PERIODICAL CANCELLATION AND ALTERNATIVE ACCESS: THE ADONIS DOCUMENT DELIVERY SYSTEM

Dwight Ittner
University of Alaska Fairbanks
4012 Teal Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99709

ABSTRACT: The University of Alaska Fairbanks Rasmuson Library was faced with a $136,000 reduction in its FY93 continuations budget. After a periodical use study and survey of the faculty, it was decided that continuations would be reduced by $200,000 with the extra amount being used to provide other means of access to serial publications. One form of alternative access would be the acquisition of journals on CD-ROM. At the BioSciences Library the ADONIS Document Delivery System was obtained. This allowed for the cancellation of over $80,000 worth of periodical subscriptions and serial standing orders. In use since January 1993, ADONIS is proving to be a viable alternative to subscribing to journals in hard copy.

In the fall of 1991 the University of Alaska Fairbanks was experiencing a budgetary deficit of over $4,000,000 with prospects for the next financial year as bad or worse. The Chancellor instructed each unit to prepare a program review indicating what adjustments would be made if faced with a 5%, 10%; or 20% decrement in its budget. For the University Library system these reductions would be $242,244, $484,888 and $969,777. The library staff spent considerable time identifying where to make cuts and how to reallocate our resources.

The staff identified a $300,000 reduction in the periodical budget with $163,400 of that amount being reallocated resulting in a net reduction in the periodical budget of $136,400. The funds reallocated would be used to cover an estimated $58,000 increase in inflation for subscriptions not canceled. Interlibrary Loan would receive $84,400 to add personnel and cover the cost of CARL UnCover, $11,000 would be added to book purchases and $10,000 for student assistance.

Other cuts would involve the elimination of distance delivery to rural students and faculty, the consolidation of Alaska Book Collection and rare books and maps, and a reduction of student positions in the Alaska and Polar Regions Department.

As one might expect, not all units on campus were as thorough as the library in preparing their program review. The library director presented the library's review with

documentation, hard facts and figures, graphs and overhead transparencies. Some units reportedly did not take the review seriously and may have suffered accordingly.

The program review also included information concerning the units' needs and identified areas where an increment in the budget could be used to enhance the program.

When the Chancellor reached her decisions she stated "Rasmuson Library will increase its inter-library loan capability, including distribution and delivery of materials to rural sites. This action will allow access to more journal information even as reductions occur in the periodical budget." She also instructed the library to reduce its subscriptions to "little used expensive periodicals" by $136,000.

The Library Director decided that we needed to cancel about $200,000 worth of periodical subscriptions and serial continuations to allow for inflation and cover the cost of increased interlibrary loan activities. We had managed to prepay $36,000 to our subscription vendor that postponed some cancellations for one year.

The next problem was how to decide which titles to cancel. Unfortunately we had very few of the so called "little used expensive periodicals." In the BioSciences Library the expensive journals were some our most used titles, while our least used titles were the relatively inexpensive titles. In the past 15 years we had gone through at least three significant journal cancellations which left us with very few titles that could be canceled without affecting someone's teaching or research activities.

A group was formed to evaluate the collection and recommend titles for cancellation. The group consisted of the library department and program heads and those individuals responsible for some area of collection development. The collection development individuals were the Collection Development Officer, the head of the Reference Program, the Arctic Bibliographer, the Documents Librarian and the BioSciences Librarian. Other librarians were welcome to participate if they so desired. The group was originally expected to complete its task in 2 days but spent the better part of 10 days to complete its work.

The group began its work with four basic assumptions. 1. First priority is to be a good undergraduate library and to build a core of indexes and serials that support this priority. All areas will be considered: periodicals, standing orders, blanket orders, reference, APR. 2. Indexes will be linked to titles. 3. BPO, ADONIS, SSFT will shore up weak areas in the collection. 4. Receiving title in microformat only will be a valid option for appropriate titles.

