

Against the Grain

Volume 25 | Issue 2

Article 13

April 2013

How Technology Fee Funding Transformed Collection Decisions at the University of Central Florida

Michael A. Arthur

University of Central Florida Libraries, maarthur@ua.edu

Natasha White

University of Central Florida Libraries, natasha.white@ucf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Arthur, Michael A. and White, Natasha (2013) "How Technology Fee Funding Transformed Collection Decisions at the University of Central Florida," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 25: Iss. 2, Article 13.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6472>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

How Technology Fee Funding Transformed Collection Decisions at the University of Central Florida

by **Michael A. Arthur** (Head of Collection Development and Acquisitions, University of Central Florida Libraries) <michael.arthur@ucf.edu>

and **Natasha White** (Senior Library Technical Assistant, University of Central Florida Libraries) <Natasha.white@ucf.edu>

Introduction

In 2007, the Florida Legislature addressed the need for technology funding at the eleven state universities. The change permitted each university to collect technology fees from students at the rate of 5% of tuition. The new fees went into effect at the start of the 2009-2010 academic year. Each university is able to determine the process for distribution of the funds. The **University of Central Florida** made the decision to establish a review committee consisting of sixteen members. A call for proposals is sent out each year that begins a competitive bid process by which university departments are permitted to submit proposals. Submissions must follow a detailed set of guidelines to ensure that the final product will be designed to enhance instructional technology resources for students and faculty. Each year the process becomes more competitive with requests for funding far exceeding the available funds.

The **UCF Libraries** has received over \$1.2M in technology fee funding since 2009 to fund the purchase of library materials. The availability of these funds impacted the acquisitions process in several ways. The Technology Fee process transformed how the library selects online materials, it raised expectations for how content can be acquired and delivered, and resulted in successfully acquiring previously unattainable content at deeply discounted prices.

Overview of the Technology Fee Process at UCF

Revenue generated by the Technology Fee is allocated by the **UCF Technology Fee Committee**, which consists of sixteen members. The Technology Fee Committee issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the fall of each academic year. Each RFP focuses on projects that enhance instructional technology resources for students and faculty. The committee defines instructional technology as information technology resources, services, or software that directly supports the development and delivery of instruction. **UCF** administrators

decided that the technology fee funds would be awarded through a competitive bid process.

The **UCF Libraries** has been successful with seven collection based proposals. Most of the successful proposals have shared the same key aspects. The focus has been on e-content that is available 24/7, with unlimited simultaneous access, IP authentication, and perpetual rights.

The goal continues to be providing new and exciting content that will enhance the education and research experience. After four years of this process the **UCF Libraries** has a proven track record developing outstanding proposals. The following list outlines the successful technology fee proposals since the program started in 2009.

About the University of Central Florida

- Established in 1963
- Total enrollment 59,767
- Total degree programs 212
- \$155 million in research funding
- \$1.4 billion operating budget

Successful Technology Fee Proposals

- 2009-2010 Springer Complete E-books 2005-2009
- 2010-2011 Oxford Scholarship Online and Oxford Handbooks Online
- 2010-2011 Springer Complete Backfiles & Protocols
- 2011-2012 Cambridge Books Online
- 2011-2012 Sage Backfiles
- 2012-2013 Alexander Street Press Streaming Video Collections
- 2012-2013 VHS to DVD Transition

A Transformation at UCF

During the planning for the first proposal, members of the library committee realized the impact that this process was going to have on the future direction of eBook acquisitions at **UCF**. As late as 2008, the **University of Central Florida**

Libraries did not have a focused approach regarding the migration to eBooks. A few purchases of large collections from *NetLibrary* (now *EBSCO E-books*) and *Early English Books Online* represented the bulk of eBook acquisitions. With the first technology fee award for *Springer Complete E-books 2005-2009*, the library began to rethink how eBooks fit into the collection development philosophy.

In 2010, the library began to consider the possibility of the technology fee as a long-term benefit. Those on the original committee began to think about what type of product would next be considered as a Technology Fee proposal. It became apparent that eBooks had been well received and the only question was how to utilize the Technology Fee funding within the

overall collection development process. A decision was made early on in the second year to stick with electronic books, and seek to balance the collection. *Oxford Scholarship Online* and *Handbooks* rose to the top in year two primarily because the collection addressed the important content delivery criteria while also supporting the humanities and social sciences, thus complementing the 2009 *Springer* purchase. While eBooks did not necessarily become a focal point of future submissions, the development of each proposal was based on how well possible packages could meet the access criteria previously mentioned and provide balance across subject areas. As the deadline for 2011 proposals approached, internal discussions centered on how best to continue incorporating purchases from technology fee funding into the larger collection building process. Once again the committee focused on the previous criteria for content delivery, balance across subjects, and the option for replacing print with online access. The 2011 awards for content from **Cambridge University Press** and **Sage Publications** were ideal.

Looking back through the past four years it is apparent that the opportunities provided to the library through receipt of over \$1.2M in additional funding have resulted in permanent changes to the acquisitions process. The library is now actively involved with the selection of eBooks through multiple platforms including **EBL** and **EBSCO**. eBooks are acquired through patron-driven acquisitions, librarian selection, and statewide and regional consortial purchases. An ever-growing percentage of monographs are now acquired in e-format, and future changes to the approval plan include selectively migrating to "e-preferred" in specific subject areas.

