The CHARLESTON REPORT

Business Insights into the Library Market

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Buyers Talk

$The University of Miami has announced its decision to choose electronic over print; networked over standalone. Susi Seiler, University of Miami.

$Librarians have the professional responsibility to provide all types of high-quality literature for kids of all ages. Our knowledge of child development should be a driving force behind the decision to make library materials an integral part of everyone's childhood, and we should be using newer technologies to enhance kids' experience of print material. Librarians must select materials that reinforce positive self-esteem and promote their availability. Librarians should provide books in which ethnic groups are treated with dignity and where injustice and apathy come under attack. Lucille Thomas, American Libraries, June/July, 1997, pg. 85.

$Two definitions of the "ideal book vendor" recently appeared in Against The Grain. Beatrice Colastin at the University of Miami says the characteristics are: "provides expedient delivery of materials; personalizes customer services (one contact person in the vendor organization); makes their comprehensive database available online and allows electronic ordering; provides online order status and payment reports; is accurate in shipping and invoicing; and offers high discounts." Against The Grain, "Book Vendors and Service to Libraries," by Eamon Fennessy, Linda Albright and Kathy Miraglia, November, 1997, pg. 70.

Mary Kay of Humboldt University, CA, adds her ideal as, "decent discount, email access, FTP or other speedy retrieval for brief records loadable into their online system, searchable database as a plus, West Coast location for speedier shipment, and good customer service operation." Ibid

Charleston Conference

Hot Topics

Over 500 publishers, vendors, and librarians attended the 1997 Charleston Conference on November 6 to 8, with almost 100 of them arriving a day early for the preconference on "How Libraries Buy: Selling Materials to Libraries." The hot topics were archiving of electronic products, outsourcing, consortia buying, and Web selling. Key words were flexibility and mutual dependency. The interesting quotes can be separated into two sections, general publishing and sales as follows and issues in electronic publishing which appears as a separate article in this issue.

—The biggest factor in the selection of books in the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County is the title's potential use. They look at past circulation by the author and the popularity of the subject area and rely on knowledge of patron requests. Alice Peery, Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County.
—What individuals want in information retrieval is: 1. ease of use and access, 2. immediacy of results, and 3. control of the process. Ward Shaw, CARL.
—We have moved from a "product" to a "service" mode. Melanie Vandermark, Johns Hopkins University Press, Project Muse.
—The number one market tool for selling titles to librarians is reviews. Rebecca Seger, McGraw-Hill. Repeated by Tom Gils, College of Charleston.
—In summary, the key to selling to libraries is flexibility. There is not a single product, a single price, or a single market. Linda Crismond, The Charleston Group.
—It's never too late to keep trying [to sell your product to librarians]. Katina Strauch, College of Charleston.
—The major challenges for vendors in the 21st Century will be to interface with the library's software and public access catalog, to provide electronic ordering and invoicing, and to FTP MARC cataloging records. Fred Philipp, Blackwells.
—Choice screens their reviewers so that the title is given to someone with subject expertise, usually a faculty member. They try to avoid conflict-of-interest and won't publish a review if it is too bad or libelous. From a librarian's perspective, the components on a Choice review which are most helpful are the comparative statements to other works in the field and the grade level. Francine Graf, Choice.
—The CUNY will be consolidating ordering for all 19 campuses. Their requirements of a vendor are a 95% fill rate in 90 days, high discounts, full MARC cataloging records, and customized physical processing. They estimate they will spend $1 million on books. Doug Duchin, Baruch College.
—If a library can define what they do, it can be outsourced. Keith Schmiedl, Coutts Library Services, Inc.

Trends

Internet commerce cannot develop further without authentication standards. Jan Peterson, Information Quest.

All mass media has been funded by advertising. This will also be true of the Internet. New services must be economically viable or they won't last. Ward Shaw, CARL.

