INTRODUCTION

Known also as patron driven acquisition, DDA is a new method of acquiring books “just-in-time.” At the heart of DDA is the idea that libraries pay only for e-books that are used. Libraries load records for e-books not owned into the online catalog and the library’s discovery layer tool. Users are unaware of the difference between a title the library owns or does not own. If a user accesses an e-book, the library pays either a brief short term loan (STL) fee or the full purchase price of the e-book depending on how extensive the use is. A library user triggers an STL by browsing in an e-book for over ten minutes, printing pages, or downloading the e-book. A single click on a link in the library catalog does not trigger an STL.

If a DDA book is never used, there is no charge. In contrast, the library pays for a print book whether or not it is used. When one considers that 40% of print books purchased by libraries are never used (Allen Kent et al., Use of Library Materials: The University of Pittsburgh Study (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1979) it is clear that DDA gives libraries an option to save money and offers an alternative approach to book selection that responds to users’ immediate needs.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In September 2013, the Ottenheimer library began discussions with YBP and EBSCO, its primary book and serials vendors, to develop a plan to offer (DDA). The library chose EBSCO, one of several companies offering e-books to academic libraries because the library had 30,000 e-books available on the EBSCOhost® platform and users were already familiar with searching EBSCO databases.

In the first step of the project the library completed a memorandum of agreement with EBSCO and YBP to conduct a six-month pilot. The next step was to modify the library’s existing collection profile with YBP. The profile outlines the Library of Congress subjects in which the library acquires materials to support the university curriculum. The collection development librarian reviewed the profile and excluded types of materials such as multivolume sets, previously published works, graphic novels, reprints, and titles costing over a certain amount. YBP adjusted the profile based on the criteria specified.

In October the head of cataloguing initiated discussions with YBP to specify elements in the MARC records that would accurately describe e-books in the DDA project. Based on these discussions and with input from collection development, acquisitions, and information technology, YBP created technical specifications. Using these specifications
YBP created a batch of sample records for the library to review, load in the catalog, and test. Over a period of several weeks, the library requested modifications to the records. YBP complied with the requests and issued a final version of the agreement in December 2013. The library’s goal was to make discovering and accessing e-books as easy as possible for its users. To this end the library purchased enriched catalog records with table of contents and summaries to better support keyword searching.

Beginning in January 2014, the cataloguing department loaded the first batch of MARC records for 25 e-books in the DDA program. Since then the department has uploaded files of MARC records ranging from 25 to 100 titles weekly. Once loaded the e-books are immediately discoverable and accessible in the catalog and in EDS. Occasionally publishers remove some of their titles from the program. EBSCO sends a list of these titles and the cataloguing department removes the catalog records as they are no longer accessible.

A weekly EBSCO activity report lists the DDA titles that have been used and their cost. The collection development librarian reviews these reports to see the subject areas of high interest and to select related titles that are not part of the DDA program. The first STL occurred in January 2014. Below are some relevant findings.

- From January to June 12th the library spent $853.04 on 58 STL.
- The average cost per STL was $14.70.
- STL charges varied from 10% to 30% of list price, although specifications of the pilot project indicated STLs charges as “‘roughly’ 10%” of the e-book list price.”
- Three STL exceeded $30 per use and 23 cost less than $10.

At the end of the pilot project the library incorporated DDA into its acquisitions program.

**CHALLENGES**

Perhaps the most significant challenge has been the reaction of some publishers to libraries use of short term loans as a substitute for outright purchasing. In some instances they withdrew titles they previously offered from the program. While this did not affect the user as far as we know, the potential exists for a user to return to look for a title that is no longer available. Below is a list of factors that should be monitored as the library moves forward with DDA.

- Publishers withdrew titles from the pool of titles available. Of more than 2000 titles approximately one hundred titles were removed.
- STL charges varied depending on the publisher.
- The e-book vendor did not provide timely responses to questions perhaps because the e-book landscape continues to shift daily.
- Technical specifications were not always followed. For example, holdings information appears in OCLC for the DDA titles even though this was not requested.
• The e-book vendor does not provide usage statistics for DDA titles separate from other e-books
• Usage statistics do not provide a detailed analysis of how e-books are used.
• Prior to DDA, acquisitions staff initiated new purchases and had an order number to follow. Staff track DDA purchases after they occur and require monitoring.

SUCCESES

• Library users:
  o access a steady stream of current titles in subject areas directly relevant to the University’s curriculum.
  o access e-books for a fraction of the cost of purchasing monographs.
  o find and use DDA tiles with no assistance or promotion.
• The library expends funds only when users access e-books.
• The library regularly receives quality discovery records customized according to YBP technical specifications.
• The selection of titles is consistent with the agreed upon curriculum based profile.

CONCLUSION

With continued reductions in the budget to purchase books, DDA provides an opportunity for the library to purchase books that have been used at least once, and to “lease” less frequently used books for seven days. This just-in-time instead of just-in-case purchasing model is a practical option for the Ottenheimer library which must manage declining funds to purchase non-serial materials. Library users benefit from technology that allows them seamless access to e-books the library does not own.

In the next phase of this project the library will evaluate the challenges that users face in accessing e-books. The plan is to offer information sessions to familiarize them with issues surrounding the use of e-books and digital rights management. The June 2014 NISO publication outlining best practices for demand driven acquisition of monographs will help guide the library’s effort to provide access to a wide range of materials that will actually be used by the university’s students, faculty, and staff.

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