

Against the Grain

Volume 25 | Issue 2

Article 14

April 2013

Gifting, Funding, Innovating: An Acquisitions Transformation

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Recommended Citation

Russell, Tiffany (2013) "Gifting, Funding, Innovating: An Acquisitions Transformation," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 25: Iss. 2, Article 14.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6473>

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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

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more prosperous times meant that you saw new books everyday; the smell and the feel of new books is intoxicating. It was like Christmas all the time, opening boxes with surprises of new intriguing books, along the way. Being the first people to see the books and even check them out was great, but mulling through these historic materials was not as appealing at first glance.

Once we began to discover what we had, we were able to provide the cataloging department with materials to catalog and processing work for the acquisitions department as new books were diminishing, but we knew that in a short time all the books would be completed.

So then what?

Giftng Model

With the advent of our Institutional Repository (IR) it became obvious that we needed to corner the market on our in-house valuables as well as expand the number of these valuables. Being a **Historical Black University**, many of our archives contain treasures of African American History that we wanted to hold on to. Some treasures include collections from the 1960 sit-in at the Woolworth's lunch counter by four NC A&T freshmen, **First Lady Michelle Obama's** commencement materials, and artifacts of famous alumni such as politician and activist **Jesse Jackson** and **Astronaut Ronald McNair**. Using our archives as basis for discovery, we have formulated new projects to create collections for digital preservation.

While centering our focus on the historical and research value of our archives collection, the idea dawned on us that we should solicit similar items from our alumni, faculty, and our surrounding community. We are now in the preliminary stages of doing just that. We are creating promotional materials to distribute to alumni and engaging faculty to add to our collections. It is our goal that in the coming months and years our giftng will increase in size and quality. In the past the library has always received gifts but they were outdated, damaged, or already-owned works. Occasionally, we received gems, but those were rare when giftng was seen as a way to unload unwanted books onto the library — in some instances for merely a tax exemption. We are attempting to change that commonality. We want our user community to see the library as a place to store donors' valuables, not their refuse.

So, how do you make this happen, presenting the library as new and innovative? Our library now advertises the collections of our institutional repository and uses our display cases for expositions of our historical collections highlighting the legacy of the institution. Doing these two simple tasks initiates the transformation of the library. In the last few months these changes have resulted in more visitors venturing into the library, which is remarkable since the hardest undertaking is getting bodies in the physical library building.

Additional digitation projects and exposition proposals have transitioned technical services to focus more on outside sources of funding that will see these projects through to

against the grain people profile

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Mitchell Brown

BORN AND LIVED: Born in Colorado. Raised in Utah until three then moved to Maracaibo, Venezuela. Later moved to The Hague, Netherlands for elementary school. Returned to Central Texas briefly then middle school and high school in Arvada, Colorado. Undergraduate in Pittsburgh and graduate degree in Austin, Texas. Professional positions in Baton Rouge, LA and Princeton, NJ. Currently living in Costa Mesa, CA and working in Irvine, CA.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:

Research Librarian for Chemistry, Earth System Science and Russian Studies at **University of California Irvine** 2005 - present.

Scholarly Communications Coordinator at **University of California Irvine** 2011 - present.

Interim Mathematics, Physics and Astronomy Librarian at **University of California Irvine** 2006-07, 2008, 2012 - present.

Mathematics and Physics Librarian at **Princeton University** 2000-2005.

Plasma Physics Librarian at **Princeton University** 1999-2001.

Head, Chemistry Library at **Louisiana State University** 1994-1999.

FAMILY: Four sisters, four nephews, and one niece. Father retired and living in Huntsville, TX. Mother deceased.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I write short stories and paint with oils.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Solar*, **Ian McEwan**; *Tale of Two Cities*, **Charles Dickens**; *Love Is a Dog from Hell*, **Charles Bukowski**.

PET PEEVES: California drivers who merge in front and don't signal before changing lanes. Having personal habits that are other people's pet peeves. Sleet and ice storms.

PHILOSOPHY: Seize the day and revel in your time. Build for today and hope for tomorrow.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Elected President of the **Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC)** 2011/12. Curating an exhibit of personal papers of 1995 Chemistry Nobel Laureate **F. Sherwood Rowland** for the **University of California Libraries**. The exhibit opened November 18, 2011.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Transition from print-based collection development to electronic collections for monographs and grey literature.

HOW/WHERE I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Electronic distribution of monographs will predominate with the wide-scale adoption of portable readers. Most four-year colleges and universities will offer one-third to one-half of courses as online courses. I see fewer individual or family operations as consolidation of book sellers creates a smaller number of large-scale book selling enterprises. 🌱



fruition. Thusly, we librarians are more dedicated to grant writing to bring new resources to the library and the university. We are involved in several funded projects to digitize significant historic materials such as slave advertisements, historic university newspapers, and other legacy materials with partner institutions in the state. Several grants are being pursued at this time, which will help us work to increase the value of the library's collection.

Conclusion

There is a hard road ahead for technical services as we work to reinvent ourselves in the ever-changing world and find secure footing

amidst constant advances in technology. By focusing on giftng opportunities and external funding sources, acquisitions is transforming its model and workflow. No longer do we spend our days selecting and ordering books. Our transition toward archival curation, preservation, and exposition makes us different, yet the same: we still provide access to materials, but in a more progressive format. We believe this transformation will allow the library to forge and strengthen relationships with the university community, revitalize and build on our archives and special collections, and amplify the breath of our collection. 🌱