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Demand Driven Acquisitions at UC Merced

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Demand-Driven Acquisitions at UC Merced

by **Jim Dooley** (Head of Collection Services, University of California Merced)
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As the **University of California, Merced** enters its seventh year, the student body continues to grow rapidly (now 5,200, an increase of 15% over last year). This growth has occurred in spite of the serious recession affecting California. While the recession has resulted in more than one billion dollars in cuts to state support of the **University of California** system, the Legislature and the UC Office of the President have continued to support the growth of **UC Merced**. The chief constraint on future growth is the delay in the construction of necessary academic buildings caused by the recession.

Library collections and operations budgets have remained relatively flat. While this is good news in comparison to libraries that have experienced significant cuts, library budgets have not kept pace with the increases in students and faculty. The collections budget has been impacted by the necessity to provide expensive electronic resources in support of the specialized research interests of newly-hired faculty. The response to this situation will likely be a continued reduction in the purchase of print monographs.

The library collection continues to be approximately 90% electronic, and electronic resources comprise over 80% of the total information resources budget. There are effectively no print serials; patrons have access to over 70,000 subscription and free online journals. While the library houses just over 100,000 books and DVDs, it provides access to over 700,000 e-monographs, including government documents, reference works, and e-books. Library patrons have access to the 37 million volumes **University of California** collection through the libraries internal borrowing system called Request.

The library first began to acquire e-books through a subscription to **ebrary Academic Complete**. The intent is to retain this subscription because it provides access to a large number of titles at a very low cost per use. Usage statistics continue to demonstrate that this resource is heavily used. The library also participates in systemwide licenses for **Springer** and **Wiley** e-books. The **Springer** agreement covers 2005-2011 publication dates and may be extended through 2012; the **Wiley** agreement includes 2011 titles only. **Springer** usage continues to be significant; chapter downloads continue to equal approximately 80% of total annual print circulation. While the library continues to employ these means of acquiring e-books, patron selection plans remain the exclusive method of title-by-title acquisition of e-books.

Why patron selection? The answer lies in the “long tail” phenomenon — some titles are accessed large numbers of times, while others are not accessed at all. A study published in *Library Resources & Technical Services* in 2010 showed that an average of 35.5% of print books purchased on approval by two large **ARL** libraries did not circulate within 21 to 33 months of receipt. Both libraries spent a combined \$381,723 on books that did not circulate during the study period. For the **Springer** e-books purchased by the **UC** system, 19% were not accessed even once in 2010, 73% were accessed at least once, and 8% were accessed more than 100 times. These are simply two examples of the unsustainability of “just-in-case” purchasing of library materials.

The **UC Merced Library** has patron selection e-book plans with **EBL** and **Coutts/MyiLibrary**. The plans are structured differently. The entire **EBL** catalogue is visible to **UC Merced** patrons; this includes titles that would not ordinarily be acquired by an academic library, e.g., travel guides, popular psychology books, etc. A title is purchased on the fourth access after three short-term loans. The **Coutts/MyiLibrary** plan is limited by publisher to research-level STEM titles; there are no short-term loans, so a title is purchased on the second access.

Over several years, the library has averaged 154 transactions per month with **EBL**. A transaction is either a short-term loan or a purchase; it does not include free browsing. During the same period the library has averaged four purchases per month and nine transactions per month involving non-academic content. The latter is significant in that it appears to demonstrate that opening the entire **EBL** catalogue has not resulted in significant costs for non-academic content. As currently configured, the **EBL** plan is functioning as a very cost-effective supplement to traditional ILL rather than as a mechanism to purchase significant numbers of titles. The average short-

term loan costs \$15.00, and the average purchase \$85.30. Short-term loans for the non-academic content average \$3.00.

An average of six titles per month is purchased through the **Coutts/MyiLibrary** plan with the average purchase price being \$121.50. This is understandable given the focus of the plan on relatively expensive STEM titles.

