Workflows for Evaluating Systemwide Ebook Offers
Prepared by the CLS Ebook Framework Lightning Team
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Introduction

Recognizing that procedures for handling ebook packages UC-wide are at an early stage of development, the Collection Licensing Subgroup (CLS) has charged an Ebook Framework Lightning Team to develop a framework for consortial purchases of ebook packages.

Background

Ebook package offers come from various streams, including from campus librarians and directly from vendors to campuses or to the California Digital Library (CDL). It is difficult for campuses and CDL to all be informed in a timely manner of these offers with the result that a campus may go forward with a purchase without knowing if other campuses may also be interested. Over time, several campuses may purchase the same product, which is inefficient and nearly always more costly than a shared purchase would be.

Additionally, the range of campus support and other revenue sources for library collection budgets vary among the ten campuses. Not surprisingly, campus administration and faculty expect their own teaching, research, patient care, and other program needs to be the first priority for library materials purchases. These needs must be weighed when making commitments to UC shared purchases or licenses. As a result, local campus decisions to pursue ebook offers may be undertaken before a UC-wide interest surfaces.

In cases such as Springer, Wiley, and Elsevier offers, ebook packages have been added during large journal package negotiations in order to leverage systemwide purchasing power and achieve the most advantageous pricing possible. However, bundled resource packages may carry high inflation caps for large inventories of titles whose future content is not known at the time of negotiations. This creates a potential financial burden for some campuses when multi-year agreements are approved. The ongoing commitment to unknown titles can result in acquisition of titles which do not meet the core needs of campus disciplines; whether these purchases provide a demonstrable cost-benefit must be carefully monitored. Demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) and its variants offer new acquisitions models that avoid some of these pitfalls, but may present new challenges of their own.

The following framework articulates a set of considerations, principles, and decision paths to guide CLS in evaluating the range of available ebook options.

Policy and guiding principles which frame the UC systemwide approaches to ebooks include:

University of California Libraries Systemwide Plan and Priorities, FY 2014-2017
http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/coul/docs/UC_libraries_vision-mission-goals_2014_final.pdf

UC Collection Development Committee UC Digital Collection Development Strategy, 2011
http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/coul/docs/UC_Digital_Collection_Development_Strategy.pdf

Value of systemwide licensing

The Ebook Framework Lightning Team reaffirms the value of systemwide, consortial licensing for new resources, including ebook packages. Shared UC-wide purchases provide a high percentage of core materials for all campuses and are greatly beneficial. Systemwide licenses avoid redundant work for campus and CDL staff and nearly always cost less. In addition, they provide for efficiencies of cataloging and processing invoices and renewals.

CDL and CLS have a goal of licensing as many packages as possible systemwide, to achieve parity in access to resources among all campuses, and to assist campuses in meeting the Council of University Librarians (CoUL) goal to acquire digital formats whenever possible. While individual campus needs and budgets are a factor in every decision, we recognize the value of cooperative and collaborative work, which allows us to experiment and identify sustainable, cost-effective models that individual campuses or libraries may not discover on their own.

Guidelines when Evaluating Specific Ebook Proposals

Organization and workflow for ebook offers

There is an organizational and workflow structure in place for handling incoming ebook proposals (see the *Flow Chart for Evaluating New Ebook Offers, attached)*.

The flow chart illustrates six ways that incoming new ebook offers arrive at UC: (1) CLS initiatives such as the DDA pilot in 2014, (2) full collection ebook packages from the major journal publishers linked to ejournal packages, (3) campus and bibliographer group proposals, (4) direct offers from vendors, (5) ARL or CRL ebook proposals for the academic library community, and (6) special SAG initiatives such as support of the open access initiative Knowledge Unlatched in 2014.

The workflows show the interaction and communication between various UC groups involved with the selection, evaluation and approval of ebooks: campus selectors or bibliographer groups, the Joint Steering Committee (JSC), CDL staff, Collection Licensing Subgroup and SAG members.

The CDL Collection Development & Management Program staff and JSC are usually the lead working groups for incoming proposals from campus selectors or the bibliographer groups, for any requested or unsolicited vendor offers and for third-party offers from ARL or CRL. Typically, JSC follows its existing workflow for handling the incoming proposals and evaluating cost share models for ebooks. After JSC evaluation, proposals go to CLS for participation and budget approval.

