"What—Do You Get a Brain With That?": Journal Access Paradigm Change at a Liberal Arts University

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Introduction

Rising subscription costs for research journals, especially in the natural sciences, remain one of the most pressing problems facing college and university libraries. Many institutions have addressed this problem through a change from a paradigm of journal ownership to one of journal access. Document delivery alternatives for access to journal literature have existed for a decade and librarians, especially those responsible for interlibrary loan, have utilized them with great success. In addition to journal article delivery, vendors such as CARL UnCover, CISTI, and ISI provide current awareness services allowing faculty members to stay current with the literature in their fields without actually browsing the journals. For many low use, high cost journals, these services can be a viable alternative to ownership. One of the main challenges with substituting such services for journal ownership is convincing the faculty of the merit of these services. Most faculty are unfamiliar with or unaware of the document delivery and current awareness services that exist.

This paper describes a successful faculty education and journal assessment project conducted at Furman University from the fall of 1998 to the fall of 2000. Faculty members from selected departments were trained in the use of document delivery and current awareness services, and given the opportunity to use them at the library's expense. They were also surveyed about their perceptions of journal use by faculty and students in their disciplines. At the end of the project, departments were given the opportunity to cancel certain journals to fund continued free access to services. This paper discusses how this proposal was articulated to the faculty departments, the document delivery vendors that were used, the mechanics of the trial, and the results of the project.

Background

Furman University is a liberal arts institution with 2800 students and 200 faculty. The university is predominately undergraduate and residential, but also supports small master's programs in chemistry and education as well as a limited undergraduate evening program.

While all academic libraries suffered from the journal price increases of the 1980's and 1990's, the problem was

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made especially acute at Furman University by the budgeting system that had evolved. Nearly 80% of the library materials budget was directly allocated to the academic departments for discretionary spending for library materials. These funds were annually allocated by the faculty library committee on an ad hoc basis. For years the committee consistently decided to make maintenance of all journal subscriptions the priority, which generally used the full sum of annual budget increases and in some years caused across the board reductions in book budgets. As a result, the journal budget expanded to 80% of the total library materials budget, a percentage which the library viewed as too high for a liberal arts institution. However, no mechanism existed to "coerce" departments to cancel "their" subscriptions.

The challenge for the Furman library was to create a program that would provide incentives for departmental faculties to cancel high cost, low use subscriptions. The broader goal of the program was to foster a move from an academic culture based on ownership of journals to one with a balanced mix of access to articles through paper journals, electronic journals, and document delivery.

In 1998 the library decided to modify the transformational model used by Chuck Hamaker and Jane Kleiner at Louisiana State University in order to make it appropriate for a liberal arts institution in our circumstances. (Kleiner and Hamaker, 1997) The program was locally referred to as the Access Vs. Ownership Project and consisted of providing selected departments with free, unlimited access to document delivery and current awareness services on a trial basis in conjunction with surveys of faculty perceptions of journal needs. The hope and expectation was that at the end of the trial period, faculty members would agree to cancel high cost, low use journals in their disciplines in exchange for continuation of access to document delivery and current awareness services. A successful outcome in a particular department would consist of cancellation of subscriptions equal to or greater than the ongoing annual cost of the services provided, along with positive faculty feedback.

Investigating Document Delivery And Current Awareness Services

Before the departments were approached, the document delivery librarian was charged with creating a package of services to offer the faculty. The document delivery librarian decided to offer two services: document delivery and current awareness or SDI (selected dissemination of information.) The goal was for the faculty to feel confident they could obtain articles from journals the library did not own

in an easy and timely way and that they could monitor the contents of journals in their field, including those the library did not own.

Since the library was to absorb all expenses, the document delivery librarian wanted to keep costs other than the price of articles and SDI as low as possible. Several document delivery vendors were examined. Ultimately the librarian chose CARL UnCover, and later added CISTI. UnCover was chosen because a substantial amount of searching can be done for free; one can search and view the tables of contents of the 17,000 journal titles UnCover carries without cost. The only direct costs are ordering articles and utilizing UnCover's SDI service, known as Reveal. CISTI's document delivery service (which uses ARIEL) was added later as an alternative to the often unreadable fax copies from UnCover.

Proposal To Faculty And Orientation

The departments selected for the project primarily consisted of those with the highest journal budgets, including Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Economics and Business Administration, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology. In addition, slightly modified versions of the project were conducted with the departments of English and Sociology based on departmental interest. These nine departments were invited to participate in the project sequentially over the course of two years, so that only one or two trials would be in process at any given time.

