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Pioneering Partnerships: Building a Demand-Driven Consortium eBook Collection

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A Publisher's Perspective on PDA
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Publishers and authors don't come up with titles with the purposes of discoverability in mind. It's more about having a hook and being somewhat descriptive. But we now have a tremendous opportunity to help end users discover what is inside the pages of the books and help generate greater use of monographs than was ever before possible. In an informal study[1] conducted by the **University of Chicago** Libraries comparing the use of print monographs that also had e-versions available in **Oxford Scholarship Online**, the results showed that the eBooks had, on average, a circulation (or use) basis of 16 times their print counterpart. That kind of statistic should be heartening to monograph publishers and help them realize that if they can better harness the variety of ways book content is discovered, they have the potential for real growth in usage.

As a critical adjunct to discoverability, we need to work more closely with librarians than we ever have before, and we need to understand, at a fundamental level and in a truly nuts-and-bolts way, how libraries function and fulfill their mission. At a recent annual gathering of academic publishing industry professionals, it was surprising to find many attendees were not familiar with an OPAC or MARC records. The time for having a vague understanding of our market is over. Those who don't learn risk becoming irrelevant to the very market they serve.

There is also potential upside for the print-on-demand (POD) model as an adjunct to discoverability of e-monographs. Programs like the **Springer MyCopy** print-on-demand service offer the end user who prefers to read long-form scholarship in printed form with a low-cost POD version. Even with **Springer** being an STM publisher, where scholars and researchers have more widely embraced e-content as a primary delivery mechanism, there still is a demand for printed works. In the humanities and social sciences, the shift to "e" has been, and continues to be, a much more gradual process. As recently as November 2010, the *New York Times* profiled the slow shift and emerging trends in an article, "Digital Keys for Unlocking Humanities Riches."[2]

In the end, broad adoption of patron-driven acquisition has great potential to alter how scholarly content is acquired and published. How exactly this is to be done, to what extent, and over what timeframe, still remains to be seen.

PDA and Aggregators — The Challenges for a Publisher

It is also worth noting that discoverability and the central role it plays for publishers in a demand-driven world raises a multitude of questions about how to spur use and drive sales in a disaggregated market place. How can we, as publishers, do a good job driving users to our content if that content is located in a variety of different platforms? Each of those aggregators' platforms has its own URL for the book, meaning multiple points where the book is located. How can a publisher drive users to all those locations? How do we know which library has which platform(s) and has chosen to offer our particular books via PDA? While it is clear that there are benefits to choosing a single platform and having the additional services and publisher selection, even this simple outlining of issues makes it apparent that it's more complex from the publisher side when coupled with PDA.

On publishers' proprietary platforms, and particularly on those with rich metadata, we have the means by which we can drive users directly to the content in a single home and connect the user with other relevant content, often editorially curated, whether from the publishers' platforms, or to other publishers' content that the editors feel merit the connection. This isn't intended as a means of self-promotion. We know that libraries would like the ease of acquisition that a single platform can provide, but we also feel that it's important to explain the differences and spur discussion so that all sides enter the picture with a fuller understanding of what the issues are for the others in a patron-driven world. With all the movement in **University Press** eBook publishing in the last several months, the differences between publisher platforms, publisher initiatives like **JSTOR** and **MUSE**, and the eBook aggregator offerings will become more pronounced. There are advantages to each, and it will be a time of interesting developments.

Conclusion

From the publisher's perspective, to survive in a patron-driven world, we have to excel in driving users to our content, and there is ample opportunity to do that. But there remain a host of questions. Challenges to the finances of monograph publishers as they adapt to a post-approval plan world will shape the future publishing programs as more and more scholarly programs accept e as their primary format for monographs. The next year will be the first one that sees wide-scale university press e-publishing as well as wide-scale adoption of PDA as a component of acquisition. A year from now, we look forward to reviewing the landscape again and seeing where PDA has taken publishers, libraries, and academics.

