2016–2017 CARLI Commercial Products Committee Annual Project: A Review of Journal Cancellation Approaches and Practices

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Introduction

The committee members of the Commercial Products Committee decided that as an annual project a review of journal cancellation approaches and practices would be beneficial to other CARLI libraries faced with the need to address budget issues. This is an all-too-common problem facing libraries of all types and sizes. Committee members summarized their libraries' experiences with having to cancel journals or other resources. The responses were summarized in order to suggest best practices for handling this issue and the individual responses were then anonymized and provided as case studies for those wishing for greater detail. A bibliography of selected resources is also included.

Summary of Member Libraries' Approaches to Serials Cancellations

Reasons for recent serials cancellations at CARLI libraries

- Inflation - account for annual increases
- Budget issues – flat/stagnant budget or actual rescissions
- Protect or restore eroding monographs budget

General principles/considerations for serials cancellations

- Control spending
- Closely look at Big Deals, commercial publisher packages are generally not sustainable
- Collaboration
- Educate faculty about serials inflation, journal costs, and library budget realities
- Make the deepest cuts with the least harm
- Cost effectiveness should be a major factor
- Use data-driven/data-informed decision making - assess usage stats, cost per use figures, and circulation trends
- Make sure data is reliable
- Collect new data when needed to inform decisions
- Protect important programs' resources (use patterns, accreditation requirements, etc.); consider the size of programs; consult with programs or specific faculty as needed
- Look for less expensive alternatives to "core" long-held resources - use trials to assess alternatives; be willing to cancel "core" titles which are not being used. Start by not considering anything "core."
- Market/publicize lesser used resources for a year, then reexamine usage before deciding to cancel

- Ensure that all students have their needs met. Support needs of all users/programs; primarily support needs of the most students
- Examine programs/budget lines which have been on autopilot for some time
- Adapt to new teaching methods (e.g. shift to online resources)
- Reconsider how budgets are allocated. Split some funds to make them more accountable. Consider a zero-based budgeting approach - start from scratch. "Would we subscribe to this resource if we didn't already have it?"
- Look for trends over time with data, e.g. decreasing use of a resource over several years

Approaches for identifying cancellations/cuts

- The library identifies potential cancellations and does not consult with campus except to essentially inform them of decisions that have been made
- Library adheres to strict cancellation criteria with little to no faculty feedback
- Allow campus departments/faculty to identify potential cancellations and/or essential journals/databases
- Poll campus faculty about serials/databases
- Allow campus faculty to provide feedback/approval of cancellations identified by the library
- Follow up on canceled titles – analyze subsequent ILL and Get It Now usage to make sure restoring subscription is not more cost effective
- Assess campus faculty satisfaction with ILL/Get It Now access
- Look for overlap/duplication - for both journals and databases. Cancel print that is duplicated online (via actual subscriptions or within aggregator databases)
- Tie identification of cancellations into weeding schedule for various subjects
- Publicize library resources in order to increase usage
- Swap underused resources for more desirable ones
- Review/rewrite collection development plan/policy
- Switch from hardcover books to paperbacks
- Cancel microforms if not used

Important components of budget cuts/cancellations

- Set a target cancellation/cut amount – overall and/or by department
- Set Criteria for titles to be canceled - identify low use titles; look at usage by year of publication if needed
- Examples: 6 or fewer downloads per year; 50 or fewer uses per year
- Example: Cost per use below Get It Now/ILL threshold ($25-50 per use; up to $75; one library used a cutoff point as low as $1 per use)
- Use COUNTER download reports (Journal Report 1 – JR1; or DB1)
- Average use figures over three years to account for variations in use among years

Alternatives to outright cancellation of serials

- Substitute document delivery via Get It Now or another document delivery service (unmediated or mediated)
- Substitute access via ILLiad/interlibrary loan
- Cut the book budget instead
- Publicize on the library web page Open Access articles available via Google Scholar

Individual Library Case Study Narratives (Anonymized)

Library #1

The library has had two major serials cancellations, in 2012 and 2013 respectively, due to inflation and flat budget. In each one, there was a quote/task (a dollar amount) each academic department must meet, in order for the library to meet the goal in total. The library generated a recommended list, with 6 per year COUNTER JR1 usage as a threshold for most journals. Any journal with 6 or fewer article views/downloads was on the list. If that could not meet the dollar amount goal, more journals (with more than 6 uses/year) were brought in. Some departments agreed to cut their book allotment a bit in cases where there were no more journals to cut. This of course does not include journals in big deal packages such as Sage and Wiley packages. There is nothing we can do to unused or little used journals in packages. The lists were sent to academic departments for their approval. It went well overall.

