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# Patron Driven Acquisitions: Integrating Print Books with eBooks

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**vanDuinkerken, Wyoma**. "Bringing Public Services Experience to Technical Services: Improvements In Practice." *Library Collections, Acquisitions & Technical Services* 33 (2009): 51-58.

**Endnotes**

1. **Price** and **McDonald**, "Beguiled by Bananas: A Retrospective Study of the Usage & Breadth of Patron Vs. Librarian Acquired Ebook Collections."
2. **Spitzform**, "Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Collecting as If Money and Space Mean Something."
3. **Hussong-Christian** and **Goergen-Doll**, "We're Listening: Using Patron Feedback to Assess and Enhance Purchase on Demand."
4. **van Duinkerken**, "Bringing Public Services Experience to Technical Services: Improvements In Practice."
5. **Hussong-Christian** and **Goergen-Doll**, "We're Listening: Using Patron Feedback to Assess and Enhance Purchase on Demand."
6. **Barnhart**, "Want Buy-In? Let Your Students Do the Buying! A Case Study of Course-Integrated Collection Development."

## Acquisitions Archaeology
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ous expectations generated among members of our information ecosystem. Keeping in mind both the emerging options (and also restrictions) in content formats and use "rights," as well as the specific mission of each respective library, ethical engagement with our community must account for the variables that go into decisions about content acquisition. Recognizing the mutual dependence of all the stakeholders in the ecosystem (and the expectations that such dependence, in turn, conditions) is a critical starting point for determining our obligations. However, expectations born of mutual dependence do not always imply that a rigid or preset structure of ethical obligations can be imposed. Balancing the library's mission and resource limitations with the shifting economic, legal, and social context in which it functions creates a challenge to universalizing obligations.

The "question" of obligations in terms of ethical decision-making is not really a single question to be answered definitively. Rather, it is more a question of how to think about expectations and related obligations. Beyond some basic, foundational obligations (e.g., ordering selected content, paying invoices, etc.), subtle expectations are just that: expectations. We are more likely (and most productively) to address competing expectations through an approach that favors negotiation to pronouncement. We should frame our approach to ethics as a way of thinking that

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# Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Integrating Print Books with eBooks

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### Introduction and Background

**Cowles Library** at **Drake University** has had a successful eBook patron-driven acquisitions program in place — using **E-Book Library (EBL)** — since fall 2009. We are a small, private, academic library with 4623 FTE, and we're one of the first academic libraries in the Midwest to employ PDA. We deem the program to be successful because we have broadened access to materials (with 124,000+ titles available via our catalog) at the point of need at a minimal cost. Because the value of eBooks available to our users is over $10 million, it would obviously not be feasible to purchase these titles "just-in-case." Between short-term loans and purchases, we have spent a total of $37k over the last three years on this project, which averages slightly over $12k per year.

The reasons we decided to expand PDA into print were the same as for the **EBL** program: expanding access to more materials and more effective utilization of the monograph budget. We undertook a study to examine usage of books purchased on our approval plan with Blackwell from 2007-2009. We defined usage to be a checkout or in-house use. During that time we spent $238k on 5858 books. Of those, 1970 (34%) were used at least once, and 3888 (66%) were not used. We consider a "use" to be the measure of success, and given that measure, our approval plan has been less than successful. We are aware that this closely mirrors other studies (Kent, 1979; Task Force on Print Collection Usage, 2010).

### Selecting a Vendor

We initiated the **EBL** program as a pilot and have since dedicated a permanent budget line to this form of access. Since we had been successful with PDA eBooks, we sought to determine the feasibility of adding print to the mix. We were looking to avoid duplication between the formats, and we decided early on that we preferred a vendor that could provide an integrated print and electronic book profile. In 2011 we began evaluating a handful of vendors for the integrated PDA pilot, and while most vendors offer both electronic and print formats, we ultimately decided on **Ingram-Coutts** because of their ability to integrate PDA formats the way we desired. We did not previously have a relationship with **Ingram** but had seen their system in operation at **ALA** 2011 in New Orleans and thought it could work for us. The final deciding factor was **Ingram's** ability to meet the technical objectives we had outlined for the request process.

