

12/20/2006

**Northwestern University Library  
Serials Department**

**STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2004-2006**

*EVALUATION August 2006*

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Northwestern University Library Serials Department is to acquire and catalog periodical, continuation, and annual/irregular library materials in all formats, and to manage the licensing and registration of purchased and selected free online resources in both monographic and serials formats. Timely check-in of received issues and inventory control of volume holdings assists students, faculty and staff in easily locating materials for their research needs. Managing access to increasing online resources supports the Library's vision of providing desktop access to worldwide electronic resources. Processing claims of missing issues reduces gaps in the serials collections holdings which may delay researchers' goals. Maintaining commitments in purchase orders, and managing the Voyager ledger provides budget information to selectors to aid them in their management of collections funds.

*Evaluation:* The mission statement remains true in its statements. It is increasingly more evident that the technical services processing of the Department is more directly impacting the end user. The Department work with electronic resources has more of a public services component now in the direct and indirect contact with users who have access problems with electronic journals and databases. This public contact is received via email, telephone, and in person from library staff and the end users. By the fact of the cost sharing of electronic resources with other University library systems and departments, the Serials Department has extended subscription responsibilities for these units through license management and invoice processing.

**Vision**

By FY 2006, Northwestern University Library Serials Department will be managing a workflow of a higher ratio of online only to print subscriptions than that ratio was at the end of FY 2003. The Department will have transitioned to more efficient online resources management by centralizing data in Voyager, or in addition, with the help of a secondary electronic resources management system. The electronic resources workflow will be distributed more widely among the Department staff so that acquisitions and cataloging processes routinely involve electronic resources. During this time, Serials staff will be expending a large percentage of their time updating holdings records of titles moved to the Library Storage Facility, implementing and maintaining SFX, and adding commitments to serials purchase orders.

*Evaluation:* Since the University Library collection remains substantial in print collections, the ratio of online only to print subscriptions has increased by a factor of 7% from about 5% in 2003 to about 12% in 2006. The electronic resources team has gathered and reorganized information about electronic resources in EXCEL spreadsheets, note fields in purchase orders and bibliographic holdings records, and paper files. The paper files have been reviewed and culled of extraneous

information. This gathering and reorganization of information on electronic resources is in preparation of transferring this information to an Electronic Resource Management System should a decision be made in the future to acquire such software. Work re-distribution for electronic resources has been slow, in part due to the need for overlapping knowledge and coordination of work with other staff in the Department. The Serials Acquisitions Order Supervisor is learning new processes in the support of electronic resources acquisitions and receipt. Department managers are discussing the needs of print claiming and how claiming of electronic resources might fit into this workflow. In the meantime, staff have maintained the regular flow of check-in, claiming, and invoice processing for the print collection. Check-in has reduced about 14% since 2003 due to the switch to online only titles. The updating of records for items moved to the Library Storage Facility was completed at the end of December 2005. The SFX software has been fully implemented including an upgrade from version 2.0 to version 3.0. It's ongoing maintenance and notification to correct errors in the title Knowledge Base continues to consume 75% of time of one non-exempt and 25% of time of one librarian positions. The adding and maintaining of commitments in serials purchase orders has been successful in helping bibliographers and selectors have a truer picture of their fund expenditures during a fiscal year.

### **Summary of Goals**

#### **Primary Goals**

1. Acquire and manage more effectively the bibliographic and ongoing access to an increasing number of online resources.
2. Provide bibliographic access to serial electronic resources more effectively.
3. Continue to acquire, maintain issue control, and provide bibliographic access to print, microform, and serials hidden collections.
4. Provide appropriate budget management support for selectors and the Assistant University Librarian for Collections.

**Enabling Goals** – Necessary goals if the Serials Department is to achieve the primary goals.

1. Develop a staffing plan for the next two years which includes training and documentation.
2. Research the usefulness of an Electronic Resources Management System and report to the Assistant University Librarian for Technical Services.

