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CHARLESTON VOICES: THE IMPACTS OF AUTOMATION ON THE FUTURE OF MONOGRAPHIC COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

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Today's discussion features **Doug Way**, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Research Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison and **Ashley Fast Bailey**, Director, Collection Development and Workflow Solutions, Central U.S. GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO. **Doug** and **Ashley** offer their unique perspectives on the impacts of automation on the future of monographic collection development.

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~ Matthew Ismail, Director of Collection Development, Central Michigan University

AUTOMATION, VENDOR-SUPPLIED SERVICES AND THE FUTURE OF MONOGRAPHIC COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT



Doug Way

By Doug Way, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Research Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Libraries today are faced with both the need and opportunity to rethink their monographic collection development strategies. Few libraries are adding additional staff positions, yet at the same time new services ranging from data curation to digital scholarship to scholarly communications are putting new demands on librarians' time. Beyond that, libraries are faced with an increasingly complex collection development environment. Library budgets are failing to keep up with inflation even as journal prices continue to outpace inflation, and libraries are also constructing a more sophisticated understanding of how their collections are used. These factors are leading many librarians to question traditional approaches to collection development. The move toward electronic resources, especially the increased reliance on the multitude of ebook business models, has further complicated collection development. The rise of retrospective shared print programs has led many libraries to look toward coordinated collection development programs to avoid the significant duplication of low-use monographs that exists today. And as libraries migrate to cloud-based next generation library management systems, they are looking to leverage aggregate data to streamline workflows and improve decision making.

This environment cries out for increased reliance on automated approaches that leverage technology and third parties to assist with collection development. Certainly, this is not new. Since the 1960s libraries have been relying on approval plans to assist with collection development. That said, the current environment we are in is more complex than ever before, and there is a desire to move away from legacy collection development approaches. Yet the infrastructure and approaches that underlie approval plans—the use of detailed, rules-based approaches to identifying materials to make available to libraries—hold great promise to meet the needs of today's research libraries. Below, I outline four scenarios where book vendors have the potential to provide automated, value-added services that streamline workflows for libraries.

Scenario One: Evidence-Based Acquisitions. As more libraries move away from short-term loan-based acquisition models, many are looking toward Evidence Based Acquisition (EBA) models as a way to combine cost-control and usage-based decision purchase decisions. Yet, publisher-direct EBA programs have very real limitations, which could be ameliorated by book vendors. Using a vendor-created approval profile approach would allow libraries to develop far more sophisticated pools of titles that more closely align with institutions' programmatic needs for users to access than are available from

publishers, which are almost always crafted based publication year. Vendors could also free libraries from the task of selecting EBA titles for perpetual access each year. With knowledge of libraries' purchase history, they could easily help libraries avoid unnecessary purchases, they could use their profiling experience to provide libraries with complex purchasing approaches based on usage and other criterion, and they could reflect these EBA purchases in their online ordering systems for future reference by libraries.

Scenario Two: Open Access Monographs. The increasing availability of open access (OA) monographs, especially front-list monographs that are being made freely available online, while also being sold in print, has created a logistical hurdle for libraries. It is difficult for libraries to identify OA monographs, both to add them to their catalog and to also avoid inadvertently purchasing print versions of these works. Libraries need book vendors to develop services to manage OA monographs. By marking works as OA in ordering systems such as GOBI and OASIS libraries would be able to make informed purchase decisions. OA monographs could be profiled using traditional approval plan approaches, and the use of vendor MARC record services would allow libraries to easily add these works to their catalogs. Such a program would require buy-in from publishers and other open access programs like Knowledge Unlatched to feed this data to book vendors. While certainly some publishers and programs will readily do this, it is an open question whether others that are promoting the sales of OA monographs as an indicator of a viable business model will be as inclined. Of course, some libraries knowingly purchase print versions of OA monographs, but a certain percentage of those sales to libraries are almost invariably auto-shipments through approval plans—approval plans that are unable to distinguish between OA and non-OA titles. Facilitating the elimination of these sales may disincentivize some publishers from supporting these kinds of efforts.