During the same time, CCC (Copyright Clearance Center) and Ex Libris started the Get It Now service. The library turned on all publishers and all their journals via SFX, initially with the unmediated option, to make up for the loss of cancellations. But as Get It Now adds more publishers and became more and more popular, the spending became somewhat out of control. To control spending, most Get It Now journals were then moved to mediated service on ILLiad, and only selected journals stayed on the unmediated option.

Because the average cost per article on Get It Now is about $25, $25 per view/download was also used later as a threshold to cancel and add journals. For example, the library has added new subscriptions after finding out that it is less expensive to have a certain journal on subscription than on Get It Now, and has cancelled a few titles where the cost was far more expensive to subscribe than to access via Get It Now.

At the same time, the library noticed that about 50% of articles are some kind of Open Access (OA) articles in one way or another, and that Google Scholar (GS) does the best job indicating OA status. Therefore, the library had a campaign promoting GS. GS search box has been on the library home page ever since WebFeat was discontinued. To further promote GS, the library added a GS search link on SFX menu, printed out flyers on GS, and promoted its awareness in campus communication messages.

Library #2

This is a sad and complicated story. The university has suffered a series of serial cancellations for more than two decades. The trigger for virtually each of these projects were serial inflation rates depleting the monographs line—and later the databases line. In order to shore up the latter, one axed titles from the former. Originally, the scenario was to set a target figure--a sustainable monographs line—and then divvy up the pie on a department by department basis. Each department in turn would have to submit a list of serial titles that met the designated target. This was a messy way of doing things that raised a good deal of rancor--especially among faculty. But the virtue of the procedure was that it was more-or-less democratic and collaborative. As the budget noose tightened this kind of freewheeling cancellation procedure became increasingly unwieldy.

In 2003, the university entered into a license agreement with Elsevier. We had just installed SFX and were desperate to bring Elsevier into the electronic fold. The license was complex but did not expressly place a cap on cancellations, that is, until we undertook a cancellation project in 2005. The response of Elsevier management was that the university was free to cut as much as they pleased. However, the cost would be a new license which would add 25% per title as a content fee. There was a howl of protest on our side in which we argued that it was made clear from the outset that the university stated explicitly that cuts would be forthcoming--without indicating precisely when the cuts would kick-in—and that throughout the negotiation there was never a word about a content fee. Eventually, we won the argument--at least, partially so--when Elsevier management admitted that the initial license was over-sold. At the same time, it was made clear that the 25% penalty would definitely be in play if the university targeted Elsevier titles going forward.

By 2009 it was eminently clear that Elsevier was absorbing a disproportionate share of the university's materials budget—some $660k from a $4.1 million dollar budget. Traditional collaborative methods of cancellation were not going to work here. Elsevier titles were concentrated in STM fields and the focus had to be less on the discipline affected as opposed to making the deepest cut with the least harm. Here is where the COUNTER reports enter in—specifically Journal Report 1 (jr1). The latter may not be perfect but I would say that we had substantial evidence of what titles were receiving the highest and lowest use. We were also intensely aware that the cuts would have to be extraordinarily deep in order to cover the 25% surcharge. In order to gain any kind of wiggle-room we determined that about 2/3rds of the monies currently placed with Elsevier would have to be removed. When we analyzed the numbers it was determined a title could survive the cut if it cost $30 or less per use. As it turned out $30 was approximately the same amount as an ILL transaction on the open market. We consulted with faculty but were firm in upholding the rationale on how specific journals were chosen for deselection.

