Evaluating Journals/ Databases: Saving Money

Old and New Tools

AAP/PSP Seminar - May 22, 2008

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Outline

- Good News
  - University-wide faculty journal survey
  - Evaluation metrics used post-survey
- A Different View of Collections
- Bad News – Budget Crises/Forced choices
Compiled list of all subscriptions not subject to non-cancellation clauses.

Created master alphabetical & discipline-specific lists

Faculty could look at as many discipline lists & the master alphabetical list as desired
2006 Faculty Journal Survey -2

- 2 Questions
  - Check all journals important to your research & teaching.
  - List one journal you would like us to get.
- My reaction - way too simplistic to work
- 550 titles received zero votes
- 525 titles only 1 vote.
Major Journal Eval. Criteria - Ranked

1. Use stats (cost/download)
2. Price
   - Cost/page
   - Price history (>10%/year flagged)
   - Absolute price
3. Number of UB faculty articles in journal
4. Normalized Thomson Impact Factors®
   [Given: Low use/redundant content]
Minor Journal Eval. Criteria: Ranked

1. State Univ. of NY/NYS/U.S. Holdings
2. Coverage in A&I databases
3. Full-text in aggregators (minimal weight - embargo periods/risk of content being withdrawn)
Normalized Impact Factors (NIF)

- Raw impact factors (IF) not comparable across disciplines
- Each discipline has a top journal (100 percentile) and a bottom journal (0 percentile).
- Journal Citation Reports® IF by discipline downloaded to Microsoft Excel™ & ranked list converted into percentiles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Title</th>
<th>IF</th>
<th>NIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chem Rev</td>
<td>20.87</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf Sci Rep</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat Mater</td>
<td>15.94</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog Solid State Ch</td>
<td>15.17</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem Soc Rev</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annu Rev Phys Chem</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Chem Res</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Title</td>
<td>IF</td>
<td>NIF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phytochem Analysis</td>
<td>1.398</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phytochem Analysis</td>
<td>1.398</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Eng</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Eng</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Eng</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Univ. at Buffalo Faculty Publications

- Searched each component of the Web of Science® for UB in author address field.
- Analyzed (i.e. frequency ranked) by ‘Source Title’, i.e. journal title.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Title</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of 9014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstracts of Papers of The ACS</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biophysical Journal</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FASEB Journal</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Dental Research</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACS</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Biological Chemistry</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Review B</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholism-Clinical &amp; Experim. Res</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bottom Line Result

Cancelled about $50,000 of unneeded journals and added an equivalent amount of new desired titles.
Different View of Collections

- We used to manage collections by type of material: books, journals, A/V, electronic databases, etc.
- Now only two fundamental categories: one-time purchases and continuing commitments
- E-journal platforms morphing into databases
  - Finding tools, sorting, ranking, analysis.
  - RSS feeds & personalization
  - Hyperlinks: definitions, citing/related references, etc.
We are making few distinctions between databases & journals in terms of collection acquisition, management, and evaluation. Both are continuing commitments.
Budget Crises – Forced Choices

- 2008-09 NYS budget mandates a 2.9% cut in operating expenses across all of SUNY.

- Classic evaluation criteria:
  - Quality, Scope, Level of uniqueness
  - Concept of “Core”, Impact factors
  - Use (one advantage of the e-age), Cost per X
  - Champions in the organization

- But what happens when everything left is high quality, core, has significant use?
What happens?

1. Traditional metrics become nearly irrelevant.

2. The UGLY Questions get asked:
   - What can we live without?
   - What are the consequences of cancelling X?
   - i.e., What is the lesser of evils!
## What if? [Hypothetical scenarios]

(All commercial database names trademarks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancel?</th>
<th>Rely on?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books in Print</td>
<td>Amazon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTIS (Govt. Reports)</td>
<td>Science.gov, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSPEC</td>
<td>ArXiv.org, Compendex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Search Premier</td>
<td>Findarticles.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIS International</td>
<td>Google Scholar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flat out of tricks in library land

- No second tier, low use stuff left

- No Peters (staff, facilities) left to rob to pay Paul (subscriptions)
Coping Mechanism

- Budget cuts force us to consider “free” alternatives (even the big places.)
- Databases: Compare features of fee vs. free (Ex: WorldCat® vs. WorldCat.org®)
- Journals: Weigh open access or pay-by-the-drink document delivery
- Free alternatives become more numerous & more capable by the month.
**Driving our collection decisions**

- Fundamental Budget Crisis (hasn’t changed)—
  - Subscribed journals increasing 9-10% (2008 Library Journal Survey)
  - Library budgets: minus 5% to +3% at best
- Patrons increasingly use free web to find scholarly references.
- Patron’s great desire is full-text.
- Possible shift of purchases from A&I databases to full-text journals/aggregators.
Threat summary

- **Databases** threatened by library budgets, journal publishers, & OAI metadata harvesters.

- In turn, **journal publishers** threatened by library budgets and open access, especially grant funding agency mandates.

- **Libraries** threatened by budget cuts, “it’s all on the Internet” myth, out-of-control journal prices, & we used up all our tricks to save money/redirect funds.
On that happy note

The End! Questions?

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