Scenario Three: Coordinated Collection Development. Beyond the challenges with business models and the availability of electronic books, many libraries are looking to coordinate acquisitions with other libraries within their consortium. This has been happening for some time, but primarily among small groups of liberal arts institutions. As research institutions look toward coordinated collection development, the scope and scale of their acquisitions programs adds a layer of complexity. These institutions are looking to develop programs that move beyond approaches where multiple institutions share a single approval plan or threshold approaches where groups of institutions look to limit the level of duplication. Through these programs, research libraries are looking to minimize duplication of low-use monographs, leverage ebooks to provide users with immediate access to content and utilize existing resource sharing networks to deliver needed print materials to users. These institutions are also looking to move collections dollars toward systematically increasing the breadth and depth of their network's combined collection. Doing this requires them to look beyond their siloed library management systems which only tell them what they own and have access to locally, yet with increasing demands on staff and a trend toward decreasing the number of staff working in technical services this is an increasingly challenging proposition.

The reality is that libraries will be unable to implement these kinds of programs without the support of book vendors. Vendors have the ability and purchase history to run analyses to determine where

significant overlap in collection development has occurred, and they have the ability to structure auto-shipments so they are evenly spread out among a large number of libraries. In addition, for consortia that wish to take a print-plus-electronic approach to these kinds of programs, vendors are essential for providing more comprehensive coverage of ebook holdings, which are often spread among multiple platforms and vendors.

Scenario Four: Leveraging Big Data. As more libraries migrate to cloud-based library management systems like Alma, the ability to leverage large-scale data sets that were previously locked on local servers and unavailable in aggregate creates new opportunities for both libraries and vendors. Using data, approval profiles could be crafted to include auto-shipments of books that meet subject and non-subject parameters, as well as usage thresholds at peer institutions. Just as many libraries use interlibrary loan requests as a predictor of a book's future use, it could be possible to look at use at peer institutions as a predictor of future local use and demand. The use of cloud-based data could also be used to automatically ship books that are in high demand at an individual library or across a consortia, using either circulation thresholds to indicate demand or holds or recalls on a given book.

While one could argue that libraries could easily look at usage data or holds data to identify books that are in high demand, the purpose of these kinds of services is to free library staff to focus on other high-demand services. At the same time, the move toward these kinds of services can be a challenge. Libraries must be willing to give up local control and must be able to make a business case to vendors to develop and provide these kinds of services. Libraries rightfully have a reputation of wanting everything for free and then complaining about the quality of the free services they are receiving. Libraries have to frame the case for these kinds of services to vendors that are looking to make a profit, and we must be willing to pay for certain kinds of services. Savings on staff time and from avoiding unnecessary purchases make paying reasonable fees for EBA and OA services an easy and obvious choice for many libraries. While the move toward coordinated collection development may seem like a more difficult pitch, the reality is that libraries are already looking to minimize duplication. Services that allow libraries to focus on depth and breadth across a consortium does not necessarily mean a decrease in sales. And services that automate purchases and make it easier for libraries to spend money would seem to also benefit vendors.

When libraries are able to automate many of the obvious tasks they are faced with, they are then able to shift resources to not only new services and programs, but to existing services, as well. This certainly holds true for collection development. Too much time is spent in libraries on managing obvious collection development decisions, leaving too little time to build unique and distinct collections. When we automate the obvious, we create the capacity to focus on and identify those works that are excluded from the mainstream—niche presses and marginalized voices that are too often overlooked and missing from our collections. In the end, automating collection development activities is not about saving money. It's about saving time and making more effective use of our time. I like to say that everyone in the library ecosystem, from librarians to vendors to publishers, has the same goal, which is ensuring our users have access to the information resources they need to be successful. We can reach that goal by

working together to develop new and unique services and approaches to acquiring and delivering those resources.

THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF AUTOMATION IN DEVELOPING AND MANAGING 21ST CENTURY LIBRARY COLLECTIONS



Ashley Fast Bailey

by **Ashley Fast Bailey**, Director, Collection Development and Workflow Solutions, Central U.S., GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO

As libraries work with tighter budgets, and in many cases reduced staff, it is important to ensure that collection development and technical services are structured in a way that makes bringing content into the library efficient and makes the most of a library's resources. All the while, the amount of content published each year continues to grow and new models of collecting content are added into the layers. On top of that, there are more programs and resources competing for librarians' time. Where is the balance in this? How can a vendor help alleviate some of the strain libraries are feeling when it comes to the shifting landscape of collection development? What tools and resources are available to help manage and navigate the myriad of new acquisition models on the market?