None of this could have been accomplished without reliable data deriving from COUNTER reports. We were confronted with a similar situation with Wiley/Blackwell and Springer in 2011. Like many of you, the university had a series of agreements with both publishers culminating in a full Big Deal package brokered by CARLI. As the materials budget continued to hemorrhage, it was clear the Big Deal packages were unsustainable. Again, we compiled a series of COUNTER reports and examined cost per use with a $30 cut off figure. At the same time, we confronted a situation that disallowed department-by-department consideration. The interesting upshot of this exercise— this is a different topic altogether— is that a number of former core titles did not make the grade whereas a number of outliers—let's say Big Deal residues—were maintained. In any case, at this point we had gone a long way down the road of severing the last connection between subscriptions and departmental derived serial attribution. Finally, the university implemented a new—and massive—serials cut last spring. Not only were we now confronted with unsustainable serial inflation rates but placed in the position of having to reduce the serials budget in absolute terms.

The following spiel was delivered to a meeting of faculty liaisons last April. The document attempts to spell-out the logic and contours of the serials cut:

> The library materials budget has reached a grim impasse. As we know, each academic unit over the last decade was hit with rescissions and demands to reduce expenditures. Throughout this entire belt-tightening process library administration labored to protect the library materials budget. This has been a major uphill battle in that the materials budget has witnessed only one significant increase to its base—$300,000—in the last fifteen years. Despite the many challenges there have been expansive areas of growth within the library over the same period. First and foremost, there was the wholesale conversion of serials and databases to electronic access. Accompanying this move was the upsurge of aggregated database providers such as EBSCO, JSTOR, PsycArticles, Lippincott nursing journals, IEEE engineering titles, and many more highly used and reliable platforms. At the same time, there has been a steady erosion of the resources devoted to books and monographs.
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> The system has leaked oil for years but became completely derailed this fall when the library was delivered a fiat to reduce expenditures to the tune of 11%. Already reduced to a skeletal budget there was no safe harbor for materials, and therefore an immediate reduction of $339,621 was imposed. Seeing that we were well into the 2016 fiscal year when the demand was posted there was insufficient time to marshal forces so as to carry out a serials cancellation project. Moreover, by the fall a significant number of items had already renewed. As a consequence, there was no choice but to lift the funds from the monograph side of the ledger. The ensuing disaster was unprecedented. Book purchases came to a dead halt in mid-December. This year only 3,500 monographs were added to the collection. Let's put this number in perspective—at its height the university acquired 30,000 titles in the course of fiscal 2001. Last year—fiscal 2015— which was an all-time low—the university purchased approximately 9,000 titles. Further complicating this indigent situation is that the administration ordered a further reduction to the base library budget for fiscal 2017. This reduction to the materials line translates to an additional loss of $409,211. It

is impossible to steal from the monographs line any further—it is already obliterated. In this circumstance, there is no choice but to severely prune the serials side of the ledger.

In the fall a serials task force was patched together to address the materials budget predicament. Although it was eminently clear that monographs had to be restored, it was not clear what would constitute an appropriate expenditure level. After considerable discussion it was agreed that at a minimum 16% of the materials budget should be devoted to monographs. (In previous and brighter days the split between serials and monographs was 70% to 30% respectively.) Assuming a materials budget base of $3,682,904 for fiscal 2017 then it would require a figure of $589,264 to reach the minimum 16% threshold. That sounds like a lot of cash until one takes into consideration that the library devoted more than a million per annum for monographs a short six years ago. Nonetheless, to achieve this barebones monograph threshold would spawn the most radical serials cut that this library has ever undertaken.

Across the board cuts would not allow us to arrive at the desired figure. The latter solution—that has not been pursued for many years—appears reasonable on the surface. However, what across the board cuts fail to account for are the massive discrepancies allotted from one disciplinary serials line to another. These stark inequities have a long historical tail and should have been addressed previously but were not owing to a variety of factors—first and foremost of which was institutional inertia. The topic was painful, acrimonious and best avoided. We cannot duck any longer.

