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Three Years of Unmediated Document Delivery: An Analysis and Consideration of Collection Development Priorities

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ABSTRACT. San Jose State University Library, like most academic libraries, is struggling to meet users' rising expectations for immediate information within the financial confines of a flat budget. To address acquisition of non-subscribed article content, particularly outside of business hours, San Jose State University Library implemented Copyright Clearance Center's Get It Now, a document delivery service. Three academic years of analyzed data, which involves over 10,000 requests, and the subsequent collection development actions taken by the library will be discussed. The value and challenges of patron-driven, unmediated document delivery services in conjunction with traditional document delivery services will be considered.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are struggling to meet users' expectations for quick and readily available information with flat or constricting budgets and increasing content costs. Libraries are exploring various programs and services that satisfy users' needs for content outside of the library's subscriptions in a 24/7 environment, while trying to maximize collection development dollars. This paper reports on San Jose State University Library's implementation of Copyright Clearance Center's Get It Now document delivery service. Three academic years of analyzed data, which involves over 10,000 requests, and the subsequent collection development actions taken by the library will be discussed. The value and challenges of patron-driven, unmediated document delivery services in conjunction with traditional document delivery services will be considered.

BACKGROUND

San Jose State University (SJSU) is a large comprehensive public university that grants bachelor's and master's degrees in 134 areas of study. Through its seven colleges, the university offers 73 bachelor's degrees (146 with all concentrations) and 71 master's degrees (104 with all concentrations).[1] While the library subscribes to many discipline-specific and multidisciplinary resources, Copyright Clearance Center's (CCC) Get It Now was activated in November 2011 to complement electronic holdings, address existing embargoes on current content, and meet the additional collection needs of two new degree offerings: a Doctor of Nursing Practice and Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership.

CCC's Get It Now is a recently developed document delivery system that promises the delivery of journal articles to an individual user's e-mail account within hours from the time it is requested using the institution's own link resolver. Get It Now is available in either a mediated or unmediated fashion. Mediation is integrated into interlibrary loan workflows, while unmediated document delivery bypasses any staff interaction.[2] SJSU opted to implement an unmediated Get It Now service to minimize wait times and to fulfill article delivery outside of interlibrary loan (ILL) operating hours. To promote access for the entire campus community, Get It Now was available to all students, faculty, and staff in all disciplines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Growing Library User Expectations and E-commerce Principles

Historically, the academic library was concerned with providing resources for current students and faculty as well as storing these resources for future students and faculty.[3] This traditional collection development charge is changing due to the emergence of patron-driven or demand-driven acquisition models, whereby current users trigger the addition of materials to the library's collection. Levine predicts that delivery of demand-driven books and journal articles will be the norm for the future library.[3] Demand-driven acquisition may be seen as the application of emerging e-commerce concepts to library operations. In 2012, Mak suggested that "frictionless ordering," (i.e., making the experience as easy for the user as possible) was permeating the library environment. This concept was most apparent in interlibrary loan services, where the

ability to order and receive materials in a timely manner has been enhanced by technological developments.[4]

Unmediated Document Delivery – Benefits and Limitations

Unmediated document delivery has been available to libraries for some time. Wichita State University Library initiated unmediated document request and delivery services as early as 1996.[5] Ryerson University offered science and engineering faculty unmediated document delivery access to the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI Source) database in 2001.[6] Such systems are often implemented to improve document delivery turnaround time, as well as subject and journal coverage. From 2002 to 2003, Ryerson saw a reduction in document delivery time from 6.6 days with ILL to under 48 hours using CISTI.[6] Other institutions have turned to unmediated delivery systems when faced with organizational change or budget shortfalls.

At Furman University Library, employee reductions forced the library to seek out unmediated solutions for document delivery. Get It Now was tapped to provide the service. Librarian concern over controlling the cost of the demand--driven system resulted in a five download per day limit for each requestor. Get It Now has been so successful at Furman that the library is considering adding more available journal titles through the link resolver.[7]

At Tennessee Tech University, budget deficits resulted in several journal package cancellations.[8] A usage analysis of the affected titles indicated that many journals within the package were not used. Get It Now allowed the library to offer article access to those journals that had usage without having to purchase the entire package. For the Volpe Library at Texas

Tech University, single article purchase was determined to be the most cost-effective mechanism to provide the information that faculty and students needed.[8]

Get It Now and other services may offer mediated and unmediated options. In fact, libraries frequently add limitations to document delivery systems in order to control costs. Furman University Library's limitation of downloads per requester is one method to assuage concerns about overuse.[7] Ryerson University Library initially limited the usage of CISTI to faculty in specific disciplines, but later expanded access to all faculty and then graduate students.[6] Using the Get It Now Dashboard, an administrator view of real-time use, access, and finances, institutions can identify activation periods, set maximum spending limits, obtain alerts when specific spending levels have been reached, and automatically shut-off the service when the financial limit or the activation period concludes, whichever comes first.

