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E-DUKE BOOKS: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

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E-books have been around for years, but publishers, vendors, and librarians are still trying to figure out the best ways to work together to produce, distribute, catalog, and circulate them. Duke University Press launched the pilot program for its e-Duke Books Scholarly Collection in 2008, with the full-blown launch in January 2009. The Press spent a long time planning its entry into e-book publishing, drawing on extensive feedback from librarians, and attempted to craft a model that would make best use of the size and strength of its book publishing program, benefit from the experience of its journals division (which was several years ahead of the books division when it came to electronic publishing), and deliver the content in a format that would work for librarians and users.

This session brings together representatives of several of the stakeholders in the process, including representatives from the Press, a cataloger who creates the enhanced MARC records for every book in the collection, a vendor that sells the collection to libraries, and a library that purchases the collection. We will talk about what is working, what we did wrong, where changes have been made, and what we've learned. All the panelists have agreed to speak frankly about the process, in a way that we hope will be helpful to other publishers planning their own e-book programs, to vendors trying to integrate e-books into their relations with both publishers and libraries, and to libraries trying to integrate e-book acquisitions into their collections. And we will allow time at the end of the presentations for audience questions and feedback on their experiences.

Tammy Sugarman of Georgia State University Library, one of the e-Duke Books Scholarly Collection pilot participants, offers a library perspective:

Background

In early 2007, Georgia State University Library conducted a focus group with our students to learn their opinions about and usage of e-books. Although we had been purchasing e-book reference titles on a title by title basis, and provided access to Books 24x7 and a few NetLibrary collections, the results of the focus group showed us there was sufficient demand for access to additional e-books beyond these items. Students in the focus group felt strongly that e-books should be purchased in addition to print titles, not as a replacement for them. In late fall 2007, Georgia State University Library was invited to participate in the e-Duke Scholarly Books Collection pilot program with an anticipated launch date of January 2008.

Why e-Duke Scholarly Books Collection?

With a flat budget and the decision we would purchase e-books in addition to print books, the pilot project offered an excellent way for the library to ease into the acquisition of e-book monographs at a reasonable cost. In addition, the pilot offered the corresponding set of print books at a deep discount. While the library had been receiving select Duke University Press books on our approval plan, we had noticed that Duke titles we did not own were being requested via ILL. The library acquired these on demand through our ILL-purchase plan, so we felt offering the entire Duke front list to our patrons (print and e-book) would be financially

beneficial to us and at the same time allow our patrons' access to high quality material that they had been requesting. Electronic access to the Duke backlist was also an attractive feature.

The ability to work through our book vendor (YBP) was another incentive for us to participate in the pilot project.

What we liked (what worked)

- Housing the books on the ebrary platform. In Spring 2008 we reviewed several e-book platforms and decided going forward we would purchase the majority of our e-book titles on the ebrary platform.
- Usage statistics available through the ebrary platform.
- Duke University Press participation in Portico to insure digital preservation of the e-books.

What we didn't like (or what didn't work so well)

- The initial invitation for pilot participation was received on October 9, 2007. Confirmation about our participation in the pilot project was requested by October 22, 2007. Although we did confirm by this date, more time to talk with various departments in the library would have been desirable. In fact, in the library, we were a little nervous about the "rush" to have our participation confirmed.
- As of March 2008, we were still waiting for Duke to work out problems in the initial file of bib records for their backlist titles (backlist was expected to be available in January 2008). Bib records were ready in mid April 2008.
- MARC records for titles that are not available in e-book format are in our catalog. We have several MARC records in our catalog for e-books that may have been available at one point(?), but are not anymore. If this was indeed the case, we would have liked to have been notified about this so we could remove the MARC records from our catalog for items that are no longer available on ebrary. In addition, several e-books have "partial content included" but details about what content is present is not indicated in the MARC record or "on" the ebook in ebrary.
- Overcharging for print books (2008). We believe that Duke overcharged YBP, but the fault for our billing error lies with YBP for not communicating properly with Duke on how both would handle the 2008 titles. No one at YBP followed up to make sure we were all being billed properly. We were charged the rate YBP normally charges us (less our approval discount) rather than the deeply discounted price for the print books. We initially reported this error to YBP in March 2009; we finally received a credit in September 2009 (six months later). So far for 2009 we have been billed as expected.

Where we are now

As expected with a pilot project, not everything went smoothly. Overall it has been a positive and worthwhile experience for our library and we are pleased with the content we are receiving. Our problems with incorrect billing have been, hopefully, resolved and will not occur again. Statistics show healthy usage of the e-books in comparison to the same titles in print. We have noticed that titles we would not have selected individually are being used, some for class assignments. As we look ahead to the next few years, we will be re-examining our decision to

continue to receive print copies of the e-books. With a declining materials budget anticipated for the near future, we will also be looking at usage statistics to determine whether it makes sense for us to continue to purchase the entire front list collection, or purchase the e-books on a title by title basis.

