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Evidence Summary

“Just-in-Time” Unmediated Document Delivery Service Provides Fast Delivery, Helps Identify Collection Gaps, but Incurs Extra Costs

A Review of:

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Abstract

Objective – Examine the collection development opportunities and challenges of an unmediated document delivery service.

Design – Case study.

Setting – Large comprehensive public university in the United States of America.

Subjects – 11,981 document delivery requests.

Methods – This library implemented Copyright Clearance Center’s Get It Now (CCC-GiN) service in November 2011 to supplement existing holdings, provide access

to embargoed content and help support two new programs. The CCC-GiN service was offered in addition to regular ILL service. Statistical analysis was done using usage data collected for the academic years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 (excluding June and July). Usage data included: order date and time, fulfillment date and time, publication name, publication date, article name, article author, publisher name, cost, delivery e-mail address. Taylor and Francis publications were added to the CCC-GiN service in November of 2014.

Main Results – The average yearly cost of titles with the largest number of CCC-GiN requests was compared to the annual

subscription cost of the same titles. If the annual subscription cost was less than the average yearly cost of CCC-GiN requests, the library purchased a subscription. Patrons ordered older journal content through CCC-GiN requests. This suggested that backfile subscriptions could be cost effective means of providing content. The authors are in the process of analyzing what historical journal content should be purchased.

The addition of Taylor and Francis publications resulted in an increase in the average cost per article. Taylor and Francis publications were popular with patrons, helping boost the total number of requests. The date of the Taylor and Francis materials ordered through CCC-GiN tended to be more recent compared to other publishers. The authors suggest CCC-GiN is a possible solution for acquiring embargoed material. Average fulfillment time increased during the three year time period from 1:34 (hr:min) to 3:52. The percentage of requests outside of ILL working hours was consistent across all three years (62% each academic year). The authors note CCC-GiN service provided the most expedient way for patrons to receive requested material.

A number of the most requested CCC-GiN publications were also available in print format. The quality of print serials data was uncertain hence the decision was made to not upload this data to the CCC-GiN service. This resulted in some overlap in requests with the library's print holdings. Older content was requested through CCC-GiN rather than through traditional ILL. This resulted in increased costs from copyright fees that would have been avoided using traditional ILL services.

Conclusion – The authors reference the impact of e-commerce on library patron expectations about ease of access and just-in-time delivery. They found that the CCC-GiN service meets these expectations as patrons were able to access a broad selection of materials in a timely and easy to use manner. From the analysis come suggestions to help reduce costs associated with the service. They include

adjusting system settings to cap spending limits, limiting who can use the service, selecting only titles that cover a gap in the collection, and including quality print serials holdings data to prevent purchase of already owned material. The authors also discuss using a mediated rather than unmediated service to help lower costs but they note this would slow down turnaround time. The authors close by saying each library will have to consider its own needs and those of its patrons with respect to ease of use, delivery time, and cost.

Commentary

At the 2011 ACRL conference, Copyright Clearance Center announced the debut of the Get It Now service (Brynko, 2011). CCC-GiN provides patrons with full-text articles from non-subscribed journals within hours from the time of request, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A number of studies have investigated the unmediated (no human handling of requests) version of this document delivery service (Hendler & Gudenas, 2016; Jarvis & Gregory, 2016; Suhr, 2013). This study discusses the collection development opportunities and challenges resulting from their analysis of three years of data. The CAT critical appraisal tool (Perryman & Rathbun-Grubb, 2014) is used here to help assess the study.

The literature review discusses the impact of e-commerce principles (fast, “frictionless ordering”) on library user expectations. It also discusses the benefits and limitations of unmediated document delivery services and copyright compliance issues. All of these issues are relevant to the subject and help lay the ground work for the study.

The project was initiated to supplement existing holdings, provide access to embargoed content and help support two new programs. The implicit question is whether the service succeeded in achieving what it set out to do. The analysis shows that the CCC-GiN service does indeed provide access to content that the library does not subscribe to. However, the analysis does not provide clear evidence of patrons accessing embargoed

content. The data presented show a drop in average age of requested articles that coincides with the addition of the Taylor and Francis publications. However, the data analysis presented is not granular enough to show how many of the requested Taylor and Francis publications were from the embargo period(s). The third rationale for implementing the service was to support two new programs. The analysis identifies new content and older backfiles that are relevant to the programs but the authors do not state that the acquisition of the titles was to support the new programs. The authors also identified additional costs that came out of the analysis. Despite that, the library is continuing with the CCC-GiN service because they are committed to quick service and patron preference for online material.

The authors mention that the fulfillment time increased over the three-year period. They did not offer a suggestion as to why. Some speculation on this would have been interesting. Next steps are also not included in this study. It would be interesting to see where they would like to go from here.

This study provides a clear picture of how the library and its patrons used the CCC-GiN service. The paper's unique contribution is the explanation of how and why collection development decisions were made based on the analysis. The authors also offer practical suggestions for others interested in implementing a similar service. This paper is very helpful for those interested in implementing an unmediated document delivery service or for those simply interested in finding out more about it.

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