

Part 1-Vendors to Furnish Serials

This assignment dropped us right into the swirling waters of the serials subscription whirlpool. The more journal articles I read and chapters from professional books, the more I realized that this is an area of library acquisition that has no dominant model. There seem to be many players in the game. Now in the morass are institutional repositories, championing the retention of copyright to publishing faculty but, thus far, limited in distribution activities.

Divine/Faxon/Rowe (Faxon/Rowecom) is in various stages of merger and disarray after two years of reorganizing from a lawsuit and scandal. Mergers for strategic business advantage happen all the time so it is difficult to really know who you are choosing as a representative agent. Not-for-profit groups like JSTOR, LOCKSS, Portico and Project MUSE are presenting models that solve some problems of back issue inventories, insurance for loss and access, and assuring periodical titles for the patrons of the future. No one vendor can provide for all the serial solutions. As our textbook pointed out, there are ways to evaluate the service of a vendor. Many professional articles help librarians with checklists to help in vendor selection. Service is a huge factor in choosing a vendor. The service charge that is levied to the library is a figure that is essential to know. Flexibility in working out the pricing of the “big deals” and consortial “deals” is highly desirable. Communicating with the library about the definition of “patron” and “site” is essential information to the library. Using the backdrop of a small academic library setting, I investigated Swets/Blackwell and EBSCO to learn about serials vendors. Serials terminology is important to sort out. It doesn't help that EBSCO is an aggregator as well as a subscription agent. EBSCOhost Electronic Journals Service (EJS) now provides access to nearly 12,000 e-journals (Watson & Clay, 2007) (Evans & Saponaro, 2005). EBSCO has been a vendor I have used for

many years as a school librarian here in eastern Oregon and their service and attention has been excellent. There is comfort with that previous experience.

Swets/Blackwell merged to become a new company in 2000. In one presentation I watched, they termed themselves “infomediaries.” They handle both paper and electronic formats of the journals they carry. In 2001 they had reduced their dead links by 95% and introduced their document delivery service. They also offer a consultancy service to aid in consortium deals. To aid in that process, they will analyze a library's holding and mediate prices and terms. *SwetsWise Searcheris* is a federated search service that can be implemented locally on the library's servers using a simple interface. *SwetsWise Title Bank* creates a customized A-Z list of all the print and electronic titles contained in your organization's collection and uses an Open URL link resolver. They also have a service called *SwetsWise Online Content* that allows the library to choose titles by content by clicking into fields on the screen. I was not able to see what the interfaces actually looked like beyond the document delivery options that looked to be straightforward checkboxes and pull-down menus for selecting titles (Feik, 2006).

EBSCO entered the subscription business in 1943 and today has 32 offices in 20 countries worldwide. Their subscription service, *EBSCOhost Electronic Journals Service* (EJS) provides access to nearly 12,000 e-journals. They also handle a library's print serials needs. EBSCO concentrates on public, school, corporate, special, government, and biomedical libraries offering 49,000 publishers and a database of more than 260,000 titles. They say on their web site that they have the largest collection of peer-reviewed full text journals, which include comprehensive collections of journals such as Academic Search Elite, Alt-HealthWatch, and the Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection. They also say they strive to offer as many full text titles as

possible to aid remote users and on-ground users to avoid having to resort to interlibrary loan. EBSCO features an "Interlibrary Loan request module" that can be configured to allow users to send requests for articles listed in EBSCO's citations and abstracts directly to the library's own web-based ILL system. At our small university library, the form is partially filled out so that the patron need only supply personal information of patron's name and barcode and mailing addresses (including email). This is important support for the student to avoid writing down all the bibliographic information (by printing out the citation or writing it by hand). The title, article title, volume, and issue number and ISBN come over to the form automatically. *EBSCOHost* offers a "smart-link" service that allows for cross-database connections to full-text articles in another database holding the same article ("EBSCO: Company Profile," 2005).