Although we had these assumptions to work with, there still was the need to have good evidence and workable alternatives to help select the titles to be canceled. Fortunately my department head had anticipated the need for a severe constriction in our continuations budget and had initiated a periodical use study at the Rasmuson Library about 18 months earlier and a similar study was begun at the BioSciences Library in the

previous 9 months. With both studies library patrons were asked not to reshelve any periodical issues. At the Rasmuson Library counts were taken separately for the current issue and older issues. At the BioSciences Library only a count of the total use of each title was kept. This allowed the Rasmuson Library to determine which titles were used heavily as current issues and those titles that tended to age before they received significant use. The assumption was that if titles tended to be used after they appeared in published indexes or cited in other sources, then a subscription to the title on microform could be substituted for the paper subscription. A microform format was considered to be unacceptable for titles at the BioSciences Library since photomicrographs and some other types of figures and graphs do not reproduce well with microforms and the reader/printers currently owned.

Besides the ongoing use study, the recommendations of the university faculty were solicited. In April of 1992 I distributed a list of our current paid subscriptions to the faculty of all departments that may utilize the type of titles held at the BioSciences Library. At the time the list was distributed it was not known what action the Chancellor would take on the Library's budget but it was known that the Library would need a $114,000 increase in its periodical budget to maintain the present subscriptions.

The faculty were asked to rank those journals as they relate to their personal needs and departmental programs. A ranking system of 5 for essential to 0 for expendable was used. The definition of these categories were: 5, Essential: Essential for instruction in broad area of the discipline. A premier journal recognized as a leading publication in a field in which the university has a major research program. 4, High Priority: A first-tier in an important area of continuing research commitment. A journal heavily used in instructional programs. 3, Valuable: Important for the discipline though less closely related to existing instruction. May be of considerable importance for advanced research but not as broadly applicable to the instruction and research program as (5) above. 2, Useful: Useful but not basic or central to instruction and research programs of the university. May fill individual research needs; these are likely to be highly specialized. Interlibrary loan access would be satisfactory. 1, Marginal: A journal whose loss could be sustained or offset with other resources. Infrequently consulted; may serve occasional need, of peripheral value. Interlibrary loan access would be satisfactory. 0, Expendable: A journal that has little relationship to instruction and/or research programs. Can do without. NA, Not Applicable: A journal that is not in your field of interest and you feel you cannot make a fair ranking of its worth to our collection.

The faculty was informed that this would not be the only criterion that would be used to select the titles for cancellation. Other criteria to be used would be: documented use, availability at other Alaskan libraries, availability at non-Alaskan libraries that have borrowing agreements with UAF, availability on CARL/UnCover, ISI impact factor, price and coverage by indexing services.

Although I had a good return of the forms, the ability of the faculty to read directions and make intelligent and helpful rankings was less than satisfactory. Some individuals

ranked all journals and basically recommended cancellation of all titles not in their subject area. Others ranked all journals they were interested in as 4 or 5 and NA on all others. Titles like "Alaska's Wildlife," a magazine published by the state Fish and Game Department aimed to educate the public, was ranked as a premier journal in their field of research. I tabulated the average ranking, the number of individuals ranking the title, the mode, median, and range for each title. The mode, median and the number of individuals ranking a title tended to be the most meaningful numbers. Most titles had a range of 5 through 1 or 0. There were a few who followed the directions but their honesty was lost in the numbers.

The ISI factor was not helpful because we had too many titles for which we did not have the ISI factor and the titles where not grouped by their subject category. As you are probably aware, the ISI factor is only meaningful when compared to other titles in the same subject category. A nursing journal with an ISI factor of five could be a high ranking but a five for a biochemistry title could be quite low. Also, just because a title has a high ISI in its field does not mean that it is important to our program.

In the final review the factors that were most useful in the selection of the losing title were: total use, use compared to cost, availability in another acceptable format, and my personal knowledge (or hunch) as to the importance of the title.

Very early in the process I became aware of a product called ADONIS that could replace many of our current titles, add additional titles and still save us money.

