

demand driven acquisitions <http://bit.ly/11YJarL>

what is it?

Demand (or patron) driven acquisitions—DDA or PDA—is a method of e-book purchasing that allows libraries to offer a wide range of content to their patrons but only purchase items as they are used.

In its short history, DDA has evolved from the small scale purchasing of interlibrary loan requests to a fully developed collection development method that can be used in conjunction with more traditional methods (firm orders, approval plans).



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<https://flic.kr/p/6jEJFb>

how does it work?

There are multiple models and service providers. Print books can also be obtained in this manner, but the majority of programs focus on ebooks. Libraries can choose to engage with their book vendor (Ingram, YBP), directly with the ebook provider (Ebrary, EBL, EBSCO) or even directly with the publisher, though this method is still under development and new to the scene.

The library defines the profile of the titles they wish to see added to the “discovery pool” and the provider collates those records for periodic delivery to the library. This is akin to the approval plan profiling process, and many libraries use the approval plan profile as a foundation to populate their discovery pool (only available via book vendor, not platform direct). Those titles are loaded into the OPAC and/or discovery layer. Patrons who use these titles are unaware that the content is not yet owned.

Depending on the provider, after a certain period (this varies) of time (e.g. 10 minutes of active use) or use (e.g. certain amount downloaded), a loan or purchase is triggered. This is defined by the library: some choose to allow for a high number of short-term-loans that have a price that is a percentage of list; some choose to purchase immediately; some choose a mix of these models. Purchases can be mediated where a librarian is notified that a book has been triggered and must authorize its purchase or loan, or unmediated where the purchase or loan happens immediately upon trigger.

who's doing it?

Demand driven acquisitions is mainly used by academic libraries at this point in time, though public libraries certainly make use of mediated programs as well. Canadian library consortia have been experimenting with DDA to varying degrees.

Novanet (the consortium of Nova Scotia academic libraries) embarked on a large scale project and it has since moved to a permanent and ongoing commitment. OCUL ran a pilot project with a small number of member participants in 2010, many lessons were learned from the project, and OCUL continues to consider options for consortial DDA programs. COPPUL has been trying to formulate an approach that will be attractive to its membership and continues to explore.

why is it significant?

Demand driven acquisitions can be described at least as disruptive technology and at most, as the most fundamental shift in acquisitions since the dawn of ebooks. In the literature, it's been asserted that it is “disruptive to the entire fabric of established collection development procedures”. It is also a divisive issue among librarians, having been derided as the “Amazonification of the library's online catalog.”

Not only has it caused an existential crisis for the traditional collection development librarian, similarly, it has caused publishers to re-examine their business models as they see their revenue shrink in the face of short-term-loan economy; many libraries

are simply no longer buying books, opting instead for lending options—essentially renting content. In a matter of only a few years, the economics of the scholarly monograph have been upended. List prices are rising to counteract lost revenue

further reading

demand driven acquisitions <http://bit.ly/1IYJarL>

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Jane Schmidt
Ryerson University
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and effect the short term loan rate, publishers are choosing to opt out of DDA programs and libraries are all the while trying to keep on top of the ripple effect of these changes on their budgeting and holdings management practises.

The fact that DDA programs are solely provided by aggregators creates uncertainty in access. Content is regularly shifted from one platform to another or dropped all together; libraries do not actually own this content and the access management required is not without its trials and tribulations. Furthermore, ebooks provided by aggregators are riddled with DRM restrictions, thus causing barriers to access for users.

where is it going?

It seems inevitable that more and more libraries will experiment and implement DDA programs. The extent to which this approach replaces traditional collection development will vary from library to library. Not all DDA programs are created equally, much like not all collection mandates are. Research libraries are unlikely to abandon their goals of building research collections for the future. Smaller libraries or those with mandates to primarily support curriculum will be attracted to the flexibility and variety afforded by this collection method.

A relatively unexplored but promising approach to DDA is called "evidence based acquisitions" (EBA). In this model, a library makes an agreement with a publisher to provide access to their output over a set period of time and agree to a pledge or deposit that the library will pay, regardless of the number of titles triggered. This provides more stability for the publisher and allows the library the security of ownership, and the ability to provide content DRM-free.

what are the implications for libraries?

The long term implications of this development are a matter of debate. Some, including vendors, collections librarians, and publishers have suggested that publishers will choose to simply opt out of DDA all together, thus rendering the debate impotent. Others have predicted that the cost of short-term loans will balloon to the point that the cost savings for libraries become moot.

If the above predictions fail to materialize, and DDA programs continue to flourish and evolve, the role of the traditional collection development librarian must also evolve. As the work shifts to access management from procurement, so too does the skill set required to manage that process. Instead of selecting books based on their subject matter "just in case", the librarian will instead focus on defining parameters for inclusion and exclusion, and oversee the organization of record management. This is no small task. The core role of the selection librarian is not changed; the major shift lay in the skill set required to effectively manage the ever-evolving workflow and assessment of the program (usage, platform preferences, licenses. etc.)

All OCULA Information Briefs are available at <http://bit.ly/1IKV9Jt>