#### **Primary Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Primary Goal 1. Acquire and manage more effectively the bibliographic and ongoing access to an increasing number of online resources.

Objectives for Primary Goal 1

PG1a. Train staff and distribute acquisitions workflow to maintain correct publisher subscriptions lists.

**Context:** More and more publishers are providing their journals catalog with an option for online only, online plus print, and print only subscriptions. In working through some of these package deals, for example, Elsevier ScienceDirect, Kluwer, and Wiley, it is known that publishers records are not always correct as to what the Library is entitled access. Proper documentation by the Serials Department includes compiling spreadsheets, making notes in the purchase orders and volume holdings records, and communicating with the publishers and/or serials agents to correct the subscription lists.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through April 2005

**Resources:** Provide training and assign new duties to current acquisitions and electronic resources staff.

**Performance Measures:** The Department will meet this objective when all acquisitions and electronic resources staff are able to complete the work assigned within established time frames. If evaluation of workload by May 2005 should indicate need, recommend additional staffing for fiscal year 2006 which would be shared with online resources serials cataloging work.

*Evaluation:* PG1a. is continuing through 2006 and will continue into the future. Electronic resources work needs consistent evaluation of processes to align people skills with changing workflows for an efficient output. Some work with access to electronic resources is similar in nature to the traditional work accomplished with print resources. The Department will build on and expand these similar processes. To accommodate staffing needs, a serials cataloging non-exempt position which became vacant is being redescribed and assigned to electronic resources processing. This position will be possibly filled before the end of calendar year 2006.

PG1b. Train staff and distribute cataloging workflow to provide bibliographic control, and maintain access to online subscriptions.

**Context:** For several years, journal subscriptions have increasingly added an electronic component. In the prior two years, more publishers have provided the option to subscribe to an online only format of their journals. Some larger publishers have converted much of their journals catalogs to this option. In addition, publishers have participated in aggregated databases for much of the last decade. Providing access to these online titles is both important and time consuming. Maintaining the viability of the URL link is also an important, tedious, and time consuming task.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through April 2005

**Resources:** Provide training and assign new duties to current serials cataloging staff.

**Performance Measures:** The Department will meet this objective when all serials cataloging staff are able to complete the work assigned within established time frames. If evaluation of workload by May 2005 should indicate need, recommend additional staffing for fiscal year 2006 which would be shared with online resources acquisitions work.

*Evaluation:* PG1b. is continuing through 2006 and also will continue into the future. While cataloging of print titles will be handled by one fewer staff, important cataloging work will continue with a reassessment of distribution of cataloging by locations and reviewing processes to realize greater efficiencies.

PG1c. Manage and maintain SFX Knowledge Base for linking to ejournals.

**Context:** It is possible that the SFX Knowledge Base will replace the Electronic Resources (ER) database management of ejournals sometime during fiscal year 2005. The Serials Electronic Resources Librarian has populated the Knowledge Base and is maintaining its title links. The Knowledge Base is shared with the medical and law libraries. Management of the Knowledge Base will remain in the Serials Department as did the management of the ejournals in the ER database, and will be coordinated with these libraries.

**Timeline:** January 2004 and ongoing

**Resources:** The Serials Electronic Resources Librarian along with the Electronic Resources Assistant will manage and maintain the SFX Knowledge Base.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Department is meeting this objective by helping implement the SFX Knowledge Base and maintaining its list of active title links.

*Evaluation:* While the ER has been deemed a necessity by the outcome of discussion at Management Council, SFX is not seen as a replacement for the ER functionality of storing web site links that are dynamically harvested by the e-collections software of the ER. SFX functions as the article linking software. It works as well as the information in the SFX Knowledge Base of titles and holdings coverage data is accurate. Maintenance of the Knowledge Base takes the greater part of time of one non-exempt staff and about a quarter of time of one librarian positions.

PG2. Provide bibliographic access to serial electronic resources more effectively.