When one takes a comprehensive view of serials expenditures there are certain elements of the terrain that readily command attention. For instance, it is jarring to recognize that more than 68% of the university's serials expenditures are tied to the so-called Big Five commercial publishers—Elsevier, Sage, Springer, Taylor & Francis and Wiley. The fact is that the Big Five have lorded over the universal serials market for decades. We propose to diminish the presence of the Big Five on our campus. The distinguished economist Ted Bergstrom has argued and demonstrated that serials from large commercial publishers are on average two-thirds more expensive than comparable titles published by nonprofit university and society presses. Obviously, this rank disparity places a tremendous burden on individual institutional serials lines. Moreover, these commercial titles are not only more costly but their usage is generally much lower based on a cost-per-use analysis.

Taking all these factors into account the serials task force focused on the Big Five publishers and set a cancellation threshold of $50 per use. In other words, if it was determined that an individual article rose above the $50 threshold then that journal was placed on the cut line. Although the $50 threshold is a somewhat arbitrary figure, we made sure the usage figures were not derived from a single year but rather represented a three-year average based on 2013, 2014 and 2015 COUNTER usage data. The latter is drawn from a NISO standard specifically the Journal Report 1 (JR1)—number of monthly downloads during a calendar year. In any case, when we look at Taylor & Francis alone and apply the $50 threshold then we arrive at a cancellation figure of more than $220,000. Our estimate is that the total figure approaches $600,000 when the criteria is applied to all the Big Five. A complicating factor is that Wiley has gone on record stipulating that they will charge an additional 25%—on top of the annual inflation rate—if the university elects to cancel more than 1% of our current subscriptions. This is a worrisome demand and certainly places a bulls-eye on Wiley titles and indeed makes them that much more vulnerable. Despite the risks involved Wiley is adamant in enforcing the surcharge.

The serials task force does not intend to restrict cancellations exclusively to the Big Five, but to merely focus on them as a launching point. Again, you have to take account of where serials are grounded. Indeed, there are other large publishers to which the university devotes significant funds. For instance, there are prominent university presses like Oxford and Cambridge—112 and 161 subscriptions respectively. However, when one examines their usage data one notes that not only are their titles heavily used but that they are also much less expensive in the aggregate. This is not to say that there are Cambridge and Oxford titles that will rise above the $50 threshold, but that they are few and far between compared to what we see from the Big Five. Indeed, once we distance ourselves from the Big Five the opportunity to recoup significant monies becomes dimmer and dimmer. We will of course soldier on but with the understanding that the focus must remain on the Big Five.

I want to leave you with one last thought. The serials universe is infinitely different than that of fifteen years ago when the digital revolution was first launched. Today unmediated and almost immediate access to journal literature is not restricted to individual and package subscriptions. Indeed, virtually every one of the titles that we are recommending for cancellation are available by means other than subscription. In this regard, I want to hand over the remainder of the presentation to my serials task force colleagues so that they can introduce you to the Copyright Clearance Center's remarkable platform—Get-It-Now.

Summing up:

First item on the agenda is to specify the problem and set a cancellation target--a firm dollar figure. Second, corral usage data--COUNTER JR1 reports are much preferred along with COUNTER DB1 stats. Three, develop a strategy that employs usage data so to realize the target sum. The latter will generally involve a dollar benchmark per download--say $75 or $50 per use. Four, consult and advise faculty on the critical need to achieve the target figure. Five, offer some means of ameliorating the damage wrought from deep cancellations whether that be implementation of Get-It-Now, promoting open access, digital repositories, etc. Six, brace for the negative fallout and hope for better days.

Library #3

The university administration asked us to cut 10% of all budgets two years in a row. For the library, those cuts straddled a retiring director/interim director transition. We took a look at every e-resource as the renewal dates approached. We pulled any stat reports available that would be useful and analyzed them. We looked at overall numbers and figured cost per article where applicable. We discussed what programs were supported by specific resources and considered the size of the program. We talked about how that program uses the library. For example: Did they have accreditation requirements that would be affected by the removal of this resource? In some cases, we actually had discussions with faculty in a particular program or with faculty who utilized a specific resource. We also looked at competitive resources. Was there another quality product at a lower cost that could replace the resource?

One of our most in depth projects was an analysis of Wiley products. We had two Wiley subscriptions. One of them was a group of individual journals that we had chosen. We pulled the statistics on those journals and analyzed each journal with significant usage stats. We found that we were paying an astronomical amount of money for journals that we already had in order to gain access to the items in the 12-18 month embargo period. We then had to decide the value of the embargo access journal by journal. For some of the journals, we went as far as pulling the statistics that sorted the usage by YOP (year of publication) to see how often the current issues were being utilized in comparison to older issues.