Endnotes

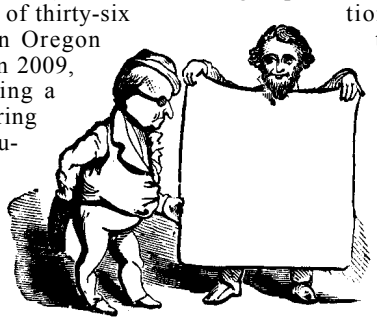
1. **Mouw, James**, "Comparison of **OUP Oxford Scholarship Online** monograph use in print and online at the **University of Chicago**," 23 September 2009.
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Pioneering Partnerships: Building a Demand-Driven Consortium eBook Collection

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The Orbis Cascade Alliance (The Alliance) is a consortium of thirty-six academic libraries in Oregon and Washington. Starting in 2009, the Alliance began exploring a consortium program for sharing eBooks across member institutions. The Alliance Council, consisting of library deans and directors, charged two different groups to investigate and design a shared eBook program. A third group, the Demand-Driven Acquisitions Pilot Implementation Team (DDAPIT), is currently working on the implementation. This article will describe the charges assigned to the groups, the models that were investigated, final recommendations for a purchase model and a vendor, and issues encountered in implementing a consortium program.



In 2009, the Alliance Council created an eBook task force and gave it a charge to: "Consider and provide recommendations to implement a consortial approach to purchasing eBooks, with the goal of sharing titles purchased by individual members. Examine the idea of centrally funding an eBook collection to which all Alliance members have access."[1] This eBook Team submitted its final recommendations to the Alliance Council

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that led to the charge for the second eBook Team. This second team was charged at the end of 2009 to:

- Leverage the existing relationship with **YBP**, the preferred monograph vendor for Alliance libraries, to create an entirely new eBook consortium purchasing model that allows consortium-wide access to titles purchased by individual member libraries.
- Focus on developing and implementing the new model, and on addressing access, collection development, financial, and technical issues outlined in the first eBook Team's report. It is expected that the team will work with the Collaborative Technical Services Team charged with developing technical services operations that support collaborative cataloging/processing for eBook collections.
- Develop a funding model to support the program in an equitable manner.
- Develop a model that prioritizes selection in a way that benefits the most members possible.
- Evaluate the project to determine ongoing viability.
- It is broadly understood that Alliance-wide access to eBooks purchased through this program will require full participation, including financial support, by all Alliance member libraries. We expect that the membership's shared commitment to collaborative strengthening of the Alliance collection will enable the team to craft a program all members can support.[2]

When the second eBook Team started its work in 2010, there was little consensus regarding the type of purchasing model that would work for Alliance libraries. Because of the heterogeneity of libraries, the team was challenged to identify a purchasing model that would offer enough appealing content without exorbitant costs. Initially, the eBook Team explored six different models. To determine interest in the six models and prepare to write a Request for Information (RFI), members of the eBook Team surveyed collection development representatives from each institution. By the time the RFI was drafted only four models remained under consideration. The first dropped was a pay-per-view model, in which the consortium would pay a fee each time a member used an available eBook. This model would allow for individual access but not ownership by the consortium. The second cut from consideration was a subscription model. Members would have access to a collection of titles, with selection driven by available publisher content and subject selector decisions, for a set time based upon a group payment. The consortium would not have perpetual access to titles after the end of the subscription period unless perpetual rights were negotiated. After surveying members, the eBook Team decided to focus on four models and asked prospective aggregators and publishers to supply quotes for each. The first proposed model was a combination pay-per-view and demand-driven. In this model the consortium would pay a fee for each view of a title by a consortium member; once a determined number of uses were reached the book would be owned by the consortium and available to everyone. The second was a demand-driven model where purchases would be driven by patron use. After a determined number of uses, the cost of the book would be charged to the consortium, which would then own the title. The third was selection by individual title with selectors using **YBP's GOBI** system to purchase content. Purchases would be driven by subject selectors and at a probable cost-per-title greater than the current cost-per-library purchase. The fourth proposed model was purchasing subject collections based on publisher availability and subject selector input, with collections built to meet Alliance specifications.

After reviewing member survey results, responses to the RFI, and meeting with eBook aggregators, the eBook Team recommended development of a demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) purchasing model. Users decide which eBooks are purchased based on the books available from an approved list of titles selected by Alliance librarians. Key features of this model include collection parameters defined by selection librarians, reliance on an established budget, and the use of controls to monitor use and purchase. Users make selections "just in time" with no additional librarian mediation.