EBSCOHost is web-based and works on a variety of PC, Linux, and Macintosh computers through standard browser software. Many administrative tools are included to check usage statistics and to track issues for claiming. Boolean logic is used in the search engine with several scoping choices for users to narrow their searches. The kind of document (book, article, book report, review) can be a restricter. A checkbox is used to limit a search to peer-reviewed journals. In small undergraduate colleges and universities, the students are trained to look for articles that are peer-reviewed. There is the ability to email, print, or save the article into a temporary file for disposition at the end of the user's session. *MyEBSCO* is a feature that allows patrons to save searches and links to articles beyond a current session and from any computer. This feature is useful to students who find themselves needing access to searches for long-term projects and work from many different computer locations. The citation information is easy to find in the interface of *EBSCOHost* and can be generated with the MLA or APA styles. The interface also will work with *RefWorks* or *Endnote* software to drop the citation into the user's software in the

format needed. This speeds up the work of citing sources at the end of a project. Technical service has been swift and thorough when I have used it.

To aid in consortia buying, EBSCO offers a 60-day trial period for its databases and works at assessing a library's content needs for databases because not all libraries are desirous of the same titles. In a consortia agreement, there has to be enough titles for all the members of the consortia to enable a group plan to be priced out and managed. EBSCO trains librarians and library staff members in using the acquisition interface and the user interface. In the trainings I have attended, EBSCO's regional team of top-notch presenters explains features and procedures, providing follow-up emails for lingering questions and problems.

Part 2: Back Issues Vendor

Again, there is no dominant model for the archiving and delivery of back issues of serials. There are informal ways to secure missing and damaged issues through the services at BackServ, which is a listserv that serials workers consult to fill in gaps and offer extra issues from their own institutions. There are a few of these organizations, some with altruistic motives of supplying serials to countries that are underserved. For small institutions needing an incidental issue, this service is free but needs constant vigilance (student workers check ours every shift.) LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) is an international group started at Stanford University (CA). They preserve back issues in an open source, peer-to-peer, decentralized digital preservation infrastructure environment. The main idea of LOCKSS is to stave off the economic stranglehold that libraries often find themselves in with rapidly disappearing electronic access to titles they once "rented" online. LOCKSS claims to have libraries' holdings to remain in perpetuity. Their technology has been in testing since 1999 and the software that they wrote has been released

since 2004 that allows libraries to preserve, store, and collect their own copyrighted issues for use in the future. The LOCKSS Alliance has an advisory board and membership is based on the Carnegie classification by size and function of the university/college. It would cost our school \$3,685 a year to be an alliance member. The basic idea is to manage the collection of many copies of a title and volume and coordinate that so that there is an electronic copy available when the institution needs it. The list of member libraries can be found at <http://www.lockss.org/lockss/Libraries>.

Project MUSE is also a not-for-profit collaboration pioneered by Johns Hopkins University Press and the Milton S. Eisenhower Library. Grants also came from the Andrew Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. All charts, graphics and images are kept intact in their archival copies of journals. Their philosophy is “once content goes online, it stays online” and they participate in LOCKSS and maintain several servers that mirror the content. Subscribers own the MUSE content even after subscription lapses. The content can be downloaded or burned to disk at no charge. Remote users are granted access. The coverage contains online access to the full-text of over one hundred journals in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and mathematics. It would cost a small university with less than three Master’s programs about \$5,600 a year to participate (Project MUSE, 2007).

Portico is a service that offers a permanent archive of e-journals with campus-wide access. Its services kick in when trigger events occur. Trigger events can be when a publisher stops publishing, a title ceases to be published, back issues are no longer provided by the publisher, or when a catastrophe strikes a publisher’s delivery mechanism. To become a member of *Portico* there is a sliding scale based on the library’s annual budget. Our library would pay about \$4,200

per year for membership. There are discounts available for early adopters and as incentives to commit for five years. After 2007, however, there are no discounts offered. *Portico* is a new non-profit that advances the work of *J-STOR*. This work has been advanced by grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Library of Congress. Five elements have been defining the work on this project:

- 1) an institutional mission with preservation at its core;
- 2) an economic model capable of sustaining the archival effort;
- 3) a robust and evolving technological infrastructure sufficient to meet the complexities of electronic resources;
- 4) relationships with libraries, the traditional preservation stewards, and
- 5) relationships with publishers, creators of the content that is to be preserved (Fenton, 2006).