Ann-Marie Breaux, of YBP Library Services, one of the e-Duke Books Scholarly Collection pilot vendor participants, offers a vendor's perspective:

YBP Library Services has been working with the e-Duke package for two years, and is getting ready to renew our customers' orders for the 2010 publications.

2008 and 2009 Packages

For the pilot year of 2008, we supported five mutual customer libraries with Duke University Press. At that time, we billed for the eBook package using a manual process, as we did not have a standard workflow in place that would allow for billing a group of monographs at one time, yet supplying the books (or access to the eBooks) and cataloging for the individual titles over a period of time. For libraries wishing to purchase the deeply-discounted print titles as well, we billed title-by-title, using a send-all process on the customer's approval plan, along with a very steep library discount, representing both the Duke University Press price along with a YBP service fee. Billing those print books title-by-title allowed us to continue to ship them normally on the customer's approval plan, with the appropriate associated cataloging records and physical processing. The whole print add-on process was complicated and did not run smoothly, either between YBP and the customer or between YBP and the Press; we all had to do much work to sort out invoices and credits in both directions.

For 2009, we continued to bill the eBook package manually, and instead of title-by-title invoicing for the print add-on, we billed for the print package in one up-front bill, as well as a small service fee for each print title as published, allowing us to continue to move them item-by-item through the library's standard technical services arrangements.

2010 Package

With the 2010 package, YBP has automated the invoicing process via new eCollection software in GOBI. We create the 2010 e-Duke package on GOBI which describes the scope of the collection and anticipated output. Libraries may order the collection via GOBI, as they would order any other eBook. As 2010 Duke UP eBook titles are released, we add them to GOBI and link them to the eCollection as well as to their print counterparts. By linking them to the eCollection record, YBP can deliver eBook cataloging records as titles are released, if the library is set up for that service. This also triggers purchase history to display at the title level in GOBI, even though the purchase was actually made at the eCollection level. Further, since the eBook titles are linked to their print counterparts, YBP is able to provide the library with duplication control against any subsequent print or other eBook versions that they may order.

Assessment

YBP appreciates being included in Duke University Press's pilot eBook project, especially as eBooks become an increasingly significant part of our monographic services to academic libraries. With this pilot project, we sorted through a number of issues, thereby helping us to create a stronger eBook service offering overall.

- As it currently stands, the e-Duke service is a bit complicated because it creates an exceptional practice for one publisher out of the many university presses and trade academic presses that we support. While this is sustainable for Duke University Press, because their output is relatively small and contained, it is not easily scaleable to many varying publishers or those with large output.
- The pilot project involved much manual work and interaction between Duke, the library, and YBP. As all of us gain experience, that degree of oversight should lessen. Additionally, the GOBI eCollection software provides a smoother, more automated way of managing Duke's eBooks.
- As the pilot developed, we discovered that not all Duke University Press books were being included in the ePackage, so paralleling the ePackage with an approval plan "send-all" instruction for the print counterparts did not work well as a way of ensuring the appropriate print counterparts were supplied.
- Speaking of which, the print add-on has been by far the most complicated portion of the undertaking. Rather than receiving the print books from Duke UP, most libraries prefer for their monographic vendor to ship the books, consolidated with their other books, and with their normal cataloging, processing, and electronic invoicing services. Libraries are only supplied with one copy at the deeply-discounted add-on price, so not only does the vendor have to ensure that all corresponding books are delivered, but also has to watch for second-copy orders of those print books, to deliver those a standard price. Finally, the vendors and Duke University Press will need to work out a more efficient way to deal with the accounting of the deeply-discounted print books and the regular-priced print books, which are indistinguishable from each other in terms of ISBN or transaction.
- The Press's imprint years overlap calendar years, and publication schedules for individual books may be adjusted after a book is announced. An important aspect of this service is keeping track of exactly which eBooks are included in which ePackages, no matter when they actually show up in print or eBook format.
- Our discussion of the pricing model with Duke University Press continues. Currently, discounts to the vendor are small, as is perhaps more common on the journals side of the business, which translates into a very small margin to support the overhead that this service currently requires.
- Various pricing models and services make it harder for a vendor to offer the uniform, coherent collection development and acquisitions services that our library customers have come to expect. Whether or not we work with standard input on the inbound/publisher side of our shop, we strive to make the service uniform and consolidated on the outbound/library side.
- Most importantly, this project has strengthened YBP's relationship with Duke University Press. The Press was one of the first university presses to work with an eBook platform of its own, and our business relationship has become much closer as we have worked together to provide this material to our mutual customers.

eBooks present a host of opportunities and challenges for publishers, vendors, and libraries alike. As academic libraries continue to collect publications needed by their users, vendors will

continue to provide a constantly-evolving suite of services, to help make that procurement as efficient and effective as possible.