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against the grain

people profile

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Emily McElroy

BORN AND LIVED: Freeport, IL. I have spent most of life either in Freeport or in Chicago. I still consider Chicago my home. I have also lived in Lawrence, KS, Kansas City, MO, Eugene, OR, Union City, NJ, and Portland, OR.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: After I received my MLIS, I worked as a Serials and E-Resources Librarian at **Loyola Health Sciences Library**. I decided to keep moving companies in business by moving across the country several times within a five-year period of time. I moved to Eugene to work as Collection Development & Acquisitions Librarian at the **University of Oregon**. I also worked at **New York University** as Head of Acquisitions. Four years ago, I moved back to the Pacific Northwest. I oversee acquisitions, cataloging, systems, data curation, user experience, scholarly communication, digital collections, and collection development. I have been fortunate in my career to have wonderful mentors (**Cindy Hepfer**, **Lynn Fortney**, **Beverley Geer**, **Marilyn Geller**, **Mary Page** to name just a few) and to work at institutions with excellent leaders who have provided me with a lot of support and room to grow — **Logan Ludwig**, **Deb Carver**, **Mark Watson**, **Faye Chadwell**, **Carol Mandel**, **Michael Stoller**, **Arno Kastner**, and now **Chris Shaffer**.

FAMILY: A thirteen-year-old dog, a Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever. She shares a name, Elston, with a street in Chicago.

SPARE TIME: Watching college basketball (Rock Chalk Jayhawk!), reading, napping, and hanging out in Portland.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Half of a Yellow Sun* by **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**; *Race* by **Studs Terkel**; all of the Tintin books by **Herge**; anything by **Sarah Vowell**.

PET PEEVES: Spiders.

PHILOSOPHY: "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards" by **Soren Kierkegaard**.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Um, the amazing librarians I've met and dated in my career! Seriously, meeting and becoming friends with so many wonderful colleagues over the years.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: We will continue seeing an increase in collaborative collection development. As part of this, we will see an increase in libraries sharing approval plans and collections. While library consortia will continue to grow, we will also see shared purchases increase between groups of libraries within a consortium. Vendors and providers will need to adopt their business models to accommodate this smaller level of networked purchasing. This networked purchasing will include an increase in activities similar to **Cornell** and **Columbia's 2CUL**. Oh, and **ALA Midwinter** will cease to exist after poor librarians and vendors unite in opposition.

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The eBook Team recommended this model for a variety of reasons. Studies of other DDA projects offered compelling data that showed materials selected via DDA show greater use than materials selected through traditional channels. These titles have a higher use rate, are used by a wider audience, and are more likely to see subsequent use over pre-selected titles. Alliance libraries would only be purchasing titles that patrons used instead of purchasing titles that may be used. Complementing the research were the encouraging results of DDA pilot projects by two Alliance libraries, **Oregon State University** and **University of Washington**. Unlike traditional selection where individual patron requests are reviewed and then, once approved, processed through technical services before materials reach requestors, demand-driven selections would be immediately available to the end user. The program would also easily expand the world of available content. For Alliance libraries, DDA provides the potential for staff savings during the selection, acquisition, and cataloging processes while offering the Alliance the opportunity to design a collection that fits its needs.

To develop the universe of titles available via DDA, the project builds on the expertise of subject specialists and professional experience of those working with approval plans within the Alliance. An approval profile would be created based on subject and non-subject parameters, including purchase price. The integration of the DDA project with **GOBI** provides several advantages. Using **GOBI**, selectors at Alliance libraries would be able to tell if a title is included in the pilot project and when it has moved from the short-term loan phase to an actual purchase. It allows the Alliance to set up a deposit account with **YBP** to handle all of the financial transactions for short-term loans and purchases and the DDAPIT would be able to monitor the account balance. The DDA model with short-term loans would also allow the Alliance to use its budget more wisely. Patrons would have access to more eBooks than single title purchasing could permit. Alliance libraries would receive strong value for their acquisitions dollars as titles are not purchased until triggered by multiple patron uses.