CLS may be an initiator and initial recipient for various ebook proposals, too. CLS is responsible for the communication oversight among participants of ebook offers and CLS provides coordination and evaluation of those offers, including the assessment schedule and the metrics used. An example of a CLS-initiated ebook proposal is the DDA pilot for university presses in 2014. In addition, CLS is the UC

library group which approves Tier 1 and Tier 2 co-investment for ebook offers regardless of the source of the offer.

The workflow chart illustrates new ebook offers; however, ebook renewals are somewhat different. Renewals can be managed in a more streamlined way by proceeding directly to CLS or the participating campuses for discussion and approvals and bypassing an additional JSC evaluation step.

The workflow paths are flexible. If an incoming proposal falls between one or more of the categories and it is unclear which workflow and communication path to follow, CLS will be consulted.

In evaluating the various ebook proposals, there are many factors to be considered prior to a consortial decision.   The following documents provide broad guidelines and should be consulted when evaluating ebook proposals:

UC Libraries Ebook Value Statement:
http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/groups/files/cdc/docs/UC_Libraries_-Book_Value_Statement.pdf

Package vs. Title by Title Purchasing:
http://www.cdlib.org/services/collections/ebookpackage.pdf

Categories of Ebook Offers: Issues & Recommendations

CLS-initiated proposals – e.g., the DDA Pilot (with DDA task force)

> *This is an emerging model of interest in building systemwide ebook collections.*

Issues:

- Demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) include a co-investment for access to content prior to a purchase of a title. The cost for access – not ownership – can be significant in a DDA program. Guidelines are needed to achieve an acceptable balance between usage vs. purchase that still meets collection goals.
- Duplication with local purchases of print versions may affect the willingness of a campus to join a consortial agreement for the online version.
- There may be overlap with local campus DDA initiatives or e-preferred approval plans already in place or on competing platforms.
- Publishers often withhold titles from DDA offers that are anticipated to be course adoptions.
- Digital rights management (DRM) on the ebooks place restrictions on the ability to provide library services.
- Publisher vs. aggregator differences in ebook package content can be significant.

Recommendations:

1. CLS continues the current DDA pilot through December 2015 in order to evaluate and determine if this is a promising ebook model.
2. CLS should continue to discuss the right balance of usage vs. ownership in the DDA model.

3. With the DDA pilot, monitor purchases on a regular basis so that campus selectors can be sure that valuable core titles within the DDA packages are being purchased for the local campus permanent collection (such purchases should take place outside of the DDA package).
4. CLS considers other ways in which the same ebook titles are available either directly from the publishers or other aggregator platforms (are there cost savings or no DRM?).
5. CLS continues to experiment with demand-driven acquisition models of various flavors (including other pricing models).
6. CLS creates talking points to use with publishers concerning ebook issues such as DRM.

CDL major negotiations - ejournal publishers with bundled ebook packages (e.g., Springer, Wiley, Elsevier, Karger)

These ebook collections are strategic purchases during major journal negotiations, often with CDL contributions along with campus co-investment. Generally, these packages are highly cost effective on a per title basis and offer additional cost savings on the journal pricing from the publisher.

Issues:

- Long-term cost sustainability is a major issue with the big-deal packages. To collectively purchase all the output from each of the major publishers is a significant financial commitment for most campuses.
- In addition, many publishers are increasing the size of their ebook collections through acquisitions or digitization programs. Elsevier, Springer and Wiley have increased the volume of their collections during the current CDL contracts by 15-25% more titles each year. Only negotiated annual price caps in multi-year contracts have protected UC libraries from equally high cost increases.
- Smaller subject collections are an alternative to acquiring the full collection with Elsevier, Springer and Wiley. It may be difficult to find common discipline interest across all campuses, the cost savings might be insignificant compared to the low unit cost for the full collection and there may be a loss of internal efficiencies in shared cataloging, etc.
- Assessment and evaluation of the major packages are needed regularly but it is a workload issue with CDL staff and timely usage data is not always available prior to a renewal decision.

Recommendations:

1. CDL and CLS explore other ways to license ebook collections from major ebook publishers including DDA, evidence-based or title-by-title purchasing via YBP's GOBI interface (e.g., Elsevier).
2. CDL and CLS consult the 'Package vs Title by Title Purchasing' framework document mentioned earlier in the report when evaluating new major packages or renewals for existing packages.
3. CDL should continue to negotiate the long-term sustainability issue with publishers – we want high quality titles, not more titles or high cost increases each year or each contract. Annual caps for ebook packages should strategically align with journal caps.
4. CDL and CLS conduct regular assessment for existing major ebook contracts (Elsevier, Springer and Wiley). There should be a periodic evaluation and approval by CLS to continue each contract, tied to the multi-year renewal cycle or annually if the package is not on a multi-year contract.