Objectives for Primary Goal 2

PG2a. Purchase available sets of MARC records when possible.

**Context:** With the purchases of online resources packages that may contain up to a hundred or more serials titles, it is difficult to catalog each title so as to be represented in the public online catalog in a timely fashion.

**Timeline:** August 2004 and ongoing

**Resources:** Continue to acquire MARC cataloging sets, and updated SFX MARCIt records to be loaded as a batch into the Voyager cataloging module.

**Performance Measures:** The Department will meet this objective each time it can acquire MARC cataloging sets for serials titles grouped within an online resource, and update MARCIt! loads for ejournals activated as targets in SFX.

*Evaluation:* PG2a. is an ongoing activity. The Department continues to coordinate the load of MARC records for serials, two sets being those records for the SPIE and IEEE digital libraries. MARCIt! Records from ExLibris for those targets turned on in SFX are loaded as cataloging records for titles in JSTOR, Project Muse, and the aggregated databases to which the Library subscribes.

Primary Goal 3. Continue to acquire, maintain issue control, and provide bibliographic access to print and microform serials resources.

#### Objectives for Primary Goal 3

PG3a. Adjust check-in processes as necessary to allow for the check in of all issues within one week of receipt.

**Context:** The Serials acquisitions staff finishes a day's receipts of check-in within the same day received. In order to allow the staff to do new tasks related to online only journals, the staff will check-in receipts within the same week of receipt. With the transition to subscriptions to online only journals, it is expected that the numbers of physical issues to be received and checked in will be reduced. The effects of this transition are minimal to date with the implementation of online only subscriptions packages beginning January 2004. These packages represent about 3% of the Library's subscription base.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through October 2004

**Resources:** Evenly distribute check-in workflow of print subscriptions to three current acquisitions staff, and maintain division of microform subscriptions check-in so that check-in is completed within the week of its receipt.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Acquisitions section will meet this objective when the Serials acquisitions staff are able to complete the work assigned within the week.

*Evaluation:* PG3a. has not been fully accepted by some staff perhaps due to the longstanding tradition of getting check-in for the day out to the shelves for patrons to use. The goal is still an option for allowing adjustments in the day to cover multiple tasks, some of which may be new and related to processing electronic resources.

PG3b. Adjust claiming processes as necessary to allow for the timely claiming of issues to publishers and serials agents.

**Context:** Current serials acquisitions staff will integrate claims into their workflow on a regular basis.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through April 2005

**Resources:** Introduce increasing quantity of claims into workflow of current serials acquisitions staff. If evaluation of workload by May 2005 should indicate need,

recommend additional staffing for fiscal year 2006 which would be shared with online resources acquisitions work.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials acquisitions section will meet this objective when the staff are completing their assigned claiming work from each week's serials issues problem list.

*Evaluation:* The Department Head and Order Supervisor categorized claiming as one of several priority duties for the serials acquisitions staff to be completed on a weekly basis. Regular meetings were held during a period in which the claiming reports were refined to work more efficiently for the staff by June 2005. The claiming schedule was changed in January 2006 on a trial basis to having claims generated on a monthly basis and having them finished in that time so as to not claim too soon and to have time to follow the claim procedure more fully. Claiming will be under ongoing evaluation as to its effectiveness and priority.

PG3c. Investigate system for actively maintaining links to online resources, especially those for which the Library pays for a subscription.

**Context:** Maintaining working URL links is a challenge for the thousands of online journals in the Library's collection. Over the years, the Department has relied on reports from staff and patrons when a link is not working. The access missed during the time that the link is to be fixed is similar to a missing issue in the print format. The link may usually be restored in less time than it takes to receive a missing issue, but in both cases the Library is not able to provide access to content that is needed by the Northwestern research community. The Department is not aware of how many people may have tried to access the journal and did not report the problem before some individual took the time to report it. Since it is desirable to maintain working URL links for the online journals for service to Library users, especially to those journals for which we pay for online access, it may be worthwhile to follow a selective verification process, or investigate automated support for such a process.

