

## **Integrating print and digital resources in library collections.**

Ed. Audrey Fenner.

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This publication is a collection of 13 papers that have been co-published simultaneously as *The Acquisitions Librarian*, Numbers 35/36, 2006.

It is an interesting compilation of views on issues in managing print and electronic resources ranging from licensing and consortial purchasing to providing access to them via the library catalog and the web site.

The articles in the book have been divided into three parts, namely, Issues and opinions, Research and analysis, and, Histories and projects. This assists the reader to separate the different aspects of the topic, such as the theoretical debates, the empirical research, and projects in libraries to fathom the problems of acquiring resources, providing access to them and managing the collections.

The articles in this volume address the questions and concerns of acquiring one format over another; the decisions that are made in the process, such as the focus that predominates in selection (cost, librarian's preference, or, the needs of the library users?) and pricing model or the feasibility of adopting a certain technology.

In *Issues and opinions*, David Ball is of the opinion that librarians are Singing away [their] (own insertion) freedom in the 'big deals' (the purchase of access to large quantities of materials in electronic format) as small publishers in the traditional hardcopy procurement arena will be forced out of business. Consortial purchasing and alternative publishing methods can continue to make printed materials an attractive library format. Bethany Levrault investigates the future directions of the academic reference collection in the shift from print to electronic sources. New technologies need to be addressed, but the traditional principles of library work apply to the selection of resources in all formats in the hybrid library. Levrault emphasizes the need to select appropriate content and to make it available without regard to format, and the need to ease the users' access.

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The section on *Research and analysis* highlights the research efforts of five teams at academic department libraries, academic libraries, research libraries and corporate libraries.

In Canada's largest computer studies school, Seneca, the provision of access to large e-book collections has not caused a decline in the circulation statistics for print collections. An investigative report examines the way in which I14 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) arrange their electronic resources based on their home pages and catalogues. These libraries provide links to electronic resources in the catalogue, but this practice is not consistent among each other or within themselves. The other researchers focused on the catalogues and electronic holding lists of the ARL libraries to determine if core reference titles are held in duplicate formats in library collections in General Reference, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences. The trend is to cease receiving print versions of titles in lieu of electronic access. A longitudinal study of the use of print journals has provided statistics for purchasing decisions. Print journal use has fallen in titles both with and without electronic counterparts. The removal of print journals has led to an increased use of e-journals.

The *Histories and projects* section contains the positive approaches of 6 projects that illustrate the attempts at integrating materials in different formats in the library collection. The Integrated Library System (ILS) is a flexible and highly developed database that can be used and adapted to solve many problems of providing access to library materials. This innovation allows the librarian to use the tools as efficiently as possible for the purpose of outstanding customer service.

Two projects deal with serial acquisitions for both print and electronic journals, using process and workflow analysis and serial review respectively. Possibilities of ceasing the checking-in of print serials and the implications thereof for staff workflow and user satisfaction are discussed. The input by academic staff into the serials evaluation by asking for cancellations and additions was designed to allow effective evaluation by all parties. A serials cancellation project is used to discuss consortial agreements for online resources in budget cuts. The results show how consortial purchasing has led to an increase in the number of journal titles made available online.

One project details the user-centred arrangement of materials in a new library without regard to the format of materials to progress to an all-digital collection. Some materials remained in separate discrete collections, though due to the need for special equipment or assistance to use the collection, uncertainty exists regarding the long-term relevance of the collection to the general collection, and user behaviour.

The last project in the book illustrates the reality that not everything in a library can or must be digitised, especially educational materials. Physical and tactile experiences are important in learning. The author stresses that format must never hinder access to the contents of library materials, and that it is the responsibility of the library professional to ensure that access is made easy, logical and convenient for the user.

The various contributors to this publication have dealt with the different aspects of the topic in a language that is clear and easy to follow, whether the reader is a student or practitioner in Library and Information Science field. Concepts have been defined and clarified; advantages and disadvantages have been tabled, the reader has been sensitised to difficulties, and solutions have been offered based on research done and experiences in several projects.

This publication can be recommended as suggested reading for library and information science students, especially those interested in serials management, collection development and academic librarianship. Library and information science workers that are confounded by the dilemmas of the print/digital mix will be able to relate to the issues raised, and will find the alternative viewpoints worthwhile to consider, to discuss and even to try.

**Reviewed by:** Sally Witbooi, Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, University of the Western Cape, Bellville

Tel.: +27 21 959 2437 (work)

Email: [switbooi@uwc.ac.za](mailto:switbooi@uwc.ac.za)