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Interlending and document supply: a review of the recent literature; 93
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Interlending and document supply: a review of the recent literature; 93

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to review the current library and information science (LIS) literature for document supply, resource sharing and other issues such as open access (OA) that have an impact on the service.

Design/methodology/approach – The approach is based on the scanning of about 150 journals, reports, websites and blogs.

Findings – Of the 13 articles and reports reviewed, 12 are freely available, continuing the trend of increasing OA. As always, these days, much is happening on the OA front. Big Deals, demand-driven acquisition and discovery tools are reviewed.

Originality/value – The only regular literature review that focuses on interlending, document supply and related issues.

Keywords Open access, USA, ILL, Discovery, Big deals, Demand-driven acquisition

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

Two things are striking this quarter. First, the dearth of material related to the interests of interlending and document supply librarians – at least in paid for journals. What little there is I have obtained through personal author contact or by Googling and finding a freely available copy is usually but not always a preprint. Second, two of the most important factors affecting our service, Big Deals and Open Access (OA), appear to be fairly quiescent at present – at least as far as published material is concerned. The big flurry over the Max Planck Digital Library paper on Gold OA flipping seems to be over before it really got started, and I cover the events below. Libraries no doubt continue to struggle with the Big Deals, but there is little in the way of concrete proposals. Also, continuing the trend, 12 of the 13 cited works in this review are freely available on the Web.

Library systems

Publishers merge to increase market domination and to cut costs (and increase profits); this is similar to library systems. A useful article by Marshall Breeding give a detailed overview of changes in 2015:

The transitions seen in 2015 were not lateral changes of ownership among investors but strategic acquisitions that concentrated power among a smaller number of much larger companies and reassembled product portfolios.

He notes the purchase of ExLibris by ProQuest and some smaller deals. Developments at Ebsco and OCLC and Innovative's "impressive adoption of Sierra", albeit from existing customers of Millenium, are covered. Also dealt with

are library system developments in public, school and academic libraries (Breeding, 2016).

Content discovery

A key issue for ILL librarians is the proportion of material freely available and directly accessible by their users. An important survey with 40,000 responses globally offers a well-informed estimate and many other intriguing insights. It is worth quoting extensively from a summary article. but for the full results, go to: www.simoningerconsulting.com/how_readers_discover.html. The summary appears in *Research Information*, and the author notes that:

More than half of all journal content delivery appears to be from free incarnations of articles. PubMedCentral is popular in the medical sector and social media sites appear to be a significant source of free articles in lower income countries.

This conclusion derives from the question asked, "What proportion of the journal articles you read do you access from each of the following resources?" The options offered were: the publisher website, journal website, full-text aggregation or journal collections; a free subject repository; a university's institutional repository; Researchgate, Mendeley, or other scientific social sharing site; and a copy e-mailed by the author or colleague. Respondents were then asked to select the percentage of content accessed via each of these options.

The author also points to the recently announced initiative by 1Science and EBSCO to provide academic libraries access to a vast number of openly accessible scholarly articles when performing a search in EBSCO Discovery Service, which will only add to the percentage of people finding and accessing free versions of content. See <http://librarytechnology.org/news/pr.pl?id=21554> for more details of this service. If you do nothing else, read the article summarising the report quoted here (Gardner, 2016).

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available on Emerald Insight at: www.emeraldinsight.com/0264-1615.htm



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Open access

Undoubtedly, the big news this quarter is the wakeup call for the costs of Gold OA. Critics of commercial publisher-driven Gold have been shown to be correct. The relentless Walt Crawford analyses with great care the developing and disastrous situation; disastrous that is for all except the commercial publishers. He shows how commercial publishers are dominating the article processing charge (APC) market with extraordinarily high prices being charged. He divides the market into two sectors which he calls – APCLand and OAWorld:

APCLand accounts for 13 per cent of the fully-analysed DOAJ journals for 2015 and 29 per cent of the 2015 articles in those journals. It also accounts for 74 per cent of the maximum potential APC revenues. In other words, although APCLand accounts for a bit more than one-eighth of the serious gold OA journals and somewhere between one-quarter and one-third of the articles, it takes in nearly *three-quarters* of the revenue (emphasis in original).