Ensuring that a citation linker's knowledge base completely reflects the library's print and electronic holdings can be difficult. Libraries may choose to mediate document delivery to prevent electronic article fulfillment of items held in the library but in other formats. The University of Washington opted to limit automation of their OCLC ILL Direct Request program because "frequently the UW owned an alternate edition of requested material that met the patron's need."[9] Automation would have resulted in additional expenditure and inconvenience when the library already held the same materials. At the University of Notre Dame, Mak found that 47% of database searches and 34% of interlibrary loan requests took place between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., the period during which Interlibrary Loan offices were closed.[4] Thus, another important element when considering mediated document delivery is the time delay between the initiated request and when ILL staff will process the request.

The Nature of the Requested Materials

Another potential consideration when evaluating the cost differences between unmediated and mediated document delivery and interlibrary loan is compliance with copyright laws, particularly the National Commission on New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works (CONTU) Guidelines. This commission established what is commonly referred to as the "Rule of Five."[10] This guideline prohibits borrowing more than five items from any one journal with a publication date of five years prior to the date of the request during the course of a calendar year. This was codified to address "aggregate quantities." Borrowing articles beyond the five copies could result in paying additional royalty fees to the copyright holder.[11]

In her 2012 study, Brown estimated that 70% of the article requests at University of Nebraska Medical Center's McGoogan Library were for items published within the last five years. Due to the number of requests in excess of the "Rule of Five," the library had to pay substantial copyright royalty payments. McGoogan Library incorporated a pay-per-view article acquisition model in conjunction with traditional ILL. This resulted in significant projected cost savings, though Brown observed that her estimates did not reflect free, reciprocal articles through ILL.[12]

Articles older than five years from the date of the user's request were not explicitly addressed in the CONTU Guidelines. As a result, ILL departments generally consider requests for these types of materials to be subject to Section 107 of Title 17 of United States Code or the doctrine of "fair use." These items are exempt from additional royalty payments.[11] Thus, the costs that a library would incur for articles older than five years from the date of request would include the lending library's fee, ILL employee time, and ILL system fee.

Against this landscape of an on-demand culture with e-commerce expectations, financial limitations, potential for duplication, and complicated copyright considerations, this article examines three academic years of Get It Now data.

METHODOLOGY

Copyright Clearance Center representatives provided reports for three academic years of SJSU Library's usage: 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. An academic year spanned the months of August through May. At SJSU, the Get It Now service was routinely turned off for the summer months. There were over 10,000 Get It Now fulfilled requests during the three-year period; usage report data points included:

- Order Date and Time

- Fulfillment Date and Time

- Publication Name

- Publication Date

- Article Name

- Article Author

- Publisher Name

- Cost

- Delivery E-mail Address

The CCC report also provided a Get It Now user number that in some cases seemed to be tied to the user's SJSU ID. However, the ID protocol was not consistent enough to provide any usable data. If ID protocol could be standardized and clearly linked to SJSU IDs in the future, it might

provide valuable data regarding type of user such as undergraduate/graduate/faculty status and major or department affiliation. This information would further inform usage pattern analysis and what titles to select for inclusion in the Get It Now service.

This analysis sought to answer a variety of user preference and collection development questions relevant to the future of the SJSU Get It Now subscription, collection fund allocations, and collection development policies using the available data points. The analysis centered especially on factors such as "just in time" document delivery; the decision to allow unmediated fulfillment; cost of individual requests versus yearly subscription to the highest requested publications; and the cost and usage of Get It Now compared to traditional and RapidILL. The data provided by CCC in the Get It Now reports would also be useful for those interested in evaluating the value of the "big deal" versus an individual document delivery service; however, that was beyond the scope of this paper.

The CCC-provided reports were manipulated and analyzed in Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS

The Get It Now service was heavily utilized at San José State University during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 academic years (see Table 1). There was substantial growth each academic year (AY), which may be attributed to better awareness and communication about the Get It Now service, the continual addition of new publishers to the library's link resolver, and higher average prices for specific journal titles. A major reason for the increase in average price per article for academic year 2014-2015 was the addition of Taylor and Francis publications to

the available Get It Now title list in November 2014. The minimum price per Taylor and Francis article was $45.

[PLACE TABLE 1 HERE]

Legend: TABLE 1. Number of Requests and Average Price Per Article

In terms of convenience and maximizing users' time, the Get It Now service was able to fulfill articles, on average, in 1 hour 34 minutes, 2 hours 12 minutes, and 3 hours 52 minutes for the academic years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, respectively (see Table 2). The reason behind the increasing fulfillment time was not readily apparent. Interestingly, 62% of all requests, regardless of school year, were initiated outside of ILL business hours. When coupling this information with the fulfillment time, SJSU users were still obtaining their articles in the most expedient way possible.

[PLACE TABLE 2 HERE]

Legend: TABLE 2. Average Fulfillment Time and Percentage of Requests Submitted

Outside of ILL Operating Hours

A surprising number of articles requested from the Get It Now service were older than five years (see Table 3). For academic years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, 63% and 60%, respectively, of the requested articles were outside of CONTU guidelines. For academic year 2014-2015, 47% of the requested articles were older than five years from the date of request. While this was a reduction from previous academic years, 47% still represented a high degree of

user needs for older articles. The average age of the requested article decreased with each subsequent academic year. This indicates that there was a greater influx of current content, which is important, as one reason Get It Now was activated was to connect users to embargoed content quickly.

[PLACE TABLE 3 HERE]

Legend: TABLE 3. Percent of Articles Greater than Five Years from Request Date and Average Age of Requested Article from Request Date

In academic year 2012-2013, the top ten most requested journals accounted for 340 requests or 16% of the overall Get It Now activity (see Table 4). Due to the complexities of physical holdings, there were article fulfillments of duplicate items held in different formats. Depending on the title, there seemed to be some need for an electronic backfile.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

Legend: TABLE 4. Top Ten Requested Journals for Academic Year 2012-2013

In academic year 2013-2014, the top ten most requested journals accounted for 346 requests or 9% of the overall Get It Now activity (see Table 5). Again, articles were fulfilled for alternate format items. Despite the scientific or medical orientation of the titles, users still seemed to request items that were older than five years from the date of the request.

[INSERT TABLE 5 HERE]

Legend: TABLE 5. Top Ten Requested Journals for Academic Year 2013-2014

In academic year 2014-2015, the top ten most requested journals accounted for 370 requests or 6% of the overall Get It Now activity (see Table 6). Fulfillment of duplicated items continued to be an ongoing issue. There appeared to be a greater need for more current (i.e., <5 years) content.

[INSERT TABLE 6 HERE]

Legend: TABLE 6. Top Ten Requested Journals for Academic Year 2014-2015

DISCUSSION

Results from the above analysis suggest a number of collection development opportunities and challenges. The first obvious response was to compare the average yearly cost of titles with the largest number of Get It Now requests to the yearly subscription cost of the same title. In some cases, such as the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, the library chose to purchase the annual subscription based on cost analysis. For other publications, like *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America* and *Seminars in Perinatology*, the Get It Now fulfillment cost was lower than the annual subscription, even with these high request numbers. Because of the quick fulfillment time through Get It Now, simply keeping the title available through the system was determined to be the better option.

The significant numbers of requests for older journal content (15.3, 16.1, and 10.6 years for academic years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, respectively) has spurred the library

to seriously consider increasing backfile purchases of electronic journals. Ongoing requests for potentially duplicate content that can only be utilized by one individual may not make sense when a backfile that provides perpetual unlimited access can be purchased for a one-time, finite cost. Several titles were among the top ten most frequently requested journals across multiple academic years. Analysis of what historical journal content to purchase is currently underway. As to what point a backfile purchase will be triggered based on Get It Now data, this has not been determined. Additionally, SJSU paid significant fees for patrons to receive older content quickly using the unmediated Get It Now rather than waiting for traditional ILL services, which would have avoided copyright fees under CONTU guidelines.

Of note is the large increase between the 2013-2014 AY (3,738) and 2014-2105 AY (6,131) article request totals. This can be attributed to the addition of Taylor and Francis publications in November 2014 and Wiley publications in February 2015 to SJSU's Get It Now service. Get It Now seemed an ideal way to fill existing gaps in coverage for both publishers caused by either embargoes in our existing databases (Taylor and Francis) or suspended service during contract negotiations (Wiley). Taylor and Francis materials were especially popular with patrons and the date of the requested articles tended to be more recent, meaning these requests were less likely to fall within the CONTU guidelines. This may suggest Get It Now is a good solution for acquiring embargoed materials if the price of individual requests is reasonable for an institution.

The difficulty of setting Get It Now's display logic to accurately reflect alternative format holdings in the link resolver will be dependent on the quality of an institution's serials holdings data. At SJSU, the uncertain quality of print serials data in the OPAC led the Get It Now administrator to decide against loading alternative format information. Tables 4, 5 and 6 show

that a number of the most requested publications were also available for some dates in an alternative format, likely resulting in the purchase of copyright for an article SJSU already held in print. Despite recognizing this, SJSU has decided to continue with the Get It Now service without restriction for alternative format holdings based on an organizational commitment to quick service, an understanding that many patrons prefer to work with electronic materials, and the increasing number of online courses at SJSU.

CONCLUSION

It is unlikely many state university libraries, like SJSU Library, would be financially capable of providing the breadth of material, even with RapidILL, that Get It Now makes available to users with only a few hours delay. However, implementation must be carefully considered for libraries concerned with providing access to content they may have in print or that could be delivered at far less cost by ILL, particularly in cases of free, reciprocal borrowing and lending. System settings that allow libraries to limit to user type or simply cap spending limits are useful. Careful selection of titles to fill the greatest need gaps and good print holding information to inform the Get It Now display logic may also help control costs. Mediating requests is also an option, but this method will affect fulfillment time, one of Get It Now's greatest benefits. Each institution will have to consider all of these elements and determine the value of immediacy, or frictionless ordering and delivery, to them and their patrons.

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