Taking Periodicals from Print to E-: Making Way for Special Collections at Ina Dillard Russell Library
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The Situation

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions …
- The library has been adding JSTOR collections and discarding physical holdings. In recent years we have taken advantage of one-time purchase of collections to eliminate annual fees. JSTOR is a popular platform with faculty, both inside and outside the library, as well as students. We have added JSTOR collections based on overlap with physical collections, relevance to curriculum, and COUNTER turnover reports (JR2). The library has recently embarked on a year-long evidence based trial of unpurchased collections to determine if acquisition would be a good decision.
- Some holdings will not be retained, even if they are not available electronically. The mission of the university changed in 1996 to become the state’s liberal arts university. While the collection was heavily used in 2010 or 2011, there is still an opportunity to weed titles of little current relevance.

The Knowns …
- Special Collections has outgrown its current footprint and needs stacks, storage, and work space.
- The space where the periodicals are housed will be repurposed in the next five years. As soon as the university secures funding for the project, it will be a go.
- Usage of the physical periodicals collection is very low, with a few exceptions.
- A volume is more likely to be used by Interlibrary Loan than by a student.
- The library has an excellent record of successful end of the year funding requests.
- The library has not received an increase in the annual materials budget in close to a decade.

The what ifs …
- the library discards the whole collection and there are no print periodicals?
- the library purchases online replacements and those aren’t used either?
- the accumulated annual maintenance fees for purchased backfiles aren’t sustainable?
- the library discards print before securing online replacements?
- a periodical isn’t available in an online format?
- the library purchases periodicals archives and the annual maintenance fee doesn’t kick in for 10 years?
- selected holdings were relocated and integrated into the book collection?
- periodicals were obtained via donation and/or bookplated for donors?

The Procedure

Preparing the List

Using Alma Design Analytics, a report was run for the titles in the Periodicals and Microfilm Collections. Fields for title, summary holdings, number of items, number of loans (in house + not in house), and location were included. The report was exported into excel. Additional fields were added: Keep, Replace, or Discard?, Electronic Collection, Publisher/Vendor, and University Department, which were manually populated. The report contained just under 1700 rows. Titles were included twice if holdings were available in both formats.

Sorting the List

The list was sorted a couple of different ways. Sorting by descending number of items will put the titles with the largest holdings at the top of the list. These titles may be a priority for replacement based on their sheer numbers. The list may also be sorted by decreasing number of loans. Titles with the most activity might also be a high priority to obtain online.

Using Alma’s Community Zone

Titles were searched in Alma’s Community Zone to determine availability online. If the title was available in a collection that would offer perpetual access, the Collection name was added. If the current publisher could be determined, this information was also added. If subject could be verified, the name of the relevant university department or college was noted.

Contacting Vendors

Emails were sent to vendor contacts to obtain pricing details. One-time purchase for perpetual access is the preferred acquisition method. Information was also requested for any hosting or continuing access fee. Sample licenses were collected when available. Having a sample license on hand helps to gauge how long it might take to get approval from the Office of Legal Affairs.

Activating Open Access Titles in Alma

If titles were available from an open access collection, then portfolios were added in Alma and the physical title was marked for potential discard.

Creating the Wishlist Libguide

The libguide Russell Library Collections Wishlist was updated to highlight some potential databases. The libguide can be shared with faculty to gauge interest and support. The libguide might also attract potential donors.

Requesting/Receiving EoY Funding

In May 2019, Russell Library received funding to purchase collections from GALE, ProQuest, and publisher backfiles. Collection & Resources staff will begin updating holdings and removing physical items over the summer.

Offering Database Trials

Beginning in the fall, database trials will be arranged with vendors and marketed on campus to faculty and students to help determine which collections to request funding for next.