He also cites two other valuable pieces, one, in particular, is very critical of Gold OA. You need to read the fairly short (for Crawford!) article to appreciate the depth of his quantitative analysis of the current situation for Gold OA publishing; an invaluable source of factual information (Crawford, 2016). In the same issue, he comments extensively on the Google Books settlement on April 18 2016 in the US Supreme Court, which declined to hear the Authors Guild's appeal against an earlier settlement in favour of Google. So, after 10 years of litigation, Google can carry on digitising those books.

We have a white paper from the Max Planck Institute which recommends flipping all journals to a Gold OA model – it would be difficult to think of a more ill-advised paper. It seems formidable with much quantitative information to support its proposal to use current subscription revenue to flip all published articles to Gold OA. There are two fundamental objections to this: first, publishers can simply transfer the serials crisis as it is expressed in subscription pricing to APC pricing – with even less constraint than that exists now as to who will negotiate reasonable pricing for APCs. Pricing negotiations are complex enough when dealing with titles, how much more so when dealing with articles! In any event, and this is the second reason, most publishers will oppose it, as it would freeze their potential for recruiting new customers and extracting more revenue from existing customers. A subsidiary factor is that achieving agreement globally – and it would need to be global to avoid free riders – is impossible, as some countries, particularly the USA, are committed to Green OA and have made little if any provision for Gold OA fees [it is noticeable in this context that an important report on APCs and OA does not refer to the USA at all (Björk and Solomon, 2014)].

A conference was held in December 2015 (Berlin12) to discuss the Max Planck paper and ironies of ironies, given the subject was by invitation only. Both US speakers were critical of any move towards the proposed APC model. However, an expression of interest (EOI) was agreed: the key element is this – “Although not yet completely finalized, the EOI will likely contain the following three commitments for organisations signing on:

- Transform the majority of the current scholarly journals from subscription to OA publishing and, at the same time,

continue to support new and improved forms of OA publishing.

- Pursue this transformation process through which we intend to lower costs over time and convert resources currently spent on journal subscriptions into funds to support sustainable OA business models.
- Invite all parties involved in scholarly publishing to collaborate on a swift and efficient transition for the benefit of the research enterprise and the society at large. (Shearer, 2015).

It was suggested that the EOI be discussed at the joint CARL/ARL Spring 2016 meeting in Vancouver. The paper ([www.carl-abrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/\(2016\),/04/Can_ Univ_Sustainable_Publishing_2016.pdf](http://www.carl-abrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/(2016),/04/Can_ Univ_Sustainable_Publishing_2016.pdf)) presented at that conference was sceptical and seems to have brought a halt to the proposal.

A useful and current overview of OA is written from the perspective of two Bulgarian authors who provide an interesting foil to its mainly global perspective (Dimchev and Stefanov, 2016).

A thorough study on OA access with a useful literature review from Spain concludes that:

A total of 58.4 per cent of articles resulting from publicly funded research had at least one OA copy available 1 year after publication. Among these, 23.8 per cent were in gold OA, 21.8 per cent in green OA and 12.8 per cent in gray OA, i.e. posted on websites and social networks. Most of the green OA articles were in 2 disciplinary repositories: arXiv and PubMed Central.

Gray OA is defined as authors making their work accessible on personal, group or departmental websites or sending print copies or e-mail PDFs to colleagues and MM) (Borrego, 2015).

Finally, in this section, social networks such as Researchgate, Academia.edu and Mendeley are having an increasing impact on scholarly communication. Researchers who for whatever reason do not have access to articles that they want to read can often obtain them either directly from a social network website or indirectly by clicking on a “request article” button. Registered users are in millions, and usage is growing fast. The subject receives an interesting audit and discussion in an article with some attractive graphics in the magazine for higher education in the UK (Matthews, 2016).

