

Operational Excellence: Seventh Collection Development Seminar for Academic Librarians

National Acquisitions Group, Birmingham, 17th May 2017

The UK's National Acquisitions Group (NAG) holds an annual Collection Development Seminar for Academic Libraries. This year, it was held in Birmingham on 17th May 2017 and focused on operational excellence in the acquisition supply chain. My attendance was funded by a bursary from the Library Association of Ireland's Academic & Special Libraries Section (A&SL) for which I would like to record my appreciation.

The day consisted of five papers and one breakout session. As NAG has an excellent report of the seminar on its website (<http://www.nag.org.uk/events/2017/05/7th-collection-development-seminar-for-academic-libraries-operational-excellence>) and slides are available on Glisser (<http://glsr.it/NAgcd7>), this article will focus more on my own reflections and takeaways.

The first of these was the presentation on Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA) by Matt Durant and Ted Spilsbury (University of the West of England (UWE)). Based on evidence of none or very low usage of 36% of individual ebook purchases in 2014/15 and 2015/16, Matt and Ted's proposal to switch all ebook purchases to the PDA model (PDA+) was approved. In UWE, the subject librarians make all purchasing decisions, including those based on recommendations from lecturers so the sell was to internal library colleagues rather than the academic community. It was felt that as the material was made available, it was not necessary to consult with the lecturers. Matt and Ted grappled with a complex PDA matrix in that normal PDA was continued and both purchase and rental models were accommodated. Evidence Based Acquisition (EBA) was also part of the mix. If funds run out in the PDA+ model, funds are transferred from the normal PDA model.

The terms of the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) framework, of which UWE is a member, allowed the selection of a best fit supplier. Askews and Holts, who subsequently became the top-ranked supplier within the SUPC framework, was chosen for the many additional benefits they provided. The outcomes included a decreasing annual cost per eBook and a guarantee that each eBook purchased has been used. While evidence of usage is not the only factor in the development of collections, it certainly contributes towards a compelling business case. Apart from these outcomes, another reason this purchasing model resonated with me was the potential efficiency of one purchasing process. That said, UWE purchase 10% of eBooks that are not available from Askews and Holts in the normal way.

The second takeaway was the development of a chrome plugin which greatly enhanced the order form functionality as reported by Joe Schulkins and Rachel Schulkins (University of Liverpool). As with UWE, the order form is mainly completed by academic liaison librarians. It is now a much more dynamic experience with auto population of bibliographic metadata from Amazon, a check against existing holdings and drop-down fund codes. The order does not populate the LMS by choice as ordering is done via the supplier platform which in turn populates the LMS. The chrome plugin produces statistics which are useful to academic liaison librarians when engaging with the academic community. Future plans include extending the plugin to other browsers and to academics. The main reason this solution resonated with me was that it greatly improved the ease of use of the order form which is an important factor in encouraging engagement with collection development.

The third and final takeaway came from Kevin Wilson's experience with video streaming services in Goldsmiths, University of London. The main drivers were the dramatic decline in the use of older audio visual technologies and the ways students now engage with media - common experiences in many libraries. The services used at Goldsmiths are Art Films, Film Platform and Kanopy. Kevin highlighted the importance of adequate metadata to promote video streaming services and the need to change licensing to enable comprehensive access to streaming content in libraries.

Overall, this was an excellent seminar that was extremely well organised and well worth the journey. Thank you A&SL!

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