Creating an Organizational Structure and Process to Manage Electronic Serials Collections

Carmel Yurochko, Serials / Electronic Resources Librarian
David A. Nolfi, Health Sciences Librarian
Tracie J. Ballock, Collection Management Librarian
Duquesne University
A Catholic University, founded by members of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit

- Founded in 1878
- Private, coeducational university
- Only Spiritan institution of higher education in the world
- Located in Pittsburgh, PA
- Academic Programs: 174
- Full Time Enrollment: 9,985
Gumberg Library

- Total Volumes: 690,904
- Current Print Journal Titles: 1,130
- Electronic Journal Titles: 11,448
- Research Databases: 184
History of Electronic Resources at Gumberg Library

- Relative latecomer to electronic resources
- New money funded first round of purchases
- Second round of purchases funded by print cancellations
- Method of requesting faculty input was minimal; faculty response was minimal
- Cancellation decisions were made solely based on usage data
History of Library / Faculty Relations

Library requests faculty input

Faculty believe library acts unilaterally

Caught in a Vicious Cycle

Limited faculty response

Library must act due to external factors
Collective Wisdom: Challenges
A Changing Environment

- Enrollment growing
- University adding new programs
- Demands for new electronic resources greater than budget
- Electronic resource budget exceeds one million dollars
- A new approach is needed!
Breaking the Cycle: New Directions for Communication with Faculty

- Utilize more active and participatory methods
- Take advantage of multiple opportunities for communication (two-way)
- Build trust between faculty and library
- Develop organizational structures to facilitate and improve communication with faculty

- A core organizational value is to engage faculty in the decision-making process
Electronic Resource Review Committee (ERRC)

- Committee includes:
  - technical services
  - reference
  - information technology

- Charged with reviewing all library electronic resources and making recommendations
Getting Started:
Review of Electronic Subscriptions

- Initial focus on “pick and choose” subscriptions
- Developed comprehensive lists with descriptive and use data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ISSN</th>
<th>Vendor usage stats</th>
<th>SFX requests</th>
<th>SFX clicks</th>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>V + All SFX $/use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Journal of Health System Pharmacy</td>
<td>1079-2082</td>
<td>1781</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>$780.00</td>
<td>$0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annals of Internal Medicine</td>
<td>0003-4819</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>$750.00</td>
<td>$0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Journal of Medicine</td>
<td>0028-4793</td>
<td>2662</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>$2,875.00</td>
<td>$0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of the American Geriatrics Society</td>
<td>0002-8614</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$1,085.00</td>
<td>$0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J A M A</td>
<td>0098-7484</td>
<td>2995</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>$3,200.00</td>
<td>$0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Educator</td>
<td>0363-3624</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$480.00</td>
<td>$0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine &amp; Science in Sports &amp; Exercise</td>
<td>0195-9131</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>$580.00</td>
<td>$0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing the Results

- Possible sources of usage stats
  - Vendor Usage
  - SFX Requests
  - SFX Clickthroughs
- Comparisons of statistical sources showed surprising level of congruence
- Decided to use all three!
Comparison of Usage Stats

Use Stat Comparisons

Logarithmic Scale

Selected Titles

Vendor Use Stats
SFX Requests
SFX Clickthroughs
Deciding What to Communicate

- Calculated cost per use using combined usage statistics
- Compared to average document delivery cost to develop a cancellation “hit list”
- “Hit list” used only for internal discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ISSN</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>V + All SFX $/use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytica Chimica Acta</td>
<td>0003-2670</td>
<td>$7,138.18</td>
<td>$111.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Research -Subscription to all sections</td>
<td>0006-8993</td>
<td>$18,786.40</td>
<td>$113.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>0016-2361</td>
<td>$2,442.09</td>
<td>$116.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry and Physics of Lipids</td>
<td>0009-3084</td>
<td>$2,497.71</td>
<td>$118.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Molecular Spectroscopy</td>
<td>0022-2852</td>
<td>$2,525.01</td>
<td>$168.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular Immunology</td>
<td>0008-8749</td>
<td>$3,229.83</td>
<td>$169.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicating the Results

- Listed journals and associated costs per use
- Ranked from least to most costly per use
- Spreading the word
  - Published on library website
  - University Library Committee
  - Faculty-librarian liaisons
  - Word of mouth
Encouraging Faculty Participation

- Librarians maintained positive attitude in all communications
- Stressed common goal: more closely align spending with student & faculty needs
- Faculty encouraged to:
  - Respond to librarian liaisons
  - Attend ERRC-sponsored discussion
The Faculty Response

- Faculty reached many of the same conclusions as ERRC
- A few faculty urged cuts that seemed draconian!
- Reasons for keeping low use journals:
  - Accreditation
  - University prestige
  - Research
- More journals needed!
Problems Encountered

- Insufficient stats for selected existing titles
- Only STM faculty participated
- Faculty concerns:
  - “Don’t Touch My Journals” Syndrome
  - New types of electronic resources needed
  - More electronic everything!
Decisions

- Faculty and ERRC recommended keeping selected low-use journals due to critical qualitative factors
- Cancel selected titles and reinvest in new subscriptions based on:
  - Faculty requests (existing and new)
  - ILL requests
  - Vendor reports (non-subscribed title hits)
- Concurrently renegotiated contracts with vendor partners, guided by analysis of users’ needs
Collective Wisdom: Success Stories
Results

- Duquesne gained access to most titles requested:
  - Added more than 800 new titles
  - Library maintained journal spending level
- Faculty participants and the library were able to achieve a win-win scenario
- Faculty perception of the library is improving
Long Term Goals

- Develop a better faculty-library relationship by:
  - Encouraging two-way communication
  - Improving trust in the library
  - Building a partnership

- Better meet student and faculty needs by:
  - Collaborating with faculty to craft fiscally responsible solutions
  - Developing structures to ensure regular faculty and student input (needs assessment)
Developing a New Cycle

Continuous Opportunity for Faculty Input

Public Dialog Between Faculty and Library

Replacing the Vicious Cycle

Ongoing Needs Assessment

Solutions that Balance Student / Faculty Needs within Fiscal Parameters
Developing Challenges

- Demands for:
  - More electronic everything!
  - Nontraditional resources
  - Electronic reference books and collections
  - PDA software

- Assess all print subscriptions and consider moving to electronic

- Rethink budgeting process to allow flexibility as resource types change
Collective Wisdom: The Future
The end of the beginning…

“Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

Winston Churchill
Questions?

- Carmel Yurochko, yurochko@library.duq.edu
- David A. Nolfi, nolfi@library.duq.edu
- Tracie J. Ballock, ballock@library.duq.edu