At the Institute for Scientific Information, 3% of sales in 1994 were to consortia; in 1996, these sales represented 30%. Jill O'Neill, ISI.

In the recently released Spokane Public Library's long range strategic service plan, they identified four primary service areas through the year 2002 as reference and general information, popular materials, youth services, and lifelong learning. The library's secondary emphasis will be on business information, government information, Northwest history, and cultural awareness.
**TCR Profiles**

**OhioLINK**

Q. What is OhioLINK?

A. OhioLINK is the statewide electronic database systems serving academic libraries across Ohio. OhioLINK’s online system has been up and running since 1990.

Q. What is OhioLINK’s mission?

A. “Statewide” is the operative word for OhioLINK. Its mission is to foster resource sharing and information delivery and to leverage purchasing power, all to benefit users of Ohio’s academic institutions.

Q. How large is OhioLINK?

A. Fifty-six institutions are current served by OhioLINK—17 public universities, 23 community/technical colleges, 15 private colleges, and the State Library of Ohio. The system provides access to more than 4,500 simultaneous users at 104 locations, serving more than 500,000 students, faculty, and staff.

Q. What delivery services does OhioLINK provide?

A. From its online catalogs and research databases, OhioLINK offers user-initiated online borrowing, giving users the ability to request items electronically. It also provides a delivery service among member institutions to speed the exchange of library items. These services are now available through the Web.

Q. How many research databases has OhioLINK licensed?

A. Sixty-six research databases have been jointly licensed. These include Academic Press publications, UMI databases, and a wide variety of additional files.

Q. Is OhioLINK a buying consortium?

A. Absolutely. And, given its purchasing power, OhioLINK seeks the best discounts possible.

Q. Will OhioLINK extend its joint buying power to books and journals?

A. OhioLINK is considering doing just that and is moving forward on planning for a single approval plan.

For more information, TCR readers are encouraged to check out OhioLINK’s Home Page at http://www.ohiolink.edu/.

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**By the Numbers**

Of all library spending for books, public libraries spend the most (37.5%), followed by academic libraries (26.5%), schools (26.0%), and special libraries (10%). Public libraries rely more on wholesalers (77.4% of their purchases) than schools (67.7%), academic libraries (66.4%), or special libraries (59.9%). Trade publishers sell 9.8% of their books to libraries. Cowles/Simba Information, 1997.

Over 90% of Association of Research Libraries use approval plans to buy books. The average institution spent $565,000 in 1996, an increase of 3% over the year before. Sue Flood, Auburn University.

Vendors charge between $3 and $4 to provide cataloging and processing with a book. Customized cataloging can go as high as $15. Nonprint cataloging costs much more than book cataloging because of the complexity of the record, the lack of CIP, and the absence of Library of Congress cataloging.

At the County of Los Angeles Public Library, 55% of the library’s total book circulation was by children. The number of children’s books circulated was 9.7 million in 1996-97, and their summer reading program attracted 20,000 regular participants, up 38% from the year before.

In a Gallup study, 95% of the respondents believed that the collections in the nation’s libraries need to be preserved, but only 53% believed that the institutions had the resources to do the job.

Libraries represent 10% of publishers’ domestic book sales. However, they represent 25% of all professional book sales and 30% of University presses. Book Industry Study Group Book Trends for 1997.

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**Tips in Marketing to Libraries**

The number one tool for selection of titles by librarians is REVIEWS, according to Rebecca Seger, director of library sales and marketing at McGraw Hill. Her tips for successful marketing to libraries are:

#1. Send catalogs to libraries (but don’t send multiple copies).

#2. Use the librarian’s expertise and help to sell and to create excitement for your product (suggestion: get librarians involved in the creation of the product through focus groups).

#3. For higher priced items, offer flexibility in payment terms (for example, spread payments between two fiscal years).

#4. Keep on hand subject-based lists of your materials.

#5. Adopt examination policies, particularly for electronic products.

