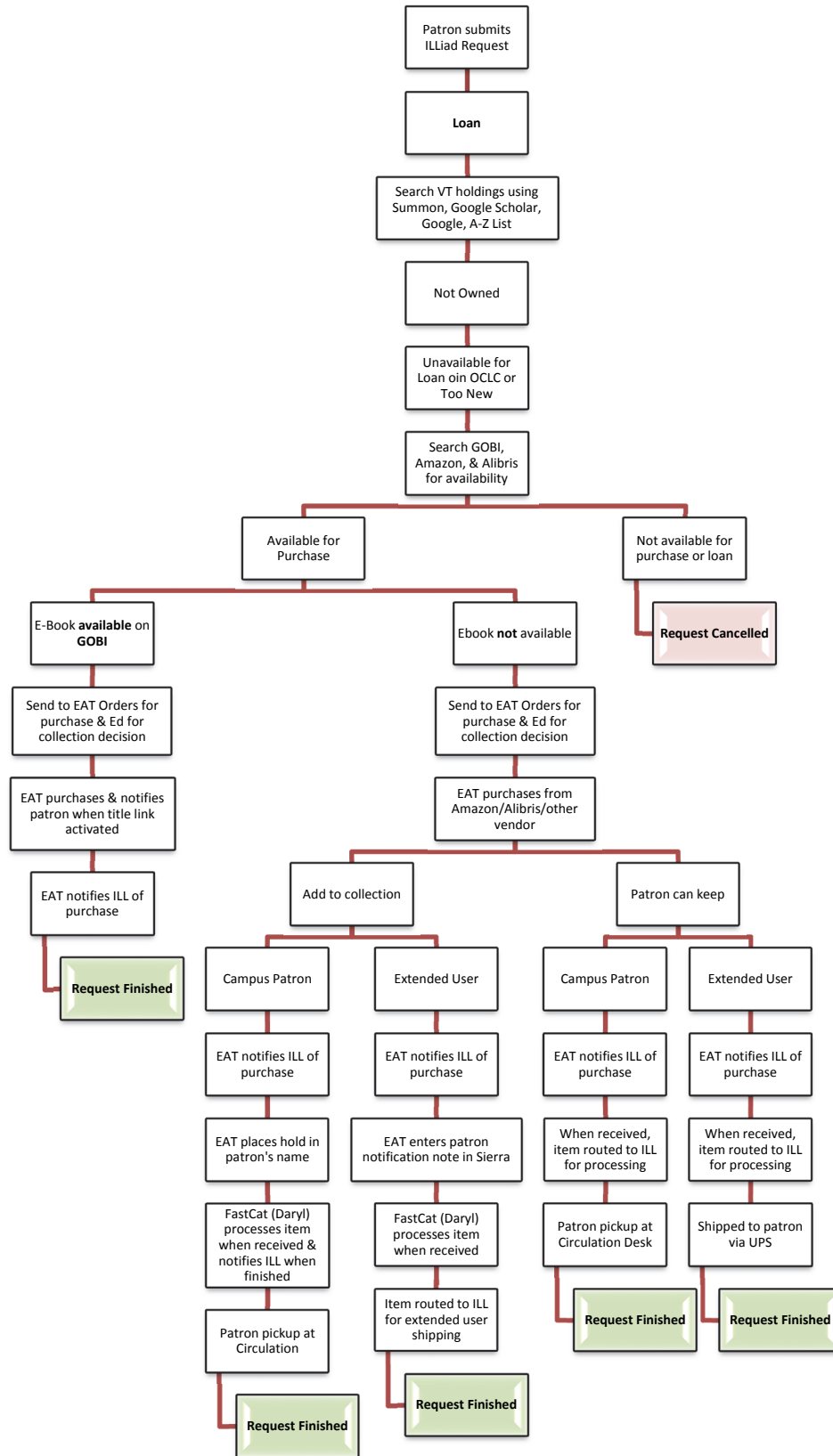


Figure 1. Purchase on demand workflow in Interlibrary Loan and Acquisitions.

POD Program Statistics (May 2013 to September 2014)

Books and E-Books

POD Collection Decision	FY 2013–2014	FY 2014–2015	Cumulative Total
Added	144	93	237
% Added	52.36%	94.90%	63.54%
Patron	131	5	136
% to Patron	47.64%	0.17%	36.46%
Total	275	98	373

POD Patron Distribution—Books	FY 2013–2014	% of Total (FY 2013–2014)	FY 2014–2015	% of Total (FY 2014–2015)	Since Inception	% of Total (Since Inception)
Faculty	107	38.91%	37	37.37%	144	38.50%
Graduate	133	48.36%	51	51.52%	184	49.20%
Undergraduate	13	4.73%	3	3.03%	16	4.28%
Staff	22	8.00%	8	8.08%	30	8.02%
Total	275		99		374	

POD Price Breakdown—Books	FY 2013–2014	FY 2014–2015	Since Inception	% of Total (Since Inception)
under \$10	30	4	34	9.12%
\$10–\$24.99	130	44	174	46.65%
\$25–\$49.99	80	31	111	29.76%
over \$50.00	35	19	54	14.48%
Total	275	98	373	

POD Price Breakdown—Books	FY 2013–2014	FY 2014–2015	Since Inception	% of Total (Since Inception)
under \$10	30	4	34	9.12%
\$10–\$24.99	130	44	174	46.65%
\$25–\$49.99	80	31	111	29.76%
over \$50.00	35	19	54	14.48%
Total	275	98	373	

Articles

POD Patron Distribution	Articles
Faculty	303
Graduate	572
Undergraduate	49
Staff	17

Overall

POD items	# Purchased	\$ Spent
Articles	941	\$ 31,782.79
Books	373	\$ 10,397.36
Total	1314	\$ 42,180.15

Future Goals and Program Considerations

We have already made considerable progress in the adoption of POD. An ongoing goal is to integrate content delivery processes more fully within the Collections and Technical Services Department, including functions such as

acquisitions, ILL, serials, and collection management. Refining the data from ILLiad and our ILS will also help in better supporting collection-related decisions. While still under deliberation, we may also seek in the future to make subject-based fund code assignments for more POD orders.

References

Stovall, C., Lener, E., & Gilmore, T. (2013) Redesigning workflows and implementing demand driven. acquisition at Virginia Tech: One year later. In *Charleston Conference Proceedings, 2013*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press. Retrieved from <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/charleston/2013/Acquisitions/13/>