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Ad Astra per Aspera: Aspiring to Excellence in Challenging Times

A New Model for Demand-Driven Acquisition

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Abstract

Like other academic libraries, the University of Kansas (KU) Libraries has been looking for efficiencies to save money. One method of savings adopted by KU Libraries is a demand-driven acquisition (DDA) model for purchasing monographs. KU librarians were reluctant to endorse this new model until they were given the option to base DDA purchases on price. Working with YBP, a new DDA model was developed to allow subject librarians at KU to choose a price limit for purchases on approval. Any monograph over the price limit was loaded into the library catalog as a DDA. During the development of the new DDA model, subject librarians in science and technology and the social sciences agreed that electronic books would be the preferred format for the approval plan and DDA model. In this paper, KU librarians will map out the processes they used to rewrite their approval plan profile to incorporate DDA and e-preferred acquisitions.

Introduction

Like other academic libraries, the University of Kansas Libraries (KU Libraries) have been looking for efficiencies to lower collection development costs and increase the accessibility of materials. One method of savings adopted by the KU Libraries to address the rising cost of materials is a patron-driven request option – a demand driven acquisition (DDA) model for purchasing monographs. The KU Libraries was an early adopter of the DDA model, working with YBP, our approval plan vendor. Librarians at KU did a cost analysis of interlibrary borrowing and concluded that, in many instances, it would be less expensive to purchase a book than pay staff time and shipping costs. Beginning in July 2007, when a KU faculty member requested a book through interlibrary loan, the Libraries ordered the book for KU's collections rather than borrowing it. This was later expanded to include undergraduate and graduate students. The following criteria governed these purchases. All books must:

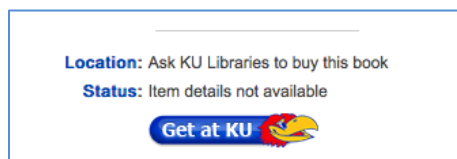
- be available from YBP
- be published in the US
- be “in stock” and available for rush order
- be YBP selected: “Research recommended” or “basic recommended”
- have as content level: Must not be popular literature or juvenile literature
- have as format: Must not be a textbook, casebook, exam questions, programmed text, or a workbook
- cost no more than \$180

These books were rush ordered and ready for pickup in less than five days. This model was so successful that we continued to look for additional means of incorporating DDA.

2010 Pilot Project

In January 2010, the KU Libraries launched a pilot DDA project to examine the effects of a new approach for purchasing print books in five disciplines: Education, Engineering, Business, Economics, and Political Science. Six months later, Physics, Molecular Biochemistry, and Chemistry joined the project. This model was based on specific publishers with the most expensive titles and highest publishing rates; less expensive books by other publishers continued to come in on approval. We worked closely with our primary book supplier, YBP, who provided catalog records and suggested a few changes to the way KU downloads MARC records into the online catalog.

We were grateful to the University of Vermont librarians and IT staff who were the first YBP customers to start a demand driven program at their libraries. They shared the coding used in their catalog to produce an order form. We uploaded brief records into the library catalog and added a feature that allowed KU faculty, staff, or students to request a purchase. When a KU library user finds a title in the catalog marked “Ask KU Libraries to buy this book,” he or she clicks the “Get at KU” button



and is presented with a simple form pre-populated with his or her KU credentials. The library user is given the following choices when placing their order:

When do you require this book? *

- ☐ Help! I need this book as soon as possible (i.e. within 5 working days). Notify me when it arrives.
- ☐ I need this book within the next 2 weeks. Notify me when it arrives.
- ☐ I'm not in a hurry, but I'd like to be notified when the book arrives
- ☐ Do not notify me. I am only recommending this book for purchase.

The original intent was for each of the catalog records to have call numbers, but librarians feared that users would try to find the book in the stacks if they overlooked the Location message. The book is rush-ordered for the library user and arrives within five working days, often sooner. The user is notified when the book is ready to be checked out at their preferred library location. So far, 88% of the DDA books have circulated.

LC Class	Requests	Circulated	Not circulated	% Circulated
B	1	1		100%
H	69	61	8	88%
J	38	33	5	87%
K	1	1		100%
L	20	16	4	80%
Q	21	20	1	95%
R	3	3		100%
T	47	41	6	87%
Total	200	176	24	88%

If a record has been in the catalog for a year without being requested, the record is removed from the catalog and the subject librarian can review these titles to decide if they should be ordered. The decision to remove the records after a year was made because we cannot ensure that a title will still be available for purchase after a year (ie. still in print).