The collection in the BioSciences Library covers the areas of the marine sciences, fisheries, fish biology, molecular biology/biochemistry, neuroscience, animal physiology, microbiology, veterinary medicine, plant pathology and the health sciences. Several years ago I had canceled many of our health sciences titles when our medical program was closed. Our holdings in plant pathology and veterinary medicine are not large. I made the decision that I would not cancel any fisheries or marine science titles if it could be avoided. This left me with molecular biology/biochemistry, neuroscience, animal physiology and microbiology for cancellation. The molecular biology program is relatively new and very active. The neuroscience program is small but makes heavy use of the journal collection. Animal physiology and microbiology support the activities of several programs and had been reduced and refined in previous budget crisis.

So what is this ADONIS that could help solve my dilemma? ADONIS is a document delivery system on CD-ROM. In 1992 it contained over 360 top journals, primarily in the biomedical disciplines. The system is available by subscription and provides one CD-ROM disk per week. The disk contains the entire article from the journals covered. By entire article I mean not only the text but all figures, graphs, pictures, photomicrographs, etc. This is not a simple full text database and that is why I refer to it as an entire article. The system runs on an MS-DOS PC workstation. We use a 486 machine equipped with an internal CD-ROM drive, SVGA monitor, a 200 megabyte hard disk, mouse, a HP Laserjet III printer running with a Jlaser card.

The journals are primarily from the biomedical disciplines, but also cover related disciplines such as chemistry, biochemistry, bioengineering and biotechnology. Although we had little interest in the medical journals available on ADONIS, many of the related titles were of interest to us. ADONIS contained 90 titles, 22 at the main library and 68 at the BioSciences Library, to which we were subscribing. The 1992 subscription price for these titles was $27,239 at the main library and $54,040 for the BioSciences Library titles. The subscription price for ADONIS in 1993 was $13,892. For each article that a copy is printed we pay a royalty to the publisher. The amount of the royalty charged varies with the journal and the publisher. The price is in Dutch Guilders so the cost varies with the exchange rate. In U.S. dollars the cost per article varies from about $5.00 to $10.30. We charge our patrons $3.00 per article. Quarterly we copy on to a floppy disk a statistics file from ADONIS and mail it to the ADONIS Amsterdam office. They then supply to us an invoice and a statistical report showing what was copied and by or for whom. We use this to charge back to those individuals or departments that have set up accounts with us. Some individuals pay cash when they copy and this is reflected in how we have set up the individual accounts.

Okay, how does one use ADONIS? You can search the database by author, title words, journal name, volume number, issue number, year of publication, page number, issn or any combination of these. Only the title field is keyword searchable but truncation can be used in the other fields and one can view an alphabetic or numeric index for each field and select one of the terms to search. Since the system is designed to be a document delivery system and not a bibliographic index, the searching capabilities are weak. The North American representative recommends that one use Current Contents on Disk to find the citations you need and then go to ADONIS for the article.

What are the drawbacks of this system? You get the articles about three to four weeks later than you would the paper copy. If your patrons need articles as soon as they are published, this may not be for you. We have only had two instances of an individual needing an article before we received the disk. In these cases we went ahead and obtained the articles via interlibrary loan. Another drawback is that some parts of a journal issue are not included. Those are letters to the editor, advertisements, table of contents and instructions to authors.

At UAF we feel that any disadvantages of ADONIS are far outweighed by the savings and easy access to a large number of journals. Also, less time is used checking in and shelving journals. So far we have copied more articles for interlibrary loan purposes than what our own patrons have copied. We view this as a positive feature since it is allowing us to share more resources with the libraries from which we have borrowed heavily in the past. Additional titles are being added to ADONIS. Academic Press has added many of their titles and other titles have shown up unannounced. One unexpected title that appeared was the New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research. There are now over 475 journal titles on ADONIS which would cost about $276,200 if subscribed to in paper copy.

It is my understanding that the ADONIS operation is going to be consolidated in the U.K instead of split between Amsterdam and the U.K which should streamline the operation and reduce the gap between paper copy receipt and ADONIS disk receipt.

If you need to reduce your periodical budget and have a collection that includes some of the subject areas covered by ADONIS, this could be a feasible alternative to paper copies.