**Timeline:** September 2004 through December 2005

**Resources:** Assign new duties to current staff, and engage Library IT staff to evaluate, and perhaps implement automated link checking routines to be employed in this endeavor by the Serials staff. If evaluation of workload by May 2005 should indicate need, recommend additional staffing for fiscal year 2006 which would be shared with online resources acquisitions work.

**Performance Measures:** The Department will meet this objective, with or without an automated system, when there are twenty or fewer reports of broken links within one month coming from staff and users outside the Department.

*Evaluation:* During one or two discussions with IT at meetings of the Bibliographic Access to Electronic Resources (BAER) Committee regarding general access to electronic resources, Library IT staff have agreed that the need of automatic checking of URL links is apparent. IT indicated that there may be a couple of options to investigate, but that there is little perfection in these checking methods. At this time this goal resides with IT for further consideration. In the meantime, the

Serials Department is investigating ways of checking on URLs in a methodical manner based on reports from other institutions given as topics at local and national conferences.

PG3d. Update the holdings records for items moved to the Library Storage Facility.

**Context:** The Library moved items from the Main library collections to the Library Storage Facility. The holdings records for these items need to be updated to reflect the new location. Many titles need to have split holdings since some volumes of a serial title remain in the Main building, while earlier volumes now reside in the Library Storage Facility. The Serials catalogers have been assigned the responsibility for updating these holdings since the bulk of titles sent to storage are serials. The items in storage are being inventoried to account for last volumes sent to storage. Many titles need some problem resolution.

**Timeline:** January 2004 through December 2005

**Resources:** The Serials catalogers and the Serials Department Head are updating holdings, resolving holdings problems, and helping with inventory. There are volunteers outside of the Serials Department that are also helping with inventory, though the inventory is coordinated through the Serials Department.

**Performance Measures:** The Department will meet this objective when the holdings for all the titles in the Library Storage Facility are updated to the correct location and holdings.

*Evaluation:* PG3d. was completed by the end of December 2005 and freed up considerable time for the staff who devoted much time to this effort.

Primary Goal 4. Provide appropriate budget management support for selectors and the Assistant University Librarian for Collection Management.

Objectives for Primary Goal 4

PG4a. Complete a project to add commitments to the purchase orders for serial and ongoing subscriptions.

**Context:** When the Serials acquisitions section migrated from NOTIS to Endeavor Voyager, purchase orders were not migrated. As new purchase orders were feverishly created, not many were created with commitments. Without these commitments, it is difficult for selectors to track and predict their serials expenditures within a fiscal year. Updating the purchase orders with the commitments would greatly add to the fiscal information necessary when judging what money may be left to spend on monographs within a fiscal year. The project to update the purchase orders with the commitments is challenging because of the number of active serials purchase orders to be updated.

**Timeline:** July 2004 through December 2004

**Resources:** Selected Serials acquisitions staff will work on this project throughout the project term.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Department will meet this objective when all active serials purchase orders have been either updated with a commitment, or evaluated for such action.

*Evaluation:* The initial input of commitments to serials purchase orders was completed by December 2004. There is and will continue to be effort to maintain commitments in serials purchase orders.

### **Enabling Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

Enabling Goal 1. Develop a staffing plan for the next few years which includes training and documentation.

#### Objectives for Enabling Goal 1

EG1a. Complete a project to reorganize staff assignments, train, and write new job descriptions.