Overall, both plans have helped to produce a balanced e-book collection, have resulted in predictable expenditures in spite of the significant increase in the size of the student body, and have provided good value. There is no evidence that patron selection has produced an e-book collection inferior in quality to what would have been selected by librarians. There is also no evidence that any individual purchaser has had an inordinate influence on the shape of the collection. Even exposing large amounts of non-academic content has not skewed the collection.

Expenditures for **EBL** have averaged \$2,640 per month during the past two years with little variation. It is to be expected that expenditures will trend higher with increases in the number of students, but there have not been wild swings that would impact the information resources budget.

Average costs were given above. The costs for **EBL** short-term loans in particular represent significant savings over the costs of traditional print ILL. Most important, all the costs were incurred in providing titles that were actually used. During the past two years, 4% of the available **EBL** titles have been browsed. If the library had purchased an additional 2% of the available titles, that would have been an expenditure of over \$250,000 for un-accessed titles. In the context of cost avoidance and “just-in-time” acquisition, PDA continues to represent good value for the **UC Merced Library**.

At the end of Spring semester 2011 the library ended its program to loan laptops to students. While popular with students, this program proved to be financially unsustainable and also unnecessary as almost all **UC Merced** students have personal computers. An important priority is to make as many information resources as possible available through mobile devices. The library still does not maintain a reference desk staffed by librarians; reference services are provided through a triage model with librarians available as necessary. Online reference is provided through participation in **OCLC** Question Point. Food and drink continue to be allowed throughout the building. This has not resulted in damage to the collection or the building.

Many important developments continue to occur at the systemwide level as the **UC Libraries**

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Pilot to Program

The DDAPIT is excited to announce that Council has unanimously agreed to move forward with the DDA E-book Program for FY2013, at a funding level of \$750,000 to be distributed according to the team’s recommended 30-35-35 formula. More importantly, it has reaffirmed its strong commitment to a shared e-book collection for the **Orbis-Cascade Alliance** and declared its intent to increase funding for FY2014 to \$1,000,000. A reconstituted e-book team has been created to administer the program moving forward, as there are still many technical challenges that need to be addressed in the coming year. 🍌

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continue to work toward greater cooperation and efficiencies. In 2009 the UC Collection Development Committee developed a document titled *The University of California Library Collection: Content for the 21st Century and Beyond* that was endorsed by the University Librarians (http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/uc_concept_paper_endorsed_ULs_2009.08.13.pdf).

One of the most significant aspects of this document was the explicit statement reflected in the title that the **UC Library** collection was to be managed as one collection rather than as ten separate collections. In support of this vision and as a means of reducing unnecessary duplication across the system, various shared print activities are underway. One project is to identify lightly-used print series that one campus will agree to collect so other libraries can cancel their subscriptions. Such materials will be owned in common rather than by an individual library and will be managed according to agreed policies. In order for such projects to succeed, and receive faculty support, there must be a very robust resource-sharing system in place. Currently work is underway to rationalize loan periods across the campuses.

Along with developments in collection management, the Next Generation Technical Services initiative seeks to “redesign techni-

cal services workflows across the full range of library formats in order to take advantage of new system-wide capabilities and tools, minimize redundant activities, improve efficiency, and foster innovation in collection development and management to the benefit of **UC Library** users” (<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/index.html>). A series of teams made recommendations that were approved and prioritized by the University Librarians in December 2010. In 2011, implementation teams have been created in the following areas:

- Build the system-wide infrastructure for digital collections
 - Transform cataloging practices
 - Accelerate processing of archival and manuscript collections
 - Simplify the recharge process
 - Maximize the effectiveness of the Shared Cataloging Program
 - Develop system-wide collections services operations
 - Transform collection development practices
- Specific information about the activities and progress of these teams is available at (<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/sopag>).