Michael McCullough, Sales Manager for Duke University Press, offers a publisher perspective:

Introduction

Duke University Press launched the pilot program for the e-Duke Books Scholarly Collection (e-DBSC) in 2008, with the full public launch in January, 2009. The e-DBSC, hosted on the ebrary platform, offers perpetual access to at least 100 new scholarly e-books per year, with term access to over 1,000 backlist titles. The catalogers at the Duke University Libraries prepare MARC records for every title, with chapter-level enhanced metadata. There is an available print add-on option.

Now that we have had a couple of years of experience with e-Duke Books, we decided to review what we feel we have done right, what has worked successfully, and what we might do differently if we had it to do over again.

What we did right

The Press made a strong commitment to the long-term success of the project at all levels of the organization. Launching this product has been labor-intensive, time-consuming, and not inexpensive. We were never forced to make decisions based on short-term goals or demands for immediate revenue. For example, we had not originally planned to have a pilot year; but as the start of the scheduled launch approached, it became clear that we needed more time. Being able to invite select institutions to be part of the pilot allowed us to get valuable feedback as we rolled the e-DBSC out, offering a discount to offset the glitches and delays that often come with a big new undertaking. We would not have been able to take that extra year without the necessary buy-in from the Press.

One critical decision was to make the e-DBSC a collaboration managed jointly by the books and journals divisions. The Collection obviously relies on content produced in the books division, but the journals division had extensive experience from having already created and marketed their own electronic collections. Not having to re-invent many aspects of the electronic collections wheel gave us a big head-start. Drawing on the combined strengths and experience of the two divisions – which have often worked quite separately in the past – has been very productive.

Hiring October Ivins (of Ivins eContent Solutions) as consultant was also one of our best decisions. With her years of experience in the academic library world and her many connections among librarians, vendors, and publishers, October was able to organize focus groups, outline the pros and cons of all the choices we faced, and help us make the best decisions possible. October kept the concerns of librarians front and center as we moved forward.

We chose to work initially only with ebrary because of the popularity and robust functionality of the ebrary platform, and we are now confident that was the right decision for us. We considered launching with our content on as many platforms as possible. In hindsight, we seriously underestimated how much work it would take to set up the process of delivering e-content and metadata, establishing clear communication among all the different players involved, and providing access to our customers. Complicating those challenges by trying to work with multiple platforms simultaneously would have made a successful launch very difficult.

In general, though, we have tried to offer librarians as many options as possible. Librarians can buy direct from the Press, but they can also order through their library wholesaler, subscription agent, or consortium. They can choose to buy the print add-on, but it is not required. We are working with Portico to provide a secure archive for the e-books in the Collection, so that librarians can have confidence in the future accessibility of their purchase. We offer, at no extra charge, enhanced MARC records.

Where we went wrong

Working with the catalogers at the Duke University Libraries to create enhanced MARC records was a good decision. Deciding to offer those records for download on our own website was not. We do not have a cataloger on staff at the Press, and we had no previous experience working with MARC records; we just did not have the expertise to do a good enough job, however many hours we invested in the attempt. Knowing that our customers had access to the records through ebrary, as well as from other sources, we reluctantly decided to get out of the business of providing MARC records directly and leave that to the professionals.

We have also not met our own standards when it comes to notifying customers of content changes. The Press spent years obtaining and confirming the electronic rights to our books. But we knew that there would be occasions – especially early on - when we would have to retract content to which customers had already been given access. We have tried to minimize those occasions, but they have occurred. We are still working to create an efficient and thorough process for letting libraries know when we have pulled a book, or part of a book, from the Collection.

Delivering the print books to the libraries that purchased the print add-on option was a real challenge, especially in the first few months of our pilot year. We could not simply enter standing orders for every book, as not every book we publish is part of the Collection (either because of rights restrictions or because the book is of largely regional or popular rather than scholarly interest). In addition, we decided to ship in monthly installments (rather than immediately as each book arrived at our warehouse) to minimize shipping costs. Our computer system could not handle the unexpected complexities of the process, which meant we had to create a complicated manual workaround. We have solved most of the problems now, but at first, some customers got double-shipped, some got no shipments, and some received shipments only sporadically.

Our vendor partners suffered with us and our customers through these growing pains. We have been, of necessity, making up parts of what we're doing with the e-DBSC as we go along. YBP and Blackwell have been very patient and generous with us as we have complicated their workflows and inserted new twists into their long-established practices. They have been an essential part of our success, but we know it has not been a smooth or simple process for them. We appreciate their willingness to join us in this experiment.