It's hard to put a formula in stone because it seems like there are so many factors that may change the formula. For example, nursing is our largest program and the department actually works with one of our librarians to order specific resources. Many of these resources are tied into their accreditation, although in some cases they may be too costly in a specific formula, we really cannot remove the resource. The positive side is that these close analyses are reminding us where we might have some weaknesses (like marketing a product) and motivates us to work harder at getting the resource used.

This is year two of the 10% cut and we are still adjusting. Last year the cut mandate was communicated after major renewal commitments had been made. We were to make some cuts with a little negotiating for payment extensions, and a couple of vendors even let us out of our contracts due to this issue. Due to the late request, we are still working on analyzing resources we have not closely scrutinized yet (especially if we had multiple year contracts on them). There is also the issue that we need to maintain the cost reduction even though prices continually increase. Then the university begins talk about adding new programs… It's not a situation of "Phew! We cut what we need to cut!" It's a moving target.

Library #4

Our library has had a flat materials budget for several years, and most of the money was spent on continuations. In 2015 subject librarians were tasked with cutting journals and serials to allow for more monographic purchases. Each subject librarian cut within their discipline based on what they felt were their monographic needs. A criterion was not really established, but initial discussions revolved around print journals and serials and online journals that had fewer than 50 users. A list was generated with all print journals and serials and all online journal with less than 50 uses and distributed to all subject librarians. A total of 160 journals and serials were cancelled and the money was used to buy monographs.

In 2016 our materials budget was cut by 15%. Print journals and serials along with online journals with fewer than 50 uses were again targeted for cancellation. Subject librarians cancelled 159 journals and serials, but this wasn't enough to come up with the 15% reduction. Due to the severity of such a cut, and the impact across disciplines, subject librarians determined they should work together to determine which databases would be cut. Prior to the meeting, the subject librarians polled their faculty and consulted database usage statistics. After several meetings, it was determined that 15 databases would be cut. These databases were a combination of interdisciplinary and subject specific.

In September 2016 we did an analysis of our ILL data to determine the impact on ILL of the 160 journal titles that we had cancelled in 2015. Only two of those journals were requested more than three times between 1/1/2015 and 12/31/2015.

Library #5

After a number of years of flat budgets in the early 2000s, our library took several different approaches to trying to keep our materials budget balanced. We did the standard across-the-board cancellations of serials for all departments (each having their own target cancellation amount) one year. We cut the book budget (both the approval program and firm order budgets) by 25% one year. Another year, we canceled some very expensive sources including the print citation indexes. Our budget situation was stable for a number of years after that when the Academic Senate campaigned successfully for some permanent additions to our materials budget which enabled us to avoid major cancellations for quite a few years and to add new electronic resources.

With the latest state budget situation woes the past couple years, we have focused almost exclusively on identifying high cost per use periodical titles, both online and print. We began with online periodicals in 2014 because the usage statistics were more readily available. We began collecting reshelving statistics for print periodicals in 2013 to better assess their usage and examined cost per use figures for them in 2016. Like some other libraries, we averaged use figures over three years to account for variations in use among years. There was no firm cost per use number for potential cancellations, but we started with titles over $75 per use. That number could potentially go lower close to $30 per use which is our benchmark cost for an average interlibrary loan or document delivery transaction. Lists of the high cost per use titles were then distributed to subject librarians who reviewed the titles with their liaison departments. Departments were given the opportunity to remove titles from the list if they felt they were critical for their current or future research and/or teaching. For titles which were canceled, these were activated in Get It Now, when available, to provide unmediated document delivery of articles via SFX. This approach has allowed us to cancel hundreds of thousands of dollars of subscriptions while still maintaining access within minutes in most cases for a fraction of the cost via Get It Now. Campus faculty seem very satisfied with Get It Now as a substitute for actual subscriptions. In some cases it has provided online delivery for titles we previously only held in print.