The ongoing development of **HathiTrust** will have significant impacts on collection management in the **UC Libraries**. According

to the **HathiTrust Update on September Activities** there are now almost 10.5 million volumes in **HathiTrust** with almost 3.2 million of these being in the public domain and thus available online with full text to users at partner institutions. The **University of California** is the second largest contributor of digitized content to **HathiTrust** with almost 3.15 million volumes ingested. Records for **HathiTrust** titles are being continually loaded into WorldCat and **HathiTrust** has developed a catalog based on **OCLC WorldCat Local**. At its recent Constitutional Convention, the organization agreed to investigate becoming involved in the archiving of print monographs and U.S. Federal documents. It is reasonable to believe that these developments in mass digitization and print archiving will allow significant print deduplication within the **UC Libraries** with corresponding cost savings and repurposing of space.

Libraries are also attempting to repurpose space by addressing deduplication of print journal collections. One such initiative is the Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST). The **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** has funded development of an operating and business model and initial implementation for a distributed retrospective print journal repository involving many research libraries and library consortia in the western United States including the **University of California**. The **California Digital Library** is providing ongoing operational and management support to WEST. 🌸

Letting the Patrons Drive... Research Library Acquisitions?

by **Martha Hruska** (Associate University Librarian for Collection Services, UC San Diego)



With a collection of over three-and-a-half million volumes, the **UC San Diego Library** supports undergraduate and graduate instructional programs, as well as advanced research for a campus community of approximately 30,000. The Library is currently in the process of restructuring to best meet the academic objectives of their primary clientele in an increasingly digital and mobile information environment with constrained resources.

Developing and sustaining the collections and information resources needed to support a large public university has always been a fairly collaborative endeavor. Very few large public university libraries have ever been in a position to acquire and collect everything published in all the fields relevant to their university's many academic disciplines. Rather, the fairly common practice has been to assign subject specialists to liaise with the academic faculty departments and, thus, better focus and select the library's collections to match the campus' research interests and curricula. This approach continues to be the practice at the **University of California, San Diego**.

However, it has become ever more challenging to meet our users' expectations for immediate access to an ever broader array of informa-

tion resources, most especially while our budget has continued to decline. This has meant a loss of staffing and a reduction in the funds available to support collections and operations. Especially at a time when we are re-defining our research library collection more broadly to include materials we have selectively digitized from our special collections, born-digital Websites, data files and sets, and licensed electronic resources, we have needed to rethink the priority activities that our specialized staff can focus on.

For years we have made it a priority to acquire the current scholarly publications our campus community needs as efficiently and as economically as possible. As part of the **UC Library** system, we collaborate on the purchase and cataloging access to ejournals and database packages. Subject specialists/selectors have continually refined our approval plans and profiles to tailor these to reflect **UC San Diego's** strengths. They also collaborate with their colleagues at other UC campuses to coordinate shared prospective monograph purchasing. Since e-books emerged a few years ago, we have been actively experimenting with how best to make these available to the campus.

Our early e-book experiences included **NetLibrary** and publisher packages, largely

in the sciences, such as Safari O'Reilly Tech Books and Knovel. Then in 2010, the **California Digital Library** negotiated a UC system-wide license for the **Springer** e-book package. Around this time, **UC San Diego** licensed the aggregated e-book package offered in **ebrary's** Academic Complete e-book database. These and other of our early e-book acquisitions basically followed the same models as has been our experience with ejournal packages and aggregated databases. But e-books have in many ways been even more difficult to integrate into our collection strategies. The market, the content available, the business models, and the access platforms all continue to be very much in flux. And just about equally variable has been the demand and use of the e-books we have made available. Needless to say, our experience with e-books continues to be iterative and experimental, learning as we go.

Around 2010, we made the decision not to continue with the aggregated package of Academic Complete, but to redirect what we had been spending on it to seed our first Patron-Driven e-book Acquisition (PDA) pilot project. The emerging models for PDA were appealing for the opportunity to engage more directly and immediately with users' needs. Of course, PDA

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