The invitation to the initial proposal meeting with each department was extended through that department's designated library liaison. Every faculty member in the department was invited to attend a session either in the library or in a multimedia classroom in their building, as they preferred. The library director began each session with a welcome and a review of the background of the serials problem. The associate director then outlined the terms of the proposed project: free access to document delivery and current awareness services for one academic term, in exchange for completion of a brief Journal Assessment Survey. The associate director stressed that agreeing to the trial period did not imply any obligation to cancel journal subscriptions and that at the end of the trial the choice would be left to the department whether or not to cancel journals and, if so, which journals to cancel. The document delivery librarian then provided the department with an introduction to the services available, including step by step handouts and an offer of a high level of personal assistance in the initial phase of the project. Although the services offered were

intended to be patron initiated, the librarians felt the offer of personal assistance was extremely important to the success of the project. Faculty would not use the services if they felt the services were difficult to access, either because they were on their own or if the learning curve was too great. Each department was then asked whether or not they would like to participate in a trial project. All of the nine departments invited agreed to do so.

Nuts And Bolts

To order articles from UnCover and utilize their Reveal service, password protected profiles had to be set up for each participant. The faculty logged on using these profiles. Anyone with a credit card can set up an UnCover profile. The challenge was setting up the numerous profiles need and have the library foot the bill. UnCover does offer a gateway service which would have accomplished this, but the service cost more than the library could spend.

Instead, the document delivery librarian set up an UnCover billing account (a deposit account is also available.) Under one UnCover account, any number of profiles can be created at no extra charge. In the profile set up process there is an option to have all activity of that profile charged to a billing account (as apposed to a credit card.) The document delivery librarian had to set up all the accounts himself to avoid having to supply the faculty with the billing account number. But by setting up the profiles, the librarian had a master list of profile numbers, and more control over the information that went into them.

This solution worked well because, each participant could have an unique profile subsidized by the library, but the library only incurred a cost if the faculty actually ordered articles or used the Reveal service. The document delivery librarian also had access to use statistics. Doing it this way did not prevent the faculty from ordering articles from journal the library owned. This was not a big concern since one of the goal of the trial was to get the faculty to cancel some journal subscriptions in return for continued use of the document delivery and current awareness service. The librarians did appeal to the faculty's moral side by asking them to keep such requests to a minimum for cost reasons.

UnCover delivers articles via fax or desk-top delivery. The document delivery librarian put the ILL/DocDel office fax number in each profile, so the faxes would come to him and he could request resends for unreadable faxes. Unfortunately, the UnCover faxes were often unreadable. This led to the decision to start using CISTI in addition to UnCover.

CISTI (the Canadian Institute of Scientific and Technical Information) uses ARIEL to deliver articles, providing better copy quality. CISTI, like UnCover, has a searchable table of contents database and an SDI service, but these services had more overhead cost then the library wanted to spend. So only CISTI's document delivery service was utilized, and UnCover continued to be used for the current awareness service. Faculty were not prevented from ordering articles via UnCover, but they were encouraged to use CISTI.

The document delivery librarian had to set up one invoice account with CISTI (which is free) and give the account number and password out to all the faculty involved in the project. To limit confusion, the document delivery librarian instructed the faculty to put their names in the "client name" box provided on each CISTI order form. He also set up a web page with links straight to the CISTI order form, web catalog, and an online instruction sheet he had created. Setting the service up this way sounds like a tremendous leap of faith, but really is not. Little if any abuse was noted, and since the articles were delivered to the Document Delivery office (where the ARIEL machine is located) they could be "held hostage" if a faculty member needed to be disciplined. Luckily, this was never actually necessary.

Results I: Faculty Response To Services

At the training sessions, the most immediate response was shock at the per article price charged by UnCover and CISTI. This led the faculty to assert that these services would not represent a savings over ownership, because of the sheer volume of articles they would order. As the librarians suspected, this did not end up being the case.

On numerous occasions, the document delivery librarian was taken up on his offer of personal assistance. He met with five faculty members on an individual basis. Each meeting resulted with the faculty using one or more of the services. Several other faculty were walked through the process over the telephone.

The copy quality of UnCover was the most immediate and widespread criticism. This led to the addition of CISTI's document delivery service. The improved copy quality was noted and appreciated by the faculty.