#6. Support library vendors; librarians want to consolidate orders for efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and vendors will help in the promotion of titles.

#7. Use exhibits to introduce new products and services; reward librarians with a prize or drawing for coming by; in return, you get qualified leads.

#8. Telemarketing does work but it needs to be done in the right way; feature new products and know that they will fit with the library’s needs.

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A Growing Dependence on the Library Systems Vendor

Often, libraries talk of working cooperatively with their “vendors,” meaning their book or serials vendors or jobbers. However, another vendor to the library can frequently play a critical role in the success of new ventures and leading edge services: the library’s integrated local systems (ILS) vendor.

These vendors provide online services to the library to help manage the day-to-day operations of circulation of materials, purchasing of materials, fund accounting, serials check-in, local processing and cataloging, and online public access querying of the library’s holdings and databases. Familiar names in this arena are: Dynix, Innovative Interfaces, CARL, DRA, Sirsi, VTLS, Endeavor, NOTIS, and others.

Libraries, materials jobbers, and publishers are rapidly developing new services to address the following trends in materials acquisitions:

- Greater use of external sources to supply cataloging data,
- More “shelfready” processing, providing books which are marked, labeled, and accompanied by holdings information,
- Automatic rollover of orders from one vendor to others if the first vendor cannot supply,
- Selection extensions, including online access to approval plan information and ways for collection managers to interact directly with library suppliers, and
- Online, immediate status information about orders providing acquisitions staff with the latest on titles not yet supplied.

However, it is important to note that none of these enhancements will work for the library if the ILS vendor is not ready to play its part. The bottom line: libraries and materials vendors must remember to include this important new third partner in negotiation, trials, support, and general communication.

Electronic Publishing

All aspects of electronic publishing and selling were probably the hottest topics at the recent 1997 Charleston Conference. Much time was spent on licensing issues, pricing, archiving, and when to buy the electronic version. Here are some of the comments:

➢ Librarians define archiving as having access “in perpetuity” and are searching for guarantees before dropping the print edition. OCLC, JSTOR, and the American Astronomical Society said they would archive.

➢ A publisher makes the format decision based on author requirements, customer requirements, and technology advantages. Athena Michael, Wiley.

➢ Performance guarantees to the library normally cover three standards: timeliness, percentage of time available, and response time. Sara Sully, JSTOR.

➢ In a show of hands indicating from whom the library buys CD-ROM’s, the score was a few from a vendor and the vast majority from the publisher. Further, regarding preference for the Web or CD-ROM, the consensus was, unanimous for the Web.

➢ Print may be preferable to CD-ROM or electronic access in some cases. The issues are: when the print access is faster than logging in and out; when readiness of students or faculty is a limitation; and when technology/hardware availability is limited.

Librarians Looking at Publishers: A Recent Survey Says...

The following information comes from a survey developed and administered by Karen Schmidt, director of collections and assessment at the University of Illinois at Urbana. Schmidt sent the survey to over 6,000 librarians who belong to ALA, SLA, AALL, and MLA during the summer of 1997. Some highlights are emerging.

What are some of the items on librarians“Wish For” list?

- Abstracting and indexing databases that link directly to publisher Web sites.
- Table of contents included in literature mailings or an agreement to fax them.
- Beefed-up Web sites with added data on supplemental publishing, to stop “the endless cycle of claiming.”
- Web sites that are “non-obtrusive and current” are frequently applauded.
- Trial samples of electronic products are welcome; trial samples of printed materials are often not.
- Librarians would like to know if publications are on a “recommended reading” list or required by some accrediting body.

What do librarians wish that publishers not do?

- Send sample copies of unsolicited material and follow up with a bill. (This is the single most common complaint noted in the survey, eliciting strong negative reactions.)
- Make unscheduled phone calls and expect answers on the spot.
- Set up differential pricing for individuals and libraries.
- Refuse to work with vendors.
Short Takes

The University of California is working towards a completely digital library with an initial focus on materials related to science, technology, and industry. One goal is to encourage professors to publish their research online. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 24, 1997.