As a part of the recommendation to develop a DDA pilot to the Alliance Council, the eBook Team proposed that the Alliance rely upon a strategic partnership with **YBP** and **EBL** to accomplish this goal. **YBP** has been the Alliance's preferred book vendor since 2007. A number of factors led to the selection of **EBL**. It had a proven record of developing patron- or demand-driven programs with several large institutions and could provide user data to plan and then evaluate the pilot. Several Alliance libraries were presently using **EBL** to provide access to eBooks. **EBL** also worked effectively with **YBP**. It offered diverse content using a clear, understandable model. Easy-to-understand pricing was provided, the platform fee would be waived for individual member libraries, and a single license for all participants could be negotiated. The Alliance could customize the program, including the number of short-term loans that would trigger a purchase. eBook Team members also believed, based upon the experience during the RFI process, that **EBL** would provide excellent customer service. The company had a local representative in Portland, was quite responsive during the RFI process, and demonstrated an eagerness to work with the Alliance.

In developing the RFI, evaluating responses and preparing a report for the Alliance Council the eBook Team identified a number of issues. The team knew these would need to be dealt with during the implementation process if the pilot project was to be successful. Some were unique to a consortium environment; others were exacerbated by the need to address issues for all thirty-six members. Although print resources were shared among the members through patron-initiated borrowing, budgets in member libraries were traditionally spent on materials for their own user base. The demand-driven pilot would require that libraries move away from this model in small measure and develop a shared fund to finance the pilot. All libraries would be required to contribute financially, and tight budgets within some member libraries offered little financial flexibility to cover costs. Five members had subscriptions to large eBook packages through another aggregator. Duplication of some of these titles along with print ones within the aggregate Alliance collection was inevitable, but how to minimize it had yet to be addressed. Compounding the problem of providing new content in the pilot was a relatively small number of eBook titles that are released each year, an estimated 20% of print titles annually. However, the largest and most vexing issues were seen to be those surrounding discovery and access.

The Alliance supports access to its aggregate collection through Summit, a **WorldCat** Group Catalog, with patron-initiated borrowing via **WorldCat** Navigator. Each member library also provides access to individual collections through a local ILS, using a proxy configuration to allow remote access. Some members have also implemented a discovery layer, most commonly **WorldCat** Local. A variety of individual cataloging practices within member libraries could also be problematic. For the pilot to be successful, the issues of loading records, providing correct URLs, tracking purchased titles, removing records and proxy access would need to be addressed.

The Alliance Council, in accepting the eBook Team's recommendation to move forward on the demand-driven pilot, recognized that expertise to address a number of these cataloging issues resided within the membership of other Alliance committees, most notably the Collaborative Technical Services Team (CTST). Placing responsibility for discovery and access with this team would allow DDAPIT to focus on the structure of the pilot, selection, and the approval profile, training, and evaluation. The Council recommended that the CTST work with the DDAPIT to catalog "consortial purchases associated with the eBook Pilot pursued by the Collection Development and Management Committee."[3] The chairs of the DDAPIT and CTST recognized that excellent communication between both groups would be essential. Thus the chair of CTST was named as a member of the DDAPIT. Another Alliance librarian was also named to serve on both teams. In recognition of the partnership that has developed and to extend communication, representatives from **EBL** and **YBP** also serve as members of the DDAPIT; **Robin Champieux** from **EBL** and **John Elliott**, **Barbara Kawecki**, and **Joan Thompson** from **YBP** participate in all of the team discussions.

The CTST approached the work on the demand-driven pilot by creating a working group consisting of members of the team, staff from member libraries, and the Alliance's Resources Sharing program manager. The chair of the DDA eBooks Working Group was not a member of the DDAPIT. It was quickly recognized that despite the overlap of two members of CTST and DDAPIT, having the working group chair sit in with the DDAPIT would further enhance communication, and the change was made. The DDA eBooks Working Group will need to make a number of decisions about discovery and access, working with our vendor partners and **OCLC**. These include whether to include records at the **WorldCat** and local level, the source of records (**YBP** or **EBL**), how URLs are stored, and record display.

The DDAPIT and CTST Working Group have set an ambitious timetable to launch the pilot at the end of May. Both groups meet regularly in person or using conference calls and share resources using shared documents space to move the pilot along. As part of the implementation process, DDAPIT is developing evaluation criteria for regular reporting to Alliance Council and member libraries. If the pilot is successful, the Alliance may very well appoint a fourth eBook Team to oversee a long-term shared eBook program.

Endnotes

1. Report to the Alliance Executive Committee from the eBook Task Force, June 12, 2009, rev., August 5, 2009. *http://www.orbiscascade.org/index/ebtf*, accessed April 12, 2011.
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