My perspective as a vendor is an interesting one, as I see the shift that is occurring first hand. As vendors we experience the shift in libraries and the marketplace and adjust to accommodate new models and supplier options as market demand arises. Book vendors can add value both in providing information and insight into what we are seeing, as well as helping librarians with the changing landscape of the 21st century library when it comes to print and ebook acquisitions. There are many tools and resources that make the collections process more efficient. Some of these are long standing and have been used for decades, and others are new services offered in response to the changes in collection development over the last decade or two. In some cases, libraries have never taken advantage of these tools or thought of them as something for a 'certain type of library'. I don't believe that is the case. The biggest example of this is the traditional approval profile. An approval profile is a set of parameters (LC Class, Non-Subject Parameters, and Publisher List) crafted with the library to meet their specific collection development needs. Approval profiles can contain automatic book shipments or send weekly new title electronic notification slips. These profiles can be tailored to any budget and targeted to the programs at a specific library. Automatic book shipments can comprise a core selection of titles or contain a wider scope to support a large research university. There is great flexibility in the profile. Since no two libraries are the same, no two approval profiles are either.

Approval profiles can be used not only to bring in automatic book shipments, but to supply a weekly batch of new title notification slips based on parameters set up by a library. This helps librarians wade

through the tens of thousands of titles published each year, just seeing the relevant ones. This service can allow a librarian to be alerted to new and relevant content in an easy to use format so that they can focus on other pieces of their responsibilities that need their expertise and make a direct impact to their users. In addition, an approval profile can provide insight into various formats and versions of a title. With the advent of ebooks, approval profiles can now be set up to prefer electronic versions. By adding ebook supplier options as demand increases, approval profiles allow librarians to prefer format and supplier by subject. In addition, as more purchase options come to market, it can be dizzying to keep up with. Book vendors collaborate with our publisher partners to ensure we are providing up to date information on all purchase options, making these available in one place. Thus, we provide librarians insight into various formats of a title, purchase options, and even show what other institutions are doing with that content. This allows for duplication control across an institution or consortium and brings added value to the acquisitions process.

In addition to approval profiles, vendors can supply additional services to enhance the acquisitions process through technical services and workflow support. Examples of this are electronic order confirmation records (EOCRs), cataloging support, shelf ready services, electronic invoicing (EDI Invoicing), and integration with a library's ILS/LMS. An order or approval shipment can be an automated process from start to finish. By allowing vendors to complete these basic tasks, it frees up time and allows a library to reallocate technical services staff to focus on local projects or intricate cataloging that requires the knowledge of a professional. Having a vendor complete the shelf ready processing also ensures consistency. Furthermore, a vendor's ordering database can work in conjunction with a library's ILS/LMS to automate the order process with the most efficient mode of ordering, such as with an API. This ordering workflow ensures that titles are encumbered in a timely fashion and no mistakes are made keying in data. Libraries can pick and choose which parts of vendor workflow support fit their needs and create efficiencies within their ordering and receiving process. This accommodates reductions in staff, allows a library to streamline processes that don't require staff intervention, minimizes errors, and creates effective processes.

As the landscape of acquisitions in the 21st century library continues to change and evolve vendors, publishers, and libraries need to collaborate to move forward, continuing to create a sustainable way of acquiring content and ensuring it is discoverable. New acquisition and business models, such as Demand Driven Acquisitions, Evidence-Based Acquisitions and Open Access, necessitate shifts from both libraries and vendors. Approval Profiles and these new acquisition models need to be considered in the larger picture of collecting. Yet, with so many avenues to find and acquire content the process can be muddy, confusing, and overwhelming for librarians. Vendors provide value in the process by providing workflow support, cataloging services, visibility into publishers output, and a single platform to discover and acquire content. Listening to input from libraries and responding to their needs will ensure that traditional and new models of acquisition continue to evolve and remain relevant into the future. Going forward, vendors and publishers should collaborate on streamlining the acquisition of books using these new models. Vendors can bring value into the process for libraries and work in partnership with publishers and aggregators to ensure content is visible and easy to discover and acquire amid the expanse of purchasing models.

Libraries of today look very different than libraries fifteen years ago. With the constant of change there are many acquisitions processes in the past were done locally but due to staff, budget, and time constraints are now automated through vendor services. In doing so, librarians can focus on the challenges and great opportunities that they currently face in meeting the needs of their user base. Since we all have a limited number of hours in our day, time should be spent doing the projects and tasks that make the biggest impact on the students and faculty we serve. I believe this is the goal of both librarians and vendors, and by working together we can accomplish this.