Small businesses get most of their information from magazines and newspapers (25%) and books and software programs (22%). Other sources include associations and trade groups (15%), past personal experiences (11%), education and training (9%), and friends and family (5%). New England Business Services, Inc.


The American Chemical Society is the largest publisher so far to agree to allow universities to purchase à la carte access to electronic versions of its journals. Other major publishers, such as Elsevier Science and Academic Press, offer electronic versions only in large package deals. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 12, 1997.

Fort Wayne, IN, has the highest reading quotient in North America, according to the *Places Rated Almanac*, 5th edition. The reading quotient is determined by adding the number of volumes on an area’s library shelves, and the area’s circulation rate, then dividing that by the population services. The average metropolitan area rate is 6.7; however, Fort Wayne has an average of 19. *Library Hotline*, October 27, 1997, pg. 3.

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Spotlight On A Public Librarian’s Needs

Alice Peery, collection development librarian at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, NC, represents a growing library system which spends $2.7 million on materials, primarily books. Patron requests for specific titles have doubled in the last couple of years, primarily because of more book advertising in the media and on the Internet, she believes. Because of the large number of branches, the library buys fewer titles and more copies. The average purchase is eight copies. Some of her subject needs include: homework support, landscaping, health, and North Carolina travel.

Videos and compact discs are a basic part of their collection. Real growth in videos will be in the educational/informational materials. There is an “insatiable” demand for unabridged audio books. The library has five copies of their CD-ROM titles, and each has 75-100 holds. All of the 265 children’s CD-ROM titles are often checked out at the same time.

Selection criteria includes potential use, quality, price, and reviews. They must see a children’s picture book before purchasing it. The more information that is provided from the publisher, the more likely they will buy a title. Notification two to four months in advance is okay to trigger a purchase. Because they place records of what is in order in their catalog, 60% to 70% of new fiction has a hold before it arrives. One of the fastest growing parts of the collection is electronic materials; they are looking for online full text accessible remotely and in the library.

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Academic Library Purchasing Trends

Julie Gammon, head, Acquisitions Department at the University of Akron Libraries and marketing manager at the University of Akron Press, summarized the following six trends which affect academic library purchasing at the Charleston preconference on “How Libraries Buy:”

- Consortia—statewide licenses are replacing local purchases.
- Depositories—libraries are out of space; warehouses which serve multiple institutions are being built and sharing of materials is easier and more commonplace.
- Licenses—simplification is needed; libraries, publishers, and vendors all need access to legal experts who are flexible.
- Electronic Materials—the numbers are on the rise; librarians are most concerned about who is responsible for archiving.
- Internet Access—future services will be based on the Internet, but equipment demands and limitations mean that access at present is still uneven on campuses.
- Budgets—in a word, flat.

Six major differences in purchasing from ten years ago:

- Having less staff.
- Allowing no duplication of effort.
- Spreading business around due to market volatility.
- Using both print and electronic versions.
- Outsourcing.
- Borrowing more.

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Electronic Product Trials

Books are selected through reviews, brochures, and approval plans. But electronic products are different. Librarians want to test the title first through a “product trial.” Tom Gilson, head of reference services at the College of Charleston, says there are several important factors in a successful trial. Librarians and vendors must coordinate with each other and, if possible, name a single contact. Communication is essential, and a consensus on the product needs to be built. The trial should have a specific time frame, at least one to two months.

Tom’s advice to vendors is:

- No product trials before their time! A too early release causes confusion and disappointment.
- If it is a Beta test, please tell the librarian.
- Use passwords to protect access rather than creating barriers.
- Provide usage reports. Who is using the service and how often is it accessed?
- Please, no end runs. Don’t pressure faculty or establish false “drop-dead” dates.
- Ask questions about the library process, i.e. when, how, who will decide.
- Know your audience.