### Technical Objectives

We had two technical objectives we hoped to accomplish with the pilot. First, we wanted to make the request process as convenient for the patron as possible. One convenience is the ability to view book availability information before filling out the request form, and the **Ingram** stock-check API allowed us to provide that. Another convenience is the option to rush books when needed; we realized that if the service could make PDA books available to patrons in a few days, rather than a few weeks, it would be an attractive option.

Second, we wanted to provide our Acquisitions Department with the necessary information about both the book (e.g., fund code) and the requester (e.g., patron status) without requiring extra work of either the patron or the Acquisitions Associate. We accomplished this by customizing the URL in the 856|u MARC field and creating the necessary fields in the request form. For example, the fund code is provided by **Ingram** as a parameter of the URL (see the "Customization and APIs" section below for an example), so when the user clicks on the URL to arrive at the request form, the fund code is stored in the form as a hidden field value. Upon form submission, the fund code is then included with the rest of the field values that are emailed to Acquisitions.

### Building Profiles with Faculty Involvement

We decided on a pilot project with our four professional programs as subject areas: Business, Journalism, Education, and Pharmacy. We have exceptionally-engaged liaisons from these programs and had already garnered their agreement to work with us on developing profiles for this project. These departments agreed to divert their library monograph allocation to fund the pilot; rather than submit monograph (print or electronic) orders for "just-in-case" purchasing, they would instead let users and faculty in their areas find and purchase materials at the point of need.

Our profiling sessions included representatives from Ingram, the Collection Development Coordinator, the Acquisitions Manager, the

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librarian assigned to the department as liaison, and the faculty liaison. Our initial strategy was to use the "slip" plan profile that we had in place with another vendor as the starting point for our PDA profiles. However, we ended up rewriting the profiles for these four areas. Teaching faculty were present to ensure that the profiles would match, as closely as possible, the curriculum taught in their respective areas. Library faculty were present to shepherd the process and to make sure there were no glaring gaps in content or publishers.

We wrote the profile much like a traditional approval profile, keeping in mind that it was for both print and electronic, and that the end result would be catalog records for discovery by patrons, not actual book orders or slips sent to librarians for review. When we created the profile we did indicate "book" and "slip" just like we would for a traditional approval profile. We had **Ingram** do a back-run report so that we could see which records would have been generated based upon our profile.

In addition to the usual "non-subject parameter" decisions, we had to make decisions about the print and eBook parts of the profile. Specifically, do we prefer print or eBook? As mentioned above, we did not want duplicate formats in the catalog. Librarians strongly preferred eBook over print, but this was not initially shared by the faculty liaisons. Eventually, after some persuasion from the librarians to the teaching faculty, and from the teaching faculty to their colleagues, it was agreed by each discipline to go with electronic over print, when available. The major factors that were useful for the faculty in persuading their colleagues were immediate availability of the material versus having to request the library to order it, convenience, and ease of access for students taking distance courses.

The next decision involved the wait period for an eBook before the print record was supplied, given the fact that most publishers do not simultaneously publish both print and electronic versions of their material. We decided to wait two or three months, after which time if an eBook version is not available, we will load a print record. Additionally, we decided upon a price differential between electronic and print. That is, if the electronic version is more than 130% higher than the print, we will load the print record instead of electronic.

### Workflow

Fortunately, we were able to apply the workflow we use for our **EBL** PDA collection to the new eBook pilot. The call number is "E-BOOK," item type is "E-BOOK," and we code the **Ingram** eBook collection (as well as other eBook and online collections, such as **EBL**) in a custom field of the item record. Also, the "Permanent" flag of the item record is set to "No." We arranged with **Ingram** to customize the MARC call number and URL fields, and the profile that loads the records into the ILS automatically assigns the item type, collection, and permanence. As a result, no manipulation of the MARC records is necessary, and we can simply load them into the ILS upon receipt. When an eBook is purchased, a local note — "Perpetual access" — is added to the bibliographic record, and the permanent flag on the item record is set to "Yes." This allows us to differentiate via system reports which **Ingram** eBooks are PDA and which have been purchased without having to move purchased titles to a separate location, call number, and collection identifier.