**Context:** The calendar year 2004 is basically the first year of large numbers of journals being changed from print and print plus online subscriptions to online only subscriptions. It has been suggested by many administrators in the field that this change to online only will have a ripple effect in serials processing by which time spent processing print titles decreases and allows staff to process electronic resources. These two subscription types have similar work to be done, but the actual work with electronic resources is as time consuming, if not more so, than that work is for print titles. Staff will also need to learn new routines, and sometimes, new skills. This 2004 year will be a test phase for the transition from print to electronic for the Serials Department. As more journals are switched to online only subscriptions, some time formerly spent processing print subscriptions, processes, such as checking in and claiming, will be available for other tasks. It may be necessary to recommend the hiring of additional permanent staff and/or student assistants. The Serials Department Head will work with the Serials Department supervisors to analyze the work of the Department.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through April 2005

**Resources:** Assign new duties to current staff. If evaluation of workload by May 2005 should indicate need, recommend additional staffing for fiscal year 2006 which would be shared with online resources acquisitions and serials cataloging work.

**Performance Measures:** The Department will meet this objective when new job descriptions are in effect and statistics are being gathered on the performance of new assignments.

*Evaluation:* Prior to January 2006, the Serials Department supervisors group discussed the distribution of the staff. The Serials Electronic Resources Librarian began to train acquisitions and

cataloging staff in routines for the processing of electronic resources. During 2006, job descriptions have been gathered, translated into the new Human Resources format, and some have responsibilities for electronic resources included. EG1A. will be under ongoing evaluation in the future.

EG1b. Document procedures for staff.

**Context:** Most of the Serials acquisitions procedures have been passed along by word of mouth. Written documentation would be helpful to staff for self-review, and for promoting uniform processing of serials through the acquisitions section. The Serials cataloging section has been documenting procedures for many years. The electronic resources sections will also document procedures. Final procedures will be mounted in an online format.

**Timeline:** May 2004 through August 2006

**Resources:** The current Serials acquisitions and electronic resources staff will document their procedures. Serials cataloging will continue to document procedures according to their established guidelines.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Department will meet this objective when a routine is established to document procedures and make them available to staff for reference.

*Evaluation:* Most all of the acquisitions work needs to be documented in procedures. Many electronic resources routines have been written. The procedures for serials cataloging have an ongoing work for many years with most of the often performed work documented and revised. The Department Head has begun to formalize some department policies. All of this work will continue into the future.

EG1c. Hire an LA II term position to help with current and retrospective claiming.

**Context:** An LA II term non-exempt employee will help with first claims, work on reclaiming older missing issues, and compile statistics.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through May 2005

**Resources:** Current Serials acquisitions staff will train the LA II term employee to check in and claim, with the majority of time spent on claiming. This term employee will also be trained to help with acquisitions processing for electronic journals.

**Performance Measures:** The LA II term employee will help clean up the backlog of first claims and the bulk of reclaims.

*Evaluation:* EG1c. was completed by April 2004. The personnel hired later accepted a permanent position in the Serials Department as the Electronic Resources Assistant, and later left to pursue a professional career in August 2005. The claiming work performed during the brief time of the term position helped to clear up many older claims.

EG1d. Strengthen supervisory and staff support mechanisms within the Department.

**Context:** In order to discuss performance expectations with the staff, supervisors must have some concrete standards by which to evaluate the performance of the staff. Standards should be realistic goals set while keeping in mind the combination of goals that will need to be met to complete job assignments. Standards should be delineated at the evaluation review and used to set clear and fair goals. Periodic review meetings may be useful in redefining standards and checking on the progress staff are making toward stated goals. Establishing standards for all Serials Department staff will help their performance be fairly evaluated.

**Timeline:** April 2004 through May 2005

**Resources:** The Serials Department supervisors will work with the Head of the Department on setting standards and goals.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Department will meet this objective when standards are written and procedures are in place that are current with all job assignments.

*Evaluation:* EG1d. is only partially fulfilled. The new University performance evaluation has given the supervisors more latitude in establishing goals and evaluating staff on a more frequent basis to keep staff on track with their own stated or agreed to expectations. Supervisors have assigned quantitative and qualitative goals where possible after consultation with the Department Head. What is lacking in support of this goal are the written procedures and policies as mentioned above.

Enabling Goal 2. Plan, recommend, and implement a more efficient means of managing electronic resources.