For the coming year, we have begun analysis of our database subscriptions to try to assess overlap in order to identify potential cancellations. We have been using SFX full text overlap reports to identify databases in various subject areas where there might be significant overlap in coverage. Indexing overlap is more difficult to assess without a full-blown research study. Subject librarians will again have the primary decision-making responsibility to identify databases for cancellation in consultation with faculty in their liaison departments.

Library #6
While our library has not experienced significant cuts, we have had a stagnant budget for the past few years. In order to keep up with the annual price increases of journals, etc., we did make some cuts. The subject librarians first looked at journals within their discipline and canceled any print that was duplicated online. Due to the fact that we support a graduate program in a specific subject area, we had a large amount of items in our reference collection that were also available online, since many of the instructors like to compare the print to the online format. The University Librarian met with the faculty of this program and explained how the Library could no longer support both formats. In most cases the faculty agreed to cut the print as long as the Library kept the last print edition in our collection. Faculty also agreed to cut many little-used print journals. While these cuts have helped us to remain within budget, our budget remains stagnant and costs keep going up. Our next plan is to analyze cost/usage of our current print and online individual journal subscriptions in all disciplines, as well as our online database subscriptions. We have discussed having our subject librarians meet with faculty to determine what journals/databases are essential to their research within their discipline and discuss cost/usage with them. We also plan to look into services such as Get-It-Now. Working on this annual project for CPC is very timely for our university as we are just beginning this process and hopefully it will be very helpful in developing a plan for assessment of our resources.

Library #7
This university library's overall budget has remained the same for the past several fiscal years. As subscription prices increased, money from other library account lines was moved to cover the overages. Although the materials budget, which is labeled as the "Books and Periodicals" account line, is used almost exclusively for subscription products, in FY16 the library cancelled a print index subscription in order to place that amount with YBP in order to restart collection of monographs, a practice which had been halted altogether at some unidentified point in the past.

Also paid out of the "Books and Periodicals" line are online services such as RefWorks, Springshare products, the library's discovery layer, etc. For FY18, the library is requesting that the "Books and Periodicals" account line be split three ways: Online Services, Subscriptions, and Books. The library hopes that this will clarify and help assess how much is being spent on which type of service or asset.

Until the FY16 creation and approval by university administration of a formal library Content Review Policy and Process, there was previously no written policy or practice of evaluation or review of the library's content, in any format. With the adoption of the Content Review Process, which is administered in conjunction with the library's Collection Development Policy (created and approved in FY15), in FY17 the library plans to complete weeding of both the History and Nursing collections. In future, the library will implement a recurrent subject-specific weeding schedule for each college/department/unit's holdings.

As for the library's electronic subscriptions, these will also be subject to the Content Review Process. Each liaison librarian will be responsible for evaluating electronic and print resources for their areas of assignment and will discuss with Deans and department heads any resources with low usage and high Return on Investment (ROI). The goal is to work with faculty to increase students' usage of relevant resources as well as to determine whether reallocations can be made to possibly exchange an underused resource for a more relevant or desirable one.

To date, the method preferred by the university provost for determining a library resource's value is (ROI) or Cost Per Use (CPU), which entails dividing the annual cost of the resource by the total number of searches during the fiscal year. The acceptable cost per use amount is $1. Resources for which the ROI is higher than $1 per search are eligible to be considered for cancellation or reallocation.

Library #8

For years our budget held steady. In FY17, the institution moved to a comparative budgeting process, which forces cost center managers to justify all spending by tying it to institutional key performance indicators (KPIs). This was not a bad thing for the library, as we have extensive library usage data. We initially received the budget we requested, but had most of our funds frozen mid-year.

As we prepare for FY18, we've been asked to cut 10% of our operating budget, but are bracing for more. We also anticipate that funds we receive may be frozen throughout the year.

Strategy/prioritizing:

The librarians saw the statewide fiscal crisis as an opportunity last year--we now had the time as well as the obligation to "right-size" some collections and formats, as well as adapt to new teaching formats (for example, ensuring online learners had equal access to resources).

To focus us, we re-wrote our Collection Development Plan. Starting with a blank slate, we discussed our mission as a library and how our priorities matched with the strategic priorities of the school.

We also became much more formalized in terms of budget allocations by selector (which stand as proxies for areas of the collection), especially for monographs. Funds are spent to optimize the number of students served.