Big deals

There has been little published in the past two or three years on the experience of Big Deals, which is odd given that they dominate the library budgets and are controversial in their value for money. So, it is good to see an article analysing the benefit of the Big Deals at Bern University, Switzerland. The metric of cost per article use (CPU) was applied to journals in the three Big Deals to which they subscribe and the well-known weaknesses of the Big Deals were exposed – in particular, very many journals with a very high CPU. However, the analysis seemed to stall at the point where it was recognised that other means needed to be found to find ways to access cancelled e-journals:

However, cancellation of the contracts with Big Deals requires alternative ways to get access for required articles and requires a detailed quantitative and qualitative evaluation of all the titles within the Big Deals. Therefore, in a next step the evaluation will consider several years (e.g. 2011–2014) and values for quality and usefulness will be determined and evaluated.

With the improvements that have been made in document supply of articles in the past few years, it is odd that no mention was made of this service. (Schaffer *et al.*, 2016).

An overview of the USA

The USA plays a leading role in all matters to do with libraries both because there is so many of them in every sector – “Government libraries 1,186/School libraries 98,460/Academic libraries 3,793/Public libraries 9,082/Special libraries 6,966/Total 119,487” (Rosa and Storey, 2016) and, more importantly, because of the USA’s innovative flair. For those wanting an overview of the current state of US libraries, a useful article cited above highlights a number of issues relevant to ILDS librarians, for example:

The evolving role of the library, competition for space and funding, and the changing nature of scholarly publishing are just a few of the challenges facing academic librarians. One role of the Research Planning and Review Committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) is to consider these challenges and identify trends. In 2014, the Committee identified “deeper collaboration” as the underlying theme of the 2014 top trends (CRL Research Planning and Review Committee, 2014).

Which is encouraging for ILL librarians. Based on 2012 figures, “Academic libraries loaned some 10.5 million documents to other libraries. Academic libraries also borrowed approximately 9.8 million documents from other libraries and commercial services”. This large ILL activity has not decreased by much, if at all, since then. Interesting to note the amount that electronic journals now consume – “Academic libraries spent approximately \$2.8bn on information resources. Of that, expenditures for electronic serial subscriptions totalled about \$1.4bn”. It will be interesting to see how this expenditure changes given the top-level commitment to Green OA in the USA; a strategy which could well lead to decreased costs in the long term, as more and more material becomes freely available via linked repositories and because of some other countries preferring Gold OA for which an increasing amount is being spent on APCs (see section on OA above and in previous literature reviews). The key role played by library consortia is given significant attention:

Today there are more than 100 library consortia in the USA, which offer significant advantages to libraries. The sharing of resources and collaboration on shared goals often enable libraries to deliver higher quality services than they would be able to deliver on their own. More than half of USA library consortia have more than 40 member libraries, serve multiple types of libraries, and have operated for more than 30 years. The large majority employ full-time staff. Consortia receive funding from a variety of sources. Public taxes, state funding and membership fees comprise a majority of their budgets. Resource sharing, shared online catalog and cooperative purchasing are among the most-used services offered by USA library consortia. And their reach extends beyond their members with services used by non-member libraries and end users. Licensing of e-content is the top initiative among USA library consortia both now and in the near future.

Library trends are noted in some detail – all in all, a very useful overview which also offers numerous references to reports that will repay further study (Rosa and Storey, 2016).

Demand-driven acquisition

Demand-driven acquisition (DDA) arose for two reasons; the first was the lamentable failure of acquisition librarians (this writer having once been one) to achieve success rates of usage of at least once for at least 50 per cent of acquired titles – very

