

PROVIDING ACCESS TO JOURNALS -- JUST IN TIME OR JUST IN CASE

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ABSTRACT

For the past two years, as a response to declining budgets, the Colorado State University Libraries Science and Technology Department has been providing document delivery from a selected list of journals via a commercial vendor. This service exemplifies the manufacturing concept of "just in time" rather than the traditional library concept of "just in case". The program is described, including planning, implementation and evolution. An evaluation of the program and possible future directions are presented.

INTRODUCTION

Declining library budgets and ever increasing subscription costs are demanding that libraries look for creative solutions to meeting their researchers' needs to identify and obtain journal articles. Traditionally libraries have been storehouses of information. They added to their collections to support the current needs of their organization and what was perceived as the future needs. That is, they collected things just-in-case they would be needed. However, as budgets have decreased and book and periodical prices increased, libraries are not able to purchase books and journals to meet even their basic needs. The manufacturing industry reached a similar crisis and found that it was not cost effective or efficient to stockpile parts. The industry developed new ways of thinking about how they deliver parts for manufacturing. They realized that large storehouses of parts weren't necessary, as well as expensive to maintain, and the just-in-time concept came into being. Just-in-time means that parts are produced only at the exact time of need.

Libraries, taking a cue from manufacturing, are now investigating ways to give their patrons quick access to information when they need it. While the information must exist somewhere, as opposed to manufacturing where it is produced on demand, it is not necessary for every library to own everything in their areas. The access versus ownership issue is currently a widely discussed concept in collection development circles. As aquatic and marine science librarians, many of the issues in the library debate sound familiar to us. They are vaguely reminiscent of the shoreline ownership

versus access debate. And for some of us who have been in libraries for a while, there is a ring of the resource sharing talks of twenty years ago. Who owns the information? How can others access it? Is having access to the information good enough? Should there be a charge and, if so, how much? I am sure at next year's meeting we will hear more on this topic.

THE PROBLEM

Two years ago at the Colorado State University Libraries Department of Sciences and Technology we reached a crisis stage when the amount we had to spent on new periodical subscriptions could in no way purchase the journal requests we had received from our faculty and researchers. However, since service is our primary mission, we wanted to find a way of to fill their requests if at all possible. When we began to discuss which of the many requests were essential to research and teaching several factors became apparent:

First, for many of the titles we had incomplete statistics on interlibrary loan requests. In addition, we did not know if faculty and students were paying for document delivery on their own. Therefore we didn't know how much use some of these journals might actually receive.

Second, a related issue was the question of whether a title would support only one researcher's work or would be of value to a wider circle of users.

Third, what did the requestor really need access to: the entire issue of the periodical or just the table of contents to see if there was anything relevant in that issue? Many researchers are browsers of the literature and while they scan tables of contents on a regular basis, they may not read an issue cover to cover.

Fourth, was it essential that the person have the article in hand immediately, or could there be some lag time between their becoming aware of the article and actually being able to read it?

As we saw it there were two parts to the problem: proving current awareness for specific journals and providing document delivery.

OUR SOLUTION

As we discussed it, we decided that if we could provide access to the tables of contents of the journals that had been requested and document delivery within a reasonable period of time (quicker than the then current two-three week for interlibrary loan) we might meet most of the needs of our researchers. We had experimented with having a computer current awareness on disk service (Research Alert) and found the researchers did not like having to access the computer separately

from scanning their journals. Remember this was two years ago, when our patrons were less computer literate and the only access to the service was the computer terminal in the library.

Since at the time we instituted the new current awareness and document delivery service, the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) provided both the table of contents service for the complete list of our titles and document delivery at a competitive cost, we decided to use them as our supplier. In addition, the quality of the copy supplied had to be considered since many scientific articles include photographs and other illustrative materials which traditionally have not reproduced well. ISI provided the actual article through tear sheets whenever possible. We selected an original list of 40 titles to try our experiment. We have since increased the list to 48 journal titles. We subscribed the tables of contents through ISI's Research Alert, and provided the articles through ISI's document delivery service, the Genuine Article.

If this was to be accepted by the faculty and researchers we decided that we would need:

- 1) to make the mechanism invisible to the user, so they did not see how it was ordered, and
- 2) to publicize it so the user understood what was being provided and how it differed from Interlibrary Loan.

We realized we might not always use the same vendor, so we developed an identify for our new service. We called it SABR (Selected Articles By Request). We sent letters to the faculty, included the new service in our library newsletter, and talked to every department we could about the service and how it would work. We added the titles to our periodical list and our online catalog with a note "Selected Articles by Request. Table of Contents only available. See Science Reference Desk". We discovered that the original note in our online catalog was not enough to keep other libraries from requesting that title on Interlibrary loan and have since changed the note.

