Walking Away from the "Big Deal": Where We are One Year after Crossing that Bridge

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Background

Budgetary constraints at West Virginia University (WVU) in combination with impending expiration/renewal of “big deal” contracts resulted in the unbundling of three major journal packages between 2017-2019: Wiley, Science Direct and Springer. Unbundling these packages saved the library system a total of $1,441,450. This poster will describe longer-term results of these decisions and how we have continued to adapt to improve access to journals for our research community.

Quicker Access to Full-Text Articles

Top 100 Science Direct Health Sciences Journals

- Average usage ranged from 450 – 4,774/year (2016-2018)
- 70% of these titles overlapped with Clinical Key
- Due to contractual language, we were obligated to keep all Clinical Key titles
- Of the 30 titles that were not Clinical Key, we only lost total access to 6 after unbundling
  - Two other titles were brought back using our criteria
  - One other title had significant overlap with another database, so only lost access to the most recent 60 days
- Those 6 titles had a combined 2017 list price of $47,288
- In the last year, these 6 titles were requested between 2-23 times via interlibrary loan, and due to reciprocal and consortial agreements, WVU did not have to pay any fees

Results

- Usage of Science Direct titles automatically retained in Clinical Key has more than tripled since the unbundling, increasing from an average of 505 uses/month in 2018 to 1,943/month in 2019 and 1,757/month this year.

Methods

- Since the unbundling, the WVU Libraries’ Collections Advisory Committee has closely monitored ILL usage and costs for canceled titles, as well as faculty requests and complaints
- An interactive session was held with key department chairs at the Health Sciences Center in early 2020 to obtain their feedback regarding journal access and the publishing landscape
- Criteria were established to consider adding back journal titles:
  - Usage prior to cancellation
  - Number of ILL and faculty requests received after cancellation
  - Overlapping coverage with other resources
  - Journal price
- New services were introduced to improve rapid access to journal articles:
  - Staff were cross-trained to place ILL requests during weekends
  - Implementation of an unmediated ordering feature through Reprints Desk for 552 ISSNs
  - Implementation/marketing of LibKey Nomad and LibKey.io

Interlibrary Loan Requests for “The Big 3” (July 2019-June 2020) Titles with 15 or More Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Science Direct</th>
<th>Springer</th>
<th>Wiley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Titles Requested</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Article Requests</td>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Articles Paid</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of These Articles</td>
<td>$4,892.35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$354.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price of Titles Requested</td>
<td>$590,014.00</td>
<td>$12,153.00</td>
<td>$79,636.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subjects Most Frequently Requested via ILL from Unbundled Titles

- Pharmacy 13%
- Forensics 5%
- All Other 8%
- Business 8%
- Agriculture 7%
- Natural Resources 7%
- Multidisciplinary 7%
- Medicine 7%
- Chemistry 5%
- Engineering 3%
- Environment 3%

Conclusions

Journal unbundling implemented by necessity has had positive results. Besides the obvious financial benefits, rapid access to journal articles has improved with adaptations to our ILL service and implementation of new ways to connect to articles.

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