The Technology Fee has become a centerpiece of budget discussions as if it is guaranteed to the library. While success is not guaranteed, it is difficult to imagine not receiving funding after observing the impact the money has had on the library. The funding is necessary to offset continued budgetary shortfalls and the impact of inflation on subscriptions. The technology fee funding has become part of the strategic approach the library is using to fill gaps in the collection, explore new technologies for delivery, and provide access to large collections of highly regarded content

continued on page 34

that would otherwise be unattainable as a consequence of seven straight years without a budget increase.

Related to the transformation of acquisitions processes, vendor and publisher relations also experienced changes. As part of the development of the technology fee proposals, the library raised the level of expectation as it relates to value-added contributions from publishers and vendors. For the eBook packages, both **YBP Library Services** and the publishers were brought into the discussion early to establish the importance of having title level information in the GOBI database. Library selectors need this information in GOBI to prevent duplication with materials received via firm order or approval plan. Beginning with the first proposal there was a new expectation of publishers to provide marketing materials and to offer training, both online and in-person, so that librarians would be well equipped to use the products. The library utilized the marketing materials at various events on campus and in the library.

The size of each collection purchased with technology fee money provided the library with an opportunity to negotiate the

best price. Early on there was an expectation on the part of the library that publishers would be willing to provide lower pricing as a way to make a sale, and help convince the UCF Technology Fee Committee of the overall value. Publishers were advised of the process for evaluating the proposal; final pricing was well below the established list price. There was a willingness from publishers to provide the library with affordable pricing because of the amount of content sold and, in some cases, the fact that UCF would be an early adopter of the product.

Now in its fourth year, the technology fee process is incorporated into collection planning. Because of year-over-year stagnant budgets and the impact of inflation, the library has seen a dramatic decrease in buying power. These new funds provided faculty and students access to materials that the library was previously unable to purchase.

During the first three years of the Technology Fee process, the library focused on large publisher packages of eBooks or journal backfiles that addressed specific needs for long-term access, offered comprehensive publisher cov-

erage, and the ability to remove print holdings based on having perpetual rights. While building on the success of previous years, the 2012 proposals leveraged these funds to further experiment with new technology. These concepts fit right in with two emerging trends on campus: a steady increase in online courses and growing demand for video content. With this in mind, the library chose to break ground with the purchase of an extensive collection of streaming video. The **Alexander Street Press** collection met the previously outlined requirements for access and will impact the future purchase of physical DVDs.

As academic libraries struggle with diminished buying power and the larger issue of funding for higher education, the need for finding alternative revenue sources has become a priority. Upon identifying new funding sources and products to purchase, it is important to consider a long-term strategy. Instead of planning for the purchase of a single new resource, libraries should incorporate the planning and subsequent purchase into an overall CD policy that addresses current needs while exploring new ways of reaching library patrons. 🌱



Gifts, Funding, Innovating: An Acquisitions Transformation

by **Tiffany Russell** (Collection Management Librarian, North Carolina A&T State University) <tbrussel@ncat.edu>

Introduction

Within the library, Technical Services has long been a hidden segment of the library that handles acquisition, cataloging, and processing of all physical library materials. This mysterious department is considered quiet, locked away, and even unsocial. In fact, I once shared this opinion myself; as a paraprofessional working in public services in the early days I never saw anyone that worked in technical services, let alone had any grasp on what it was they did all day.



Background

When I first embarked upon the role as Head of Technical Services after working in the department for less than two years, I was ill prepared for all that was going to be thrust upon me. As a young librarian I was both excited and apprehensive about the future. A change in the tide was clearly evident.

We all knew that a great transformation was underway in technical services that had been

transpiring for years. With the advent of new technologies, the days of the traditional library position was fading. Studies have been done on

how we all use the library and do research. It is my experience that people will use information that is easy to find, even unreliable information, if it requires little effort on their part. And despite all the information literacy classes that librarians instruct at our library, students and other patrons rarely get enough exposure to the library information systems, such as the Web catalog and database collections. Today, instead of using the library, many of our potential users — including myself and my colleagues — often search Google. So it is an uphill battle. (Well, in reality the battle is over.) And in light of this dire situation, our library has come up with a solution that we hope will not be a temporary one to the mire before us.

Changes in Technical Services

The evolution of the library and budget shortfall due to the economic downturn has left

our technical services department with little to do and minimal opportunity to showcase our worth. Over the last two academic years our library has experienced a budget reduction that has eliminated our ability to acquire new print materials. Working with a smaller materials budget and no “soft” money (end-of-year funds given to the library which are used to pay the upcoming fiscal year invoices early) from the university has reduced our budget by twenty-eight percent. The normal allocation for print is completely depleted and it became apparent rather quickly that it is gone for good. With no new print materials to select, order, catalog, or process, we were forced to think about the immediate future for our own livelihood.

In an attempt to carve out another niche for ourselves, we have ventured into our dark storage rooms to uncover and evaluate our historic gift collection that over the years had grown to immense proportions.

Our gift collection is stored in specific areas throughout the library. Although valuable because of their age and content, the idea of managing these materials was not met with great enthusiasm. The books are older, dusty, and unattractive. Working in acquisitions during

continued on page 36