What is interesting to note is that the intellectual content is being preserved, not necessarily the graphic layout or appearance of the original work. There is much attention paid to preserving the data in the most advantageous digital format for “pushing” it to the future. Preserving a document in its most elemental form was a strategy we studied in our digital libraries class and often discussed related to stewardship in textbooks on the subject of sustainability. The grant agencies and concerns that have supported this research and development give me confidence that with guidance from an advisory board and continued membership and commitment from libraries, the philosophy of stewardship and the technological expertise would make this service my first pick for usage in securing back issues. The interface is standard and is very easy to use. Our patrons love having it in our database list.

To choose one electronic resource to support art instruction and research for a 12,000 student body with art history undergraduate Bachelor's and Master's programs is difficult. The six databases that we were given to investigate serve two purposes. An Excel table of features follows this section. Some databases fulfill the role of providing background information and basic factual material and others provide a growing amount of interpretive professional literature in the art field. To plan a collection with just one source from either group would not support the MFA program. I would choose the *Grove Art Online* for the basic database to support the art programs but would add the *Bibliography of the History of Art* as a companion for current material and interpretive professional journal articles.

Grove Art Online has an interface that makes it easy to drill down to a topic and still remain oriented in the space of all the information that is around you. The intuitive interface represents a real library where you pull open drawers and pull out photos of works or discover articles about the genre, the artist, the materials, the geographic space, or the time frame of the creation. This database uses the dynamic advantages of the internet better than some of the other titles. To access the image of a work takes the user to a museum site and introduces more real world information and more details about how the art is framed, displayed, organized into a collection. The 34-volume print version, published in 1996, is a thirty million word text launch for the online version. To represent the world of art, across so many cultures and time periods, requires a dynamic environment to tell the stories of art and creators. As the *New York Times* review put it in their review of May 13, 1999. "If ever a digital book made sense, *The Grove Dictionary of Art Online* might be it." The database is updated monthly. *Library Journal* named it "One of the 50 Best Reference Sources of the Millennium in 1999." The *Choice* review was no less glowing

with its “Outstanding title!” heading the review. The *Grove Art Online* database also includes the images from two more image databases, the Bridgeman Art Library and Art Resource Library to amplify the number of accessible images in the database. It is hard to conceive a database that is easier to use and more comprehensive. The “lightbox” feature is a place to store images for use later. Again, the metaphor is carried from the real world into the electronic one.

The *Bibliography of the History of Art* database features articles starting in the late 1960s, including avant garde topics not covered by some other databases. There are articles on graffiti, body art, and installations as well as the traditional topics necessary for a comprehensive database of painting, drawing, design, architecture, and sculpture. Access to 43,000 journals, with a quarterly update, provides ample material for art study in contemporary times. The interface is a common database from OCLC’s *First Search* so little patron training would be necessary. User features include the ability to print, email, and export articles into citation software. This database suffers not from the indexing problems found in the *Design and Applied Arts Index*. Without actually working with the database it is difficult to assess how inclusive it is in regards to foreign titles where it would appear *ARTBibliographies Modern* and *Art Full Text* would excel. *Art Abstracts* has a hefty number of citations and a dependable EBSCO interface but full-text is important to patrons, rather than citations that depend on linking to the library catalog or to a document delivery form.

The combination of the two databases *Grove Art Online* and the *Bibliography of the History of Art* would provide coverage in the history of art, mediums, artists’ biographical material, and images to use to identify and study production methods, comparison information, and current information on exhibitions, interpretive scholarly writing, and trends in the field.

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