Objectives for Enabling Goal 2

EG2a. Investigate and recommend automated routines to gather information on the Library's electronic resources that avoid duplicate keying and the maintenance of multiple spreadsheets and databases.

**Context:** Currently, the Endeavor Voyager acquisitions module can not store information on electronic resources in a meaningful way that will allow detailed reports to be generated from queries of the Voyager acquisitions tables. The management of the electronic resources currently requires an Access database for statistical reporting, multiple Excel spreadsheets of electronic resources administrative data, as well as journal titles by publisher, notes in purchase order notes and MARC volume holdings, and hundreds of paper files. The Access database requires double keying of information, and the Excel spreadsheets are tediously compiled, verified and updated. Automating some of the information transfer would greatly enhance the storing of administrative information on electronic resources if stored in a database separate from Voyager.

**Timeline:** June 2004 through June 2005

**Resources:** The Serials Department Head will chair a committee to study the need for an Electronic Resources Management System (ERMS), and make a recommendation by November 2004 on whether to proceed with acquisition and implementation of the ERMS, or follow another course of action. The plan will be in consultation with select Serials Department and Library IT staff who will review existing information gathered on electronic resources and attempt to develop a recommendation for third party management software.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Department Head will meet this objective when the interim report is submitted and a decision on how to proceed is made by the Administration.

*Evaluation:* A report on five ERMS by the ERMS Committee was delivered to the Assistant University Librarian for Technical Services in June 2005. Budgetary reasons at the time forestalled further action on an ERMS. The report recommended looking into two systems in particular, but also other systems reviewed or not reviewed by the Committee since these systems are relatively new and being developed more each year. In the meantime, the electronic resources team in the Serials Department has been converting data about these resources into spreadsheets and organizing this information that may make a load into an ERMS database easier. Information in paper files about licenses has also been converted into spreadsheets, and the files in general culled for extraneous and conflicting information. The Serials Department Head and Serials Electronic Resources Librarian are continuing to review ERMS functionality, learn more about specifics of different products, and outline the functionality of this software needed at University Library.

EG2b. Investigate use of Voyager to gather information on the Library's electronic resources that avoid duplicate keying and the maintenance of multiple spreadsheets and databases.

**Context:** The management of the electronic resources currently requires an Access database for statistical reporting, multiple Excel spreadsheets of electronic resources administrative data, as well as journal titles by publisher, notes in purchase order notes and MARC volume holdings, and hundreds of paper files. The Access database requires double keying of information, and the Excel spreadsheets are tediously compiled, verified and updated. Storing data about electronic resources in MARC fields in the bibliographic records in addition to the data stored in purchase orders and invoices may eliminate the need for maintaining multiple spreadsheets and the Access database.

**Timeline:** June 2004 through June 2005

**Resources:** The Serials Department Head and the Serials Electronic Resources Librarian will investigate using MARC fields in addition to purchase order and invoice fields to store data about electronic resources, and experiment with retrieving the necessary data and administrative reports with queries of the Voyager tables that can be exported to a single database, and selectively displayed through the OPAC. Current databases that gather information are being revised to work more efficiently.

**Performance Measures:** The Serials Department will meet this objective when the testing of various queries of the Voyager tables yield the necessary reports. The Head will also continue to revise the current databases to work more efficiently.

*Evaluation:* The work of this goal is ongoing. Some expenditure reports and counting of some electronic resources are now handled through queries of the Voyager tables instead of laboriously maintaining the Access database that was kept for so many years for this purpose. Note fields in both the purchase orders and bibliographic holdings records are used more to record data pertinent to electronic resources. Full conversion of data elements into Voyager fields is not feasible while contemplating ERMS products for the future. Data will be duplicate keyed and stored in multiple locations for awhile longer. ERMS products do not necessarily negate the need for duplicate data storage, but can automatically load data. In a conversation with the IT during late 2005, IT staff are also concerned about duplicate storage and exchanging data with multiple systems. The intent of this goal will be under ongoing evaluation.