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Interrogating Demand: Pathways Toward Purchase in Patron-Influenced E-Book Models; University of California-wide Demand-Driven Acquisitions—E-Book Hopes and Dreams Revisited

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Abstract

From January 2013 to date, the University of California has piloted a system-wide e-book demand driven access (DDA) program comprised of University Press publications in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. This paper reviews the pilot's progress, specifically focusing on how well it has achieved the hopes and dreams laid out by several of the participating campus librarians prior to the pilot's launch.

In January 2013, nine of the ten University of California campuses initiated a system-wide demand driven (DDA) e-book acquisitions pilot with ebrary as the e-book supplier and YBP as the DDA purchasing management system. The only campus that declined to participate in the pilot program was the University of California San Francisco, our medical campus, due to their specific collection needs. In the areas of the arts, humanities, and social sciences, the pilot focused on making university press titles accessible for short-term loan (STL) and purchase. The attention on the chosen subject areas and the specific presses was by design. The STEM subject areas had been successfully purchasing and demonstrating the need and value of e-books, and the arts, humanities, and social sciences had had fewer opportunities to experiment with e-book acquisition across the UC system. The pilot offered an opportunity for the arts, humanities, and social sciences to test patron interest in e-books. Further, the University of California system-wide collections group wanted to support university presses, and the pilot was a chance to do that by exposing university press content for demand-driven interest across the UCs.

The pilot was overseen by a task force comprised of librarian representatives from the nine participating campuses as well as a licensing expert from the California Digital Library (CDL). The license was negotiated with the CDL representative, and the shared catalog records for the DDA discovery pool were managed by the University of California's Shared Cataloging Program. In total, 63 university presses exposed their DDA-eligible content for the pilot. We included publications from 2010–2015 in the discovery pool and, as of the end of October 2015, 4,620 DDA-eligible records have been uploaded into the UC's shared catalog.

In November 2012, two months prior to the pilot's launch, several UC colleagues put together a presentation for the Charleston Conference that outlined our hopes and dreams for the pilot [see *Collective Collection Building and DDA*, http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315306]. This paper revisits those hopes and dreams and assesses the pilot against them.

Hopes and Dreams

Prior to the launch of the DDA pilot, the UC system-wide collections group had developed a set of guiding principles for e-book acquisition. The principles became known as the UC E-Book Value Statement. The DDA Pilot afforded an opportunity to test those principles, among which were Digital Rights Management (DRM), full-book ILL lending, and ADA compliance, among others. Given the constraints on collection budgets throughout the system, the pilot was also viewed as an opportunity to expand or redefine the breadth and depth of the UC-wide collections. In theory, if we were collectively purchasing university press titles for the system in e-format, there would be funds left over to redirect to purchases that were unique to the campuses. Finally, we hoped the pilot would provide a

method to improve user access to content as well as help us learn more about how our users interacted with e-books.

A Mixed Bag

In the end, very little of the agreement we reached with ebrary and the 63 publishers included in the pilot matched most of our UC E-Book Value Statement. We did not negotiate publishers out of using DRM or into full-book ILL privileges, and on one campus ADA compliance was an issue—specifically with the ebrary screen reader. While the ebrary screen reader worked, it was not the reader of choice. ADA compliance allows the patron in need of accommodation to identify his or her preferred screen reader, rather than requiring him or her to use the screen reader supplied by the vendor. Expanding the breadth and depth of our system-wide collections was similarly a dream delayed. Print duplication of e-books ordered through the pilot and the inability to effectively and consistently manage deduplication at the campus level was an issue. Instead of repurposing funds for new and unique content, many of the campuses spent funds on the same content in two different formats. Perhaps not surprisingly, print duplication of titles purchased through the e-DDA pilot was highest on the campuses that did not also have a local e-DDA plan in place. Conversely, campuses with a local e-DDA plan that also participated in the system-wide pilot had much lower levels of print duplication for e-book titles included in the pilot. YBP did introduce a method to match local approval profiles against consortial approval profiles and dedupe accordingly, but the campuses did not implement this option. In the future, campuses will likely explore the option as well as develop local methodologies for handling duplication. Given that print and e-book simultaneous publication dates are still not in the majority, in the near term, there will always be some risk of e- and print duplication without intervention.

Where the pilot did realize two of our stated hopes was in improving user access and learning more about patron use of e-books.

As of the end of October 2015:

- 11% of the discovery pool was purchased: 514 titles

- 3,189 short-term loans (STL) were triggered

- 55% of the STLs triggered were for unique titles

The usage data for purchased content was impressive.

- The top used title had 17,601 uses post purchase

- The second top used title had 14,864 uses post purchase

- 26 titles had zero post purchase usage (1% of the purchased titles) but largely represented recently triggered titles (June–October 2015 purchases)

Patrons are using the content and also selecting the publishers we would be most likely to choose on our own.

Our top five triggered publishers did not surprise us:

1. University of California Press

2. University of Chicago Press

3. NYU Press

4. Oxford University Press

5. Stanford University Press

Social science, history, literature, literary criticism, and business and economics were the top five triggered (purchase and STL combined) subject areas, in the order listed.

How Does This All Stack Up?

This has been a productive experiment in consortial e-book purchasing in the arts, humanities and social sciences. [Although we have not been successful in changing the publisher stance about the need for DRM or in influencing a change in ILL practice, we have been able to effectively launch a system-wide e-book program

that supports university presses, and that has, based on the usage data gathered to date, served as a useful discovery and access tool for our user population. While we have not quite expanded the breadth and depth of our system-wide collections because of the print duplication issues encountered during the pilot, it is highly likely that duplication issues can be worked out through vendor interventions, local interventions, or both. We have improved access to content and we have learned a lot about usage. Finally, we have determined that much as in STEM, arts, humanities, and social sciences content is desirable in e-format, too.