The workflow for purchased print books is a bit more complicated. Ingram sends records with a custom call number of "On Demand" and a custom 856 field (see Customization and APIs). The item type is BOOK, the location is INGRAM-P, and the Permanent flag is set to "No." When a print PDA book is purchased, **Ingram** sends an email notification to the requester as soon as the book is shipped (this is optional). When the book arrives at the library for processing, our cataloger changes the location to STACKS, sets the Permanent flag to "Yes," adds the appropriate LC call number, and removes the 856 field from the MARC record. After processing, Acquisitions sends an email notifying the requester that the book is available for pickup.

### Customization and APIs

We used the 856|u in the MARC record of print PDA to provide users with a link to a form on the library's Website. Because we added the form's page to our proxy configuration, and the URL includes our proxy prefix, off-campus users are required to authenticate with their University credentials before they can fill out the form. Here is what one of the custom URLs looks like:

*http://library.drake.edu/request-book/?isbn=9781579224608&title=Leaders%20of%20learning&fund=EDUC*

The form, modeled after one used by **The University of Vermont Libraries**, accomplishes three things:

1) Upon arriving at the form page, an API call is sent to **Ingram** to check availability of the title (based on the ISBN that is passed to the form as a URL parameter). If the API response indicates availability within a certain threshold, a "Rush delivery is available" message is displayed.

2) We can collect additional information about the requester, such as patron status, how soon they need the book, and any additional comments. When the requester submits the form, the response is emailed directly to our Acquisitions Associate.

3) Finally, the form submission collects the patron's email address, their rush/no rush preference, and ISBN, and passes them in an API request to **Ingram**. This generates a request for the book that simultaneously sends a confirmation email to our Acquisitions Associate, who must then ratify or deny the request.

While one doesn't need to be a programming expert to deal with the APIs, having access to someone with HTML, XML, and/or PHP experience will be useful. **Ingram** was helpful in providing references for other libraries that had configured their API, as well as a brief document describing the structure of a sample API request, but we were essentially left to our own devices to determine how to incorporate the API calls and responses into our environment. APIs are becoming increasingly common with vendor services, and if your library has dealt with APIs before, **Ingram's** should not present major problems for you.

### Rollout

We initially loaded 1541 print book records and 729 eBook records. The pilot finally went live during late April 2012 with a "soft" rollout. We announced the rollout to our group of faculty liaisons, and they communicated the service to their departments. This low-key approach was intentional, and we hoped it would lead to a more accurate picture of demand for the service. We wanted users to encounter these materials during the normal course of discovery, rather than go looking for the "new on-demand stuff." As of publication we have ordered five PDA print books (cost=$233) and ten eBooks (cost=$457), and we have had no requests for "rush" delivery.

### Project Summary and Next Steps

At this point we are not ready to determine whether the project is successful or not, since it has only been in place for slightly over four months; but we have decided to extend the pilot for another academic year. The factors that we will eventually use to determine success are: level of adoption, increase in breadth of scholarly resources, and sustainability in developing the knowledge base. Future considerations include refining existing profiles to generate more records; expanding into additional subject areas; developing weeding procedures for the bibliographic records in the catalog; discussing the role of **EBL** as the pilot expands (there is overlap between the Ingram and **EBL** collections); and examining whether this program should be expanded to supplement interlibrary loan, as some colleges and universities are already doing. A broader issue deals with the monograph budget and the allocation of funds. What is the proper mix of "just-in-time" and "just-in-case" purchasing of monographs? At this point we anticipate continuing a hybrid model. We believe strongly in the purchase of "core" materials and do not anticipate abdicating the role of our librarians in this process.

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