- CDL will provide an assessment report showing a cost-benefit analysis.
- Alternative models of purchasing will be evaluated, including by subject collections.
- Metrics in the evaluation should at a minimum include usage statistics, cost per title, and cost per download at both campus and consortial levels.

Campus-initiated or Bibliographer group proposals (Tier 1 or 2)

Campus selectors and Bibliographer groups are an important source of ideas and priorities for building ebook collections, both of systemwide value (Tier 1) and specialized subject collections of interest to a smaller number of campuses (Tier 2).

Issues:

- Communication with other campuses, CLS and CDL is critical to be able to assess if there is a potential UC systemwide ebook offer. Campus selectors are often under time restrictions and need to make a quick decision for local purchasing. This is particularly true at the end of the fiscal year cycle.
- Niche subject collections are often of local interest only and difficult to share costs.
- It is time consuming for campus selectors and bibliographer groups to evaluate and submit ebook offers and shepherd a cost-share proposal through the systemwide or Tier 2 decision process.
- Although there is CDL licensing support for ebook proposals, backlogs in systemwide licensing may preclude CDL's support if there is a time constraint to complete the license.

Recommendations:

1. CLS will share campus selector interest in Tier 1 or Tier 2 ebook offers on the CLS listserv and wiki and periodically review the lists for common interest.
2. Bibliographer groups should be encouraged to participate in the JSC annual surveys and to propose relevant ebook offerings at the Tier 1 level when appropriate both during the annual survey and at other times during the year.
3. JSC will compile and evaluate the annual survey priorities for Tier 1 ebook opportunities to add to the CDL Licensing Work Plan in each fiscal year.
4. CDL will work with bibliographer groups to transition existing Tier 2 ebook contracts to Tier 1, if warranted.
5. Campuses and bibliographer groups are responsible for surfacing currently-held Tier 3 ebook collections in their subject areas that could be Tier 2 or Tier 1 licenses. The campus CLS representative should be notified of campus selector or bibliographer group discussions regarding ebook offers.

Vendor direct offers (Tier 1 or 2)

This is a source of highly discounted, often pre-publication or multi-year offers by publishers or vendors.

- Although there is often systemwide interest (Tier 1), some offers are specialized ebook collections of interest to only a limited number of campuses (Tier 2).
- Some publishers lack experience with ebook pricing or UC's decision process or consortial status (a single institution with ten campuses), leading to unrealistic ebook models, pricing based on a multiplier of ten, or licensing restrictions that are clearly deal breakers.
- To determine current campus holdings is difficult in Melvyl. YBP reports are sometimes available for certain publishers and years of holdings. CLS may need to request local holdings data in order for a vendor offer to be analyzed properly.

Recommendations:

1. CDL continues to provide the first level of evaluation for a vendor offer, often working with the relevant bibliographer group to gauge interest level for specialized ebook collections.
2. CDL continues to consult the 'Package vs Title by Title Purchasing' framework document listed above.
3. CDL notifies CLS when vendor ebook offers are received and bibliographer groups are interested. CLS decides whether to pursue a negotiation.
4. If there is CLS interest, CDL will analyze campus local holdings to determine if the current overall (systemwide) spend is equal to or greater than the pricing of the offer to consider a Tier 1 or Tier 2 co-investment. CLS might be asked to provide the local campus holdings data.
5. CLS discusses broader issues such as when to collectively acquire ebook collections even if there is significant print or local e-version duplication already in place.

ARL/CRL/Lyrasis offers

This is a source of highly discounted, opt-in offers for members (ARL) or 'friends of members' (CRL) typically managed by Lyrasis for an additional service fee.

Issues:

- All UC campuses are eligible for these offers, but communication flows are often from the sponsoring organization directly to the individual member libraries, which can inhibit systemwide discussion and consideration.
- Pricing can be higher than what CDL would be able to negotiate independently; however, CDL can often work within the framework of the proposed offers to negotiate more advantageous terms for UC as a whole.
- There are platform considerations: whether to acquire ebooks on an aggregator's platform or direct on the publisher's platform? With the case of JSTOR Books, the strong brand identity of JSTOR with researchers is an advantage for that platform.
- University presses in particular are available on numerous platforms with various cost models (title by title via YBP's GOBI, full package from publisher, DDA on ebrary/EBL, offered by Project MUSE, UPSO or DeGruyter). Overlap with existing licenses at UC (both local and consortial) must be taken into consideration.