Another criticism of UnCover was the lack of abstracts. This short coming was also evident with CISTI's current awareness products. To address this concern, the document delivery librarian offered ISI's Journal Tracker service to any interested project participants. Journal Tracker works in a similar fashion to UnCover's Reveal service (e-mailing

journal tables of contents) with the added benefit of providing abstracts, but at a substantial cost. Initially 4 biology faculty signed up for this service. Their most immediate reaction was that it provided "too much information." Eventually two of the faculty canceled their subscription to Journal Tracker because they did not have time to go through all the lengthy e-mail messages (table of contents plus abstracts) they received.

The library also offered a trial of ISI's Current Contents Connect to project participants. CCC, the online version of the print Current Contents, is a strong current awareness database searchable in numerous ways, and it includes abstracts.

Overall reaction to the services was positive.

Results II: Faculty Response To Journal Surveys

In conjunction with the trial period, each faculty member in a participating department was asked to complete a Journal Assessment Survey with four questions:

1. List the ten to twelve core journals that you think are most important to your department overall. Identify the top three with an asterisk (*).

2. List the ten to twelve journals that students use/cite most often in your classes and in research under your direction. Identify the top three with an asterisk (*).

3. List the ten to twelve journals that you use most in your teaching, research, and professional reading. Identify the top three with an asterisk (*).

4. Of the journals listed above, list those for which 24 to 48 hour document delivery might be a viable alternative to a paper subscription.

The survey instrument was distributed electronically one to two weeks after the beginning of the trial. Participants were given one month to complete the survey. Reminders were sent to participants, library liaisons, and department chairs at the end of the month. The response rate per department varied from 40% to 100%.

Individual faculty responses were then compiled by the associate director. On the basis of these surveys, subscriptions in the discipline were first informally divided into three categories:

1. Core Journals: Cited by at least half of the members of the department

2. Intermediate Journals: Cited by at least one but fewer than half of the members of the department

3. The Journals that Nobody Loves: Not cited by any member of the department

Journals in Category 2 were then reexamined with regard to use statistics, core bibliographies, and the availability of indexing. A formal list was created with three divisions: Core Journals, Keepers, and Candidates for Cancellation. A list was also prepared of those journals to which the library did not subscribe which two or more members of the department cited as most used (generally as most used for their own research.)

Results III: Closing The Deal

As promised, at the end of the trial period, it was left to each department to decide whether or not to cancel subscriptions in order to fund continuation of document delivery and current awareness services. Based on use of the services during the trial period, the library estimated the annual cost of continuing the services to arrive at a target figure for cancellations. (It was anticipated that use would probably be higher than normal during the trial period, so the extrapolated costs would thus be on the high side; hence, a "conservative" estimate from the library's point of view.)

The associate director shared the categorized list of journals with the department's library liaison, along with the target figure for cuts. The suggestions for cancellation was the most detailed list, including the cost of the journals, which faculty members often found shocking. At this time, other incentives for cancellation were also put forth, including possible new journal subscriptions (drawn from the list of journals cited but not subscribed to), enhanced electronic subscriptions, and increased book budgets.

The liaison was asked how he or she would like to proceed. Three liaisons suggested conferences with the full department, four indicated they would prefer to advocate the program with their departments individually, one believed the cancellations would not be approved and declined to proceed, and one project is still in process.

Results IV : Project Outcomes

The project has been successfully completed with six of the nine departments, which have agreed to cancellations equal to or exceeding their target figures. Two departments (Earth and Environmental Sciences and English) declined make cancellations and continue the services. One department (Mathematics) is still in the trial period at the time of this writing.

A total of 42 journals have been canceled at a total cost of over $65,000. As a result of the project seven new journal subscriptions were started with a total cost of $4,500. Net reduction to the journal budget to date is therefore over $60,000, a savings of approximately 10 percent of the total cost of the library's journal subscriptions. Of the savings, less than one-third has been needed to support con-

tinuation of document delivery and current awareness services. The remainder of the savings (over $40,000) has been reallocated to support additional spending for books and electronic resources.

Conclusion
We consider the Access Vs. Ownership Project at Furman University to be a tremendous success. It has had a substantial impact on flexibility in spending within the library budget. It has provided faculty members with access to a greatly expanded universe of titles. It has increased the perception among the faculty that alternative means of access to journal literature are appropriate and desirable, paving the way for additional moves into electronic access. Finally, it has enhanced the reputation of the library as a leader in finding creative solutions to faculty research needs.

References
Kleiner, Janellyn Pickering, and Hamaker, Charles. 1997. "Libraries 2000: Transforming Libraries Using Document Delivery, Needs Assessment, and Networked Resources." *College & Research Libraries* 58, 355–74.