The results of the FY2010 DDA were convincing from an economic point of view. From January 2010 through June 2011, we purchased 150 of the 3,609 titles that were loaded into the library catalog at a cost of \$12,603. The savings for the 18-month pilot were \$127,397, or a bit over \$7000 per month. The highest number of purchases in the original pilot subject areas were in Business, Engineering, and Political Science. The other subject areas had relatively few DDA requests during the first 18 months.

Yet, despite the savings, KU librarians were reluctant to endorse this new DDA model. They were not convinced that it was beneficial to stop getting books from expensive, but important academic publishers. Some librarians were also concerned that the library catalog was not an adequate discovery tool because books are often located by browsing the shelves in the stacks, and some subject librarians were also very concerned that the collection could become imbalanced, noting that our collections should remain academic research collections, not collections for individual researchers.

Next Steps

E-books became the next obvious choice for inclusion in the DDA program. E-book records can stay in the catalog indefinitely, while print DDA records must be purged after a year. Library users have immediate access to the DDA e-books that they request. KU Libraries also prioritized the e-book vendors available through YBP. We purchase e-books from the publisher when available because we prefer the

publishers' platforms. The publishers typically allow multiple users to view the book at one time. If we must purchase from an aggregator, we prefer E-book Library (EBL), because their platform is the most user-friendly; next Ebrary, which is not as user-friendly; and then NetLibrary, which has an extremely clunky platform, although they often offer viewing for multiple users. In the case of purchasing through EBL and Ebrary, we take part in a short-term loan program, where we "rent" the book at 10% of the list price three times before we purchase it on the fourth check out. Our E-DDA is based on the assumption that most titles will not get used at all, a smaller number will get used once, an even smaller number will be used twice, an even smaller number will be used three times, and the smallest number of all will be purchased on the fourth use. If a subject librarian is fairly certain that an e-book will get a lot of use, it is cheaper to purchase the book outright and librarians do have this option.

It took some serious convincing, but the social sciences and science/technology librarians finally agreed to expand the DDA program even further based on book prices. As a group, the social sciences librarians agreed to a \$94.99 price cap for books coming in automatically on approval. Records for books with prices between \$95.00-\$150.00 are loaded into the library catalog as DDA. Any book over the price of \$150.00 will have to be selected by a librarian. The science/technology librarians chose a \$150.00 price cap for their approval books. Books between \$151.00-\$200.00 are loaded into the library catalog as DDA, and any book over \$200.00 must be selected by a librarian. These price caps are written into the YBP profile in addition to an already selective set of profile instructions. We have not yet considered implementing DDA for the humanities or for international area studies; in the latter case, DDA would not be practical for foreign publishers. Thus, at this point, DDA constitutes a small percentage of our book buying.

Assessment and Conclusion

The DDA service is still very new at KU, so very little data has been collected. Many decisions for writing the new YBP profile were based on a retrospective list of titles that we had purchased in 2010 that was supplied by YBP. These lists allowed us to view the titles that would come in on the new profile, while looking at the number of titles that would be loaded in the catalog if we set them to DDA. We also used the retrospective list to calculate projected expenditures and average price per title. In the case of the social sciences, the average cost of print books was \$46 and e-books were \$113, while the sci/tech average costs were \$90 and \$125 respectively. With the projected costs calculated, we were able to set up a separate fund for DDA by lowering the allocation for books that come in automatically on the approval plan. Consulting retrospective lists is not a fool-proof method of calculating projections but, during the time since the profile was originally written for the pilot program, we have not had to make many changes to the profile to alleviate problems.

The initial pilot project was based on publisher, while the current project is based on price. Librarians find the latest project more acceptable because we continue to purchase books from all academic publishers instead of eliminating important academic publishers from the approval plan. YBP is still facing challenges during the implementation of this new model.

In continuing to monitor the circulation statistics for DDA, we have found circulation on DDA materials to be higher than our typical print collections. Approximately 60% of our collections circulate compared to 88% of the DDA. This high rate of circulation encourages us to continue to expand our DDA model program and realize the savings and benefits of such an approach.

Related Resources

Booth, H.A. and O'Brien. (2011). Demand-driven cooperative collection development: three case studies from the USA. *Interlending and Document Supply* 39 (3), 148-155.

www.emeraldinsight.com/0264-1615.htm

Spitzform, P. (2007). A Vision for the Future of Academic Library Collections. *International Journal of the Book* 4 (4), 185-189.

See also *Collection Management* 35 (3-4), 2010. Special Issue: Patron-Driven Acquisitions: Current Successes and Future Directions (14 articles). <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wcol20/35/3-4>

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