Recommendations:

1. CDL presents the initial offer to CLS for a preliminary decision whether it is worthwhile to pursue.
2. If CLS agrees, JSC will evaluate the ARL/CRL offer via the existing workflow process.
3. CDL should try to negotiate better, more inclusive, systemwide pricing.
4. If there isn't enough CLS interest, the offer will not be pursued on a systemwide basis but individual campuses may pursue independently.

SAG-initiated offers – e.g., OA initiatives (Knowledge Unlatched with SAG1-CLS group) and SAG3 print initiatives

These initiatives are of joint interest to SAG members and CLS.

Issues:

- The initiatives are often experimental and may need to be evaluated differently.
- There may be more initiatives arising and CLS must be selective in committing to them.
- Communication and coordination between the SAGs and CLS is very important.
- Some initiatives may be financially risky with a cost model that is hard to evaluate.
- There may be a lack of assessment metrics (e.g. no usage data).

Recommendations:

1. Endorse the formation of a CLS-SAG1 dedicated standing group to evaluate open access (OA) proposals.
2. The joint standing group evaluates OA proposals and CLS approve the co-investment, if needed.
3. Continue to financially support, monitor and evaluate the Knowledge Unlatched initiative.
4. Experiment with new models in order to learn lessons even if there is no immediate cost saving.

Role of CDL Investments

CDL collection funds have often been used strategically to facilitate consortial ebook acquisitions.

This includes CDL purchases of complete ebook collections with no campus co-investment (e.g, Karger and Elsevier full collections in 2014), CDL annual contributions to major ebook packages (Springer, Wiley), CDL acquisitions of ebook archives (ACS Symposium Series, RSC), and cases where CDL subsidized campus cost shares in order to bring all campuses onto the consortial license.

The Joint Steering Committee, as CDL's advisory group, has over the years provided guidance on the use or proportion of CDL funds in co-investment models for journals, databases and ebooks. The JSC should continue to provide this input and advice as CDL funds become available in the future to facilitate collections across all ten campuses. Any policy decisions made by CDL with JSC input regarding CDL cost contributions should be communicated to CLS.

Summary of Recommendations

Guiding Principles

The Lightning Team endorses the UC Libraries guiding principles for systemwide approaches to building digital collections in the 21st Century. This includes a goal of consortial (Tier 1) ebook licensing whenever possible and feasible.

UC-wide ebook licenses benefit all campuses in the wealth of content they provide, as well as in cost and processing efficiencies. Having different programs and resource needs, each campus has to find the right balance between local and UC-wide purchase commitments.

Communication, evaluation and best practices for UC-wide ebook collections

Ebook proposals arise from a variety of sources. In this report, the Lightning Team has provided a framework to facilitate information sharing and decision-making processes among key stakeholders (e.g. CLS, CDL Shared Collection Development & Management Program, JSC, SAGs, campus selectors and bibliographer groups). This will ensure that relevant groups are able to collaborate and evaluate the proposals.

This report also identifies issues that might arise with various ebook proposals and a number of recommendations to be considered during the evaluation.

The Lightning Team encourages experimentation in new ebook models providing there are consistent, uniform approaches so that the various 'flavors' or models can be compared for future best practices.

Different proposals from those described here will certainly arise. CLS should be consulted about these to decide how to move them forward and will update this document as necessary.

Next steps

Along with the framework and guidelines given in this report, the Lightning Team offers a number of additional recommendations to be considered:

- CLS should consider this report as a living document to be revised, as needed, including:

    o provide additional information for campus selectors to understand the types of new ebook models and licensing issues such as digital rights management (DRM) that might arise.

    o develop best practices for handling annual or multi-year ebook renewals which may be different than new ebook offers.

    o continue addressing issues and refining the recommendations to reflect our growing experience with consortial licensing of ebooks.

- CLS should encourage local campus selectors and bibliographer groups to contact their CLS representative when considering adding an ebook resource that is of broad interest to many campuses.

- CLS members should use the CLS listserv and wiki to informally share interest in ebooks.

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