

Demand-Driven E-books + Usage Data = Informed Collection Development

Emily K. Chan, Academic Liaison Librarian, San José State University
Susan L. Kendall, Coordinator of Collection Development, San José State University
Carole Correa-Morris, Head of Acquisitions, San José State University

Abstract

San José State University's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library piloted a demand-driven acquisition program in Spring 2011. Evaluating the usage data collected during the Spring and Fall 2011 semesters, SJSU librarians and staff have begun to examine user trends to innovatively meet users' needs in the area of collection development. Analyzed data informs decision-making, specifically which subjects may be complemented by the e-book format. Usage statistics can also indicate how e-books are being used across the campus community and disciplines.

This poster session will present the process, methods, and findings of SJSU's first two semesters using a demand-driven acquisition program. This poster session will also illustrate how a large, urban university library can process the data provided by an electronic book vendor to creatively learn more about its users and their general e-book usage patterns.

Description

San José State University's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library embarked on a pilot demand-driven acquisition (DDA) program in Spring 2011 to evaluate DDA's potential value in a) providing "just-in-time" access to multiple-user e-books without upfront costs, b) stretching collection development dollars to items that were activated by the campus community, and c) augmenting traditional collection development techniques for greater library responsiveness.

YBP in conjunction with EBook Library (EBL) was chosen as the vendor for the DDA program. In establishing the parameters of the plan, it was determined that an outright DDA purchase would be triggered if an authenticated user did any of the following: clicked on a "Continue to Read" icon after a free five-minute browse, initiated a download of the book to one's computer or reading device, or attempted to print from the e-book. In addition, there was a \$200 maximum on any book; books in excess of \$200 had to be approved by the Coordinator of Collection Development for purchase. The pilot was allocated \$50,000. At the end of the pilot in May, 622 books had been purchased for a total of \$54,441 over 13 weeks. The books were very diverse, representing a wide range of Library of Congress (LC) call numbers.

In Fall 2011, King Library employees were able to activate EBL's widget, which asked for users' campus affiliation and department/major. With the application of the widget, SJSU librarians and staff were able to analyze usage statistics within the context of the larger campus community. It was found that many of the books purchased were classified under the subjects of sociology and economics, supporting the curriculum and students, faculty, and staff of the College of Social Science. However, when evaluating the colleges for which the DDA users were affiliated, the Colleges of Social Science, Applied Sciences and Arts, and Humanities and Arts were distributed fairly equally. This underscored the value of multidisciplinary materials across the college community, as students completed general education (GE) requirements and engaged in increasing interdisciplinary coursework.

SJSU librarians and staff will continue to evaluate the usage statