Patron Driven Acquisitions via Interlibrary Loan at Grand Valley State University

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Patron Driven Acquisitions via Interlibrary Loan at Grand Valley State University

Doug Way
Grand Valley State University Libraries
ALA Annual Conference
June 26, 2011
Comprehensive university with 24,000 students. We have a strong focus on undergraduate programs. Our graduate programs that we do have are generally in the professional fields like business, health science and education.

Library has 500,000 print volumes and approximately 1 million ebooks in its collection.
We were beginning to see a large increase in ILL.
We viewed that increase in many ways as unmet demand. As a comprehensive university we have always used ILL to meet faculty’s research needs, but the growth we were seeing from undergraduates.

At the same time, we were really starting to focus on the large percentage of books we were buying every year that never circulated.

While this program wouldn’t have a huge impact on that problem, we thought at least we could purchase some books we knew would be used.
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While this program wouldn’t have a huge impact on that problem, we thought at least we could purchase some books we knew would be used.
First, though, we felt we needed to do some more research on the issue.
We used WCA’s “My Library as a Borrower,” which pulls data in from ILLIAD, to take a closer look at what we were borrowing from other institutions.

What we learned was that

1) We were borrowing good books

2) We were eventually purchasing many of these books

3) We were borrowing books multiple times.

After doing this research, we felt very comfortable making that case that we should start a PDA program.
Don’t Borrow... Buy

**Digging Deeper**

- **What we learned...**
  - There were good books being requested.
  - We eventually purchased a lot of the books that had been borrowed.

- Our Conclusion...
  - We were borrowing books multiple times.

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The way our library is structured, ILL, acq and cat staff are in completely different divisions from collection development so it was very important for us to work with them to get buy-in and one of those ways was to not make life too difficult on them.
Establishing Criteria

- Published in the last 3 years
- Less than $75
  - Concern about textbooks
- In stock at Amazon
  - 2 day shipping with Amazon Prime
- No librarian review
Developing a Process

- ILL staff identify candidates based on publication date

- Candidates immediately given to acquisition staff for review
  – pricing and availability

http://www.flickr.com/photos/rali/234810237/
Developing a Process

- Acquisitions staff purchase eligible titles
- Cataloging staff prioritize copy-cataloging of titles upon receipt
- Books placed on hold for patrons
Test Semester

• What we found
  – Fewer books were purchased than expected
  – Need to expand to media
Implementation

• Fall 2008/2009 Fiscal Year

• Established a budget of $5,000
  – Based on analysis of titles that would have likely been purchased in previous years
In all we purchased about five hundred books in three years.

A couple of points here...

This year’s data really only goes through April so those numbers will increase slightly.

Also, the jump from year one to year two is not so much due to an increase in demand (ILL book borrowing actually went down that year (even if you take into account the books that were purchased).

What led to the jump in purchases had much more to do with the ILL staff getting used to this new function. Remember, they had to stop what they were doing (what they had always done) and think about whether a book was a candidate and in that first year, for whatever reason, that didn’t always happen.
After Three Years

Spending Per Year

- 08/09: $4,890
- 09/10: $8,525
- 10/11: $8,520
So let’s now talk about our evaluation of these purchases...

The things we looked at were:

the quality of the materials—were they selecting appropriate books for our library. To do this, we used a peer comparison to see if libraries like GVSU were acquiring the same books.

The next thing we looked at was their use, especially over time

and then we looked at differences based on the status of the selector. Essentially trying to see how undergraduates did.

As a comprehensive, most of our ILL use comes from undergrads, simply because they outnumber everyone else on campus. Some libraries that have rolled out this kind of program have limited their purchases to faculty requests. We didn’t do that, but we wanted to compare how our undergrads did versus faculty or other groups.
Peer Comparison
Percent of ILL Purchases Held by Peers

08/09: 59%
09/10: 49%
10/11: 48%
Average: 60%
Use of Purchased Books

- % of ILL Purchases that Circulated at least Once
- % of ILL Purchases With Subsequent Circs
- % of Books Acquired That Year With at Least One Circ

08/09: 94% Circulated, 47% Subsequent Circs, 24% Acquired
09/10: 89% Circulated, 49% Subsequent Circs, 20% Acquired
10/11: 84% Circulated, 36% Subsequent Circs, 20% Acquired
Can Undergrads Select Books?