substantial number of titles simply languished unread on the shelves – an option no longer acceptable to cash poor libraries. The second reason for the advent of DDA was that a simple way of solving the problem was enabled as a result of electronic developments. The following article is very useful, and I quote extensively from it. “However, the introduction of e-books brought with it a new option: DDA (demand-driven acquisition), also sometimes called PDA (patron-driven acquisition). A DDA program allows librarians to insert records for e-books that they have not actually purchased yet into their catalogs. When a patron clicks on a link to access one of the e-books, the purchase would be instantly triggered and the patron would have immediate access. DDA transforms ‘just-in-case’ purchases to ‘just-in-time’ purchases, with the patron unaware of the difference. Statistically, books purchased by DDA have a 100 per cent use rate because the purchase is made at the moment of use”, and subsequently “A further option was quickly introduced, afforded by the nature of e-books: the concept of a use ‘rental,’ known in the industry as an STL (short-term loan). Libraries could opt to allow initial uses to be rented at a reduced cost (typically just 10-15 per cent of the book purchase price) rather than trigger an immediate full purchase. Libraries could then select how many STLs would occur before a full purchase would be triggered. Thus some purchases could have not just a single use, but multiple uses, to justify the full purchase”. This, of course, only covers e-books, and a print version was established:

The print DDA program was considered an important addition because industry reports still indicate that upwards of 50 per cent of scholarly books are not available as e-books within the first six months of their being released as print books. This program also took advantage of an existing workflow developed in 2014, called “ILL to purchase.” The workflow involved the ILL office co-ordinating with the acquisitions unit to purchase rather than borrow any books requested by UPEI (the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada) patrons that the ILL office could not get quickly and for free from the regional ILL consortium but that acquisitions could rush purchase faster and for a reasonable cost.

Although this programme has been a success, the author concludes on a pessimistic note:

Unfortunately, as was much discussed at the 2015 ‘Charleston Conference’ by both DDA vendors and various e-book session presenters, it appears that the major scholarly publishers consider the entire STL ‘experiment’ to be a failure and will be moving to eliminate it completely as an option. In the meantime, publishers are increasingly experimenting with EDA (evidence-based acquisition). Under this alternative model, the library commits to a minimum deposit ‘spend’ and then their patrons are given unlimited access to a significant portion of the publisher’s e-books (the amount of the commitment determining the portion of the e-books, often grouped by subject collection). Then, at the end of a fixed time period (usually either six months or one year), the librarians are provided with the usage data and are required to spend the entire deposit, but are free to make their own choices by title, using or ignoring the usage data as preferred. A new deposit is then made and the cycle starts again. Thus publishers are ensured a guaranteed source of revenue regardless of usage, unlike the STL/DDA model. The EDA model also so far excludes e-book aggregators like EBSCO and ProQuest from participating, as the e-books are purchased directly for the publisher’s own platform rather than for access on that of aggregators. This is not always the best choice for patrons, as the aggregator platforms typically offer much richer features and discovery integration with other databases and services. Some publishers also have such high demands for the ‘spend,’ or require such a small subset to be available for a more affordable deposit, that the patron-demand discovery aspect is all but lost.

A well-written piece that also has a useful literature review which shows once again the problems of librarians finding cost-effective solutions for their users in a commercial environment is Belvadi (2016).

Another very detailed article assesses the introduction of DDA in law libraries. It is impossible to summarise this 26-page article which is well worth reading for any library considering the introduction of such a programme, and it is freely available. Perhaps, a quote from the conclusion will suffice:

DDA can be a way to save money on purchases, but the goal for the collection should remain as it always has been for libraries – to satisfy the needs of current users while ensuring that future users will have the materials they need. A DDA program should be seen as just one more tool that allows libraries to do this while managing flat or decreasing budgets. Just as libraries make decisions about whether to cancel individual subscriptions and rely on aggregating databases, decisions about which purchases to defer to a DDA model must be made with an awareness of all the possible effects, both current and future, on the library's collection. (Sinder, 2016).

Post-script

Just a reminder about the excellent and free magazine *Research Information*. I often reference it in these reviews most recently, as referenced above. It is full of informative and up-to-date developments in OA and scholarly communications generally. Access it at: www.researchinformation.info/news/category/library-news or request a print copy in the post. (And no, I do not have an interest, financial or otherwise material, in promoting it!).

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