Need-based collection decisions:

Nothing is considered part of our "core" collection--everything has to earn its keep. Instead of starting from the premise of "what should we cut," we look at everything with fresh eyes, asking ourselves, "would we subscribe to this resource if we didn't already have it?" We make evidence-based decisions when and where we can, collecting qualitative and quantitative data. We aim to be data informed, not data driven.

Electronic resources:

Electronic resources are acquired to optimize their cost-effectiveness by ensuring that all students have their needs met, but that the majority of the funds go to databases that support the needs of the most students. We review cost per use for databases, but also discuss academic need (i.e., existing and potential research assignments) with teaching faculty. In some cases, we have opted to keep a low-performing resource for an additional year, with the goal of promoting it to the appropriate instructors and classes. We have not set a maximum cost-per-use threshold, rather, we look at the cost per use figure as one data point. We are also keenly aware of the impossibility of getting true apples-to-apples usage comparisons across (and even within) vendors (even using COUNTER reports), so we try to compare database usage against itself (previous years). We are also sensitive to the various characteristics of usage--we prioritize result clicks over searches, for example.

We continue to largely purchase Big Deals through consortial agreements, but are also looking at the proportion of unique journals used within databases, and are open to licensing individual subscriptions if/when they are more cost effective.

We are also open to exchanging long-held core resources for cheaper alternatives, and are currently running extended trials in anticipation of doing so.

Ebooks:
We have consciously stayed away from ebooks, for the usual reasons. Any ebooks we have are licensed, or we own them thanks to past CARLI deals. The few exceptions are on the chopping block.

Renting vs. owning:
We prefer to license, rather than purchase, our electronic resources (even ebooks). This keeps us nimble, and rids of us collection maintenance tasks. However, we are keenly aware this strategy keeps us dependent on ongoing funds.

Monographs:
We continue to seek out ways to do more (or the same) with less. We purchase roughly the same number of monographs per year, but have switched to paperbacks as the default binding, have put a near-total halt to print reference volumes, and have altered our customer specifications with our vendors to save on paperback reinforcement and other pre-processing. We believe it is cheaper to replace a few well-used paperbacks than to purchase everything in hardcover. Time will tell if we are right.

We are keeping a much closer eye on circulation stats, and are more aware of areas of the collection that do not circulate in print and/or would be better supported with online resources due to the currency of the subject matter alone (health sciences, for example). We are looking at ILL data from IShare and OCLC and participating in CARLI's Collaborative Collection Development initiative, and will be exploring ways to share resources.

We have also embarked on a massive weeding project, with the aim of shrinking our collection to encourage higher circulation per item. We will see if our experiments pay off over the next few years. Money saved in this area has been reallocated to support our electronic resources.

Print periodicals:
Over the last several years, we have had to cut the number of print periodical subscriptions each year, as we held steady with the total dollar amount we allocated toward this format. However, in the last two years, we have cut our print periodical subscriptions budget by ⅔. We keep manual browse counts of our print periodicals (which do not circulate), but they are so few and far between they are not helpful for decision making. We use online availability as a main determining factor in print subscription cancellations, and have also significantly reduced the number of back issues we keep for current subscriptions.

Our print periodical selections now focus more on general interest magazines, where casual reading and browsing by patrons is standard. We have cut back on the more expensive academic journals and have reallocated these funds toward individual electronic subscriptions.

Special Collections/Recreational Reading:
We remain committed to developing our special collections, including access points for literacy and recreational reading. Additionally, the library is committed to supporting the institution as a whole by purchasing a small number of periodicals and books that discuss current issues and topics facing like institutions.

Microform:
We have canceled all microform subscriptions and have weeded all items in microform. We no longer support the format.

Multimedia:
Except for occasional instructor DVD requests, we are not actively acquiring physical multimedia.

We have recently licensed audiobook and music collections. We are keeping a close watch on usage of both resources.

Open educational resources:
The library has a central role in OER (open educational resources) initiatives on campus. We are positioning ourselves as experts of and guides to this brave new old world, and may increase our role as curators of free content as budgets continue to shrink.

Select Bibliography on Serials Cancellations

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