Percent of ILL Purchases by Status of Requestor

Faculty: 52%
Grad Students: 10%
Undergrads: 36%
Other: 2%
Can Undergrads Select Books?
Percent of ILL Purchases with Subsequent Circulations

- Faculty: 34%
- Grad Students: 45%
- Undergrads: 34%
- Other: 50%
Can Undergrads Select Books?

Percent of Purchases Held by Peer Institutions

- Purchases held by no libraries:
  - Undergrads: 46%
  - Faculty: 42%
- Purchases held by more than one library:
  - Undergrads: 32%
  - Faculty: 34%
Can Undergrads Select Books?

• Our answer…Yes!
  – Books selected by undergrads were as likely to have subsequent circulations
  
  – Books selected by undergrads were about as likely to be held by peer institutions
Today at GVSU

- Budgeting approximately $10,000 per year for ILL PDA

- ILL purchases part of a much larger PDA program
Today at GVSU

- Budgeting in excess of **$200,000** for PDA

- 160,000 ebook PDA titles available in the catalog
  - ~200,000 by end of year
  - Multiple vendors
Today at GVSU

- Librarians have embraced PDA

- Continue to grow program
  - Additional vendors/publishers
  - Print-on-Demand
Today at GVSU

- So... how did we get here?
PDA via ILL as a First Step

- Easy to Sell
  - Relatively “safe”
  - Long history
  - Easy to establish *safe-guards*
  - Easy to predict *costs*
PDA via ILL as a First Step

• Eased and facilitated transition to larger program

• Additional keys…
One of the things we do every year is leave a percentage of our collection development budget unassigned (usually between 5 and 10%). This is done deliberately and purposefully and we work hard to preserve that money year after year, even if it means having to cut in other parts of budget. We use this money to support different one-time projects both within collections and within the library as a whole (be it technology purchases, furniture acquisitions or buying journal backfiles). We also use this money to quickly take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

What this flexibility allowed us to do with our PDA program was to transition to paying for it over time. People aren’t willing to give up one third of their book budgets all at once, but they are much more willing to make that transition over time. And that’s what our flex fund allowed us to do. We slowly reallocated money from book budgets to pay for PDA and have not hear a complaint from anyone.
This kind of relates to the previous point. If we’d told people we were taking a third of their budgets they would have really pushed back. Doing it over time gives them the opportunity to develop comfort with what we were doing.

So does introducing elements of a program over time. We have a large ebook collection and have had one for some time, so that was not a major concern to us, but as I mentioned earlier our ILL PDA program really helped facilitate our move to this larger PDA program.

I have talked to librarians who are looking at ebook PDA and they don’t have ebooks or any kind of PDA program and I am not surprised to hear that they are getting a lot of push-back. My suggestion is to take it one step at a time. Develop acceptance of ebooks, develop a small PDA program like we’re discussing today and allow that to lead into something much larger.
We made sure our librarians were well versed in classic and emerging literature (Kent, Trueswell) and that they understood how that was influencing our decision-making. We also made sure they were aware of our collection usage data. They had to be out there talking with faculty so we wanted to make sure they were comfortable with what we were doing and that they understood what we were doing.

We showed them that our situation was not unique and it went a long way toward gaining their acceptance. It also provides them information for when they’re out there talking with faculty. I have found that faculty really get PDA and that they understand the financial constraints that libraries (or at least universities) are in, so if you arm your librarians with facts and information they will be ready when those questions begin to arise.
The final key for us was to make sure we’re refocused on our role and mission as a library and how that fits into what our University is trying to accomplish.

And what it really boils down to is why do we build collections? Over time I think there has been a lot of mission drift, especially at comprehensives like Grand Valley where we view ourselves at little Michigans or little MITs and we have begun to view building collections as the end, when really it is just a means to provide access. Our real goal should be providing access to the resources our users need to be successful.

PDA isn’t about building collections, it’s all about providing access. Once you’re able to make that distinction and move forward you can see that PDA opens up a whole universe of information to our users that just wasn’t available to them before and it allows us to free up resources, both financial and human, that allow us to accomplish things that we could never imagine in the past.
Thank You

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