For security and preservation reasons we first photocopy the tables of contents and then display them in a three-ring binder shelved in with current periodical issues. This way if a specific table of contents is lost we have a backup copy available. Order forms and instructions are included in each binder. The form is turned in at the science reference desk.

Requests are sent by FAX to ISI. This cuts down by 3-7 days the time it takes for them to receive our request and the difference in cost is insignificant. ISI's turn around time is a maximum of 48 hours and often only 24 hours. Our only complaint has been the length of time it takes for the U.S. Postal Service to get the items to us -- 7 to 10 days from when we FAX in our order. While ISI offers a FAX delivery

service, we did not think we could justify the additional cost.

EVALUATION

From September 1990 through March 1992 we had 263 requests for articles. The average number of articles per journal title was 5.48, the median was 2. We had eight titles which received no requests.

Use of the service was almost equally spread among our primary clientele; students, faculty and staff. The service was used by faculty (32.32%), undergraduate students (27.76% of the requests), graduate students (26.24%), staff (11.41%) and Interlibrary loan (2.28%).

Of the 24 departments and eight affiliate laboratories using SABR, the most frequent users were Biochemistry with 24.7% of the requests and the National Seed Storage Laboratory (17.9%). Departmental usage then drops off abruptly with Pathology being the third most frequent requestor (9.1%).

For the two year period, it will have cost us approximately \$8,700, including tables of contents, document delivery, photocopying, staff, and telephone charges, to provide access to approximately \$62,800 worth of journal subscriptions. So, for less than 15% of the total cost we've provided ready access to these journal titles (Table 1).

After evaluating the use of the service we decided that it would be cost effective for us to subscribe to only five of the 48 titles. Because we are still receiving requests for 1991 and 1992 for one title we will purchase a two year backfile of that title only. The titles we will be subscribing to are: *Journal of Neurobiology*; *Journal of Bioenergetics and Biomembranes*; *Cyrolatters*; *Journal of Computational Chemistry*; and *Protein Engineering*.

In 1991-2, because of continued rising journal costs and an essentially static budget, we decided to cancel some journal titles in an effort to balance the budget. 224 titles totaling \$76,500.00 were canceled. Because our evaluation of SABR has shown that we have a cost effective way of providing access to journals without owning them, departments are now willing to substitute the SABR service for twenty-two titles that were canceled, due to lack of use.

BASIC COSTS	
Amount spent on Table of Contents Service (Research Alert)	
1990/91	507.00
1991/92	650.00
Amount spent on Document Delivery	
Sept 1990 - March 1992	3,132.48
estimated April - August 1992	1,125.00
Amount spent on Photocopying (This is an estimate, figured at 10 cents per page.)	
Sept 1990 - March 1992	1,700.00
estimated April - August 1992	500.00
Student worker for photocopying, pulling binders, inserting new pages in binder, etc. Based on approximately 2 hours per week at \$5.19 per hour.	
Sept 1990 - March 1992	820.00
estimated April - August 1992	218.00
Telephone charges for FAXing order (estimate)	
Sept 1990 - March 1992	20.00
estimated April - August 1992	5.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS FOR 2 YEARS OF SERVICE:	\$ 8,677.50
Actual 1991 price of subscribing to the 48 titles:	\$30,051.00
Estimated price of subscriptions for 2 years (Based on inflation estimate. Actual 1992 prices not yet calculated):	\$32,755.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS FOR 2 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION COSTS:	\$62,806.00

TABLE 1. Estimated costs for providing SABR, September 1990 - August 1992.

THE FUTURE

We anticipate that the demand for articles will increase. In an effort to control costs, we are providing document delivery through alternative sources. Our Interlibrary Loan Department is using UnCover2, FAX agreements with other libraries, and ARIEL to answer requests. We think we will be able to slightly lower the cost per article and definitely shorten the delivery time by working with ILL this year to deliver articles using a combination of methods.

As we expand access to our online catalog and various databases we are looking at ways to give our patrons access to the SABR titles table of contents online using UnCover2. Despite the ease of scanning tables of contents online, currently only a few of our patrons use UnCover2 for current awareness. We hope to institute some educational programs which will increase our patrons' use of this service.

We plan to evaluate the results of these changes to our service at the end of the coming year. We will also evaluate the cost and effectiveness of providing the service through the increasing number of new commercial vendors. Please contact me if you have any questions about the project so far, or if you want to know about our progress during the year.