

ANNUAL REPORT 2005/2006

SERIALS DEPARTMENT

TECHNICAL SERVICES

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SERIALS DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT - Fiscal Year 2005/2006

OVERVIEW

Electronic resources have been a hot topic among librarians for much of the past decade. Whatever the resources--databases, ebooks, or online journals--the online content challenged traditional workflows, staffing expertise and staffing levels in many libraries. The time of the last ten years has been considered one of a transition from processing print formats to the processing of online content. Truth be told, online content processing is now part of the normal course of the business of the Serials Department along with the still substantial print subscription base. Workflows and procedures are still adjusting to ways to best add online content access to the Library's collections. Ongoing evaluation of workflows and procedures for all Department work is a product of the transition period. This evaluation helps keep the flexibility needed to process online resources with all the complexity and time consuming detailed work they bring. The newness of working with electronic resources is fading into the work with all the more traditional formats that are ordered, received, paid for, and cataloged by the Serials Department.

In the first quarter of the fiscal year, the Department finalized the processing of the Blackwell Science big deal agreement for which much of the preliminary work started at the end of fiscal year 2005. This deal added over 200 online only journal titles to the Library's collections. These titles along with the big deal agreements with Elsevier, Springer and Wiley, and some miscellaneous online only journal content, brought the online only journals count in the collections to over 2,000. Though this figure represented only 12% of the active subscription load of the Department, the involved processes to provide and maintain access to the titles consumed more time than typically needed to handle print titles. The electronic resources librarian established procedures to search out online access provided with the Library's subscriptions, as well as to prevent access problems. With the support of the electronic resources assistant, this work was a great service to the Northwestern community of users. Statistics of print check-in dropped 9% from last year, and 28% from fiscal year 2003 when the first of the big deals, Elsevier ScienceDirect, was licensed at the Library. There has been some time savings for the staff who check in. Check-in work has been reassigned from four to three individuals, and more time was spent on claiming work by these same individuals.

The two-year Serials Department Strategic Plan came to the end of its term with a successful completion of its goals. The plan was a departmental effort to be proactive in meeting the challenges of the transition period. See the plan and its evaluation submitted with this report.

Staffing changed somewhat dramatically during the fiscal year. The vacant LA II Electronic Resources Assistant was filled when the Department welcomed Yuelei Liu near the end of October 2005. Dina Azrikan, LA III Serials Cataloger, transferred to a position in the Music Library mid-December 2005. After evaluating staffing needs with a future perspective, the position was reclassified as an LA II Electronic Resources Assistant and remained vacant for the remainder of fiscal year 2006. At the start of May 2006, Judy Eckoff completed the one-year half-time LA I term position and left to pursue professional librarian work after recently completing her library and information science

masters. The permanent staff were able to resume handling mail duties and the check-in for which Judy was responsible.

Serials cataloging work maintained a respectable pace with fewer new titles cataloged, but with a 14% increase in recataloged titles. The increase in recataloging was due mainly to an increase of title change work, and the updating of records for electronic resources. Due to problems with recording numbers of materials removed from the backlog an accurate count is not available. Based on the numbers available it would appear that the backlog grew by about 7% which was the percentage of decrease in the previous year. CONSER cataloging was up by 23%. Though the bulk of the Library Storage Facility holdings update project was completed by the serials catalogers in the previous fiscal year, they finished up remaining problems through December 2005.

The Serials catalogers spent extra time in recataloging titles from the Transportation Library to clear up missed title changes, title relationships, and access point problems. Serials acquisitions staff also spent extra time in processing Transportation Library serials.

The achievements of the department are accomplished by the dedicated individual contributions of each Serials Department staff. Building on this solid foundation, the Department will be able to meet the challenges of the new fiscal year and the ongoing changes in serials processing as more electronic resources enter into the collections.

ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS FOR 2005/2006

1. *The Serials Cataloging section will participate in the OCLC serials holdings project as a highly rated priority of work. Ongoing*

Serials Department catalogers began work on this project in late July 2006. The delayed start was due to the wait for OCLC to reload the Library's holdings using a revised algorithm that could potentially find more matches to our holdings. The reloading was effective in that it reduced the number of records for initial manual comparison work by the Department staff from about 15,000 titles to about 7,000 titles.

2. *Serials acquisitions staff will continue to update serial purchase orders with commitments. Ongoing*

Having ongoing commitments against the funds in the ledger has given selectors a more realistic perspective of available funds to spend on new materials. Several more selectors managed their funds to be fully committed while spending down their cash balances in this past fiscal year than in the previous one. Serials acquisitions made the effort to update commitments as needed, adding some, revising others, and deleting those that were incorrectly encumbered.

3. *Pursue preliminary work to organize data about electronic resources to be used in an ERMS in a way that the data is more readily available to interested personnel in its current file. Ongoing*

Much progress was made in support of this goal. A spreadsheet of titles with electronic counterparts was established for each publisher if there were more than handful of titles.

The licenses of the publishers' packages had pertinent contract terms of use input into spreadsheets. The paper folders of electronic resources were reviewed and reduced by about one third so that those remaining hold invoicing documentation and/or a license agreement. Some information was transferred to purchase order notes and the folder discarded. The database that for many years had been used for statistics of expense and number of electronic resources was frozen. New Microsoft Access queries were designed to pull most of this information from the Voyager tables. In order to retrieve the expenditure data, fund names were revised in the ledger.

GOALS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006/2007

1. *The Serials Cataloging section will participate in the OCLC serials holdings project as a highly rated priority of work. Ongoing*

In addition to the Serials Department catalogers, a one-year term librarian with split assignment between the Serials Department and the Cataloging Department will be devoting about 30% of her time to this project. With this combined staff support it is hoped to complete 60% of the manual comparison of records and updating of holdings in OCLC during the 2006/2007 fiscal year. The work will continue into the following fiscal year. Special problem solving and verification work will continue over the next several years, but the Library's serials holdings will at least be updated in OCLC.

2. *The Serials Acquisitions and Electronic Resources section will develop written procedures to describe the work processes of those two sections. Ongoing*

With a new Electronic Resources Assistant beginning in September 2006, and with the expectations that work routines may change to accommodate workflows for electronic resources, it will be important to effectively document the work process for the various acquisitions tasks for all formats.

3. *Develop an electronic folder of historical usage statistics for electronic resources to which current statistics are added. April 2007*

Usage statistics are useful in making selection and cancellation decisions. Having historical statistics will give a better view of use over time.

4. *Complete the plan to present better access to electronic journals in the OPAC. April 2007*

The Serials Department has proposed enhancements to products and cataloging procedures that will help clarify access to electronic journals in the OPAC. Discussions with staff of the Information Technology, Public Services, and Technical Services divisions have led to actions and recommendations. The Serials Department will pursue ways to change bibliographic records and experiment with the aggregator analytic service, Serials Solutions, on a trial basis, to fulfill its part in this goal during the fiscal year.

5. *Serials Department staff will work on a project to input the Africana sample files backlog into Voyager. Ongoing*

This project will distribute simple cataloging record creation to staff not responsible for cataloging to allow serials catalogers more time to fully catalog other titles. This project will be of great service to the Africana Library in exposing these hidden materials. Based on an estimated beginning total title count of 800, the goal is to reduce the sample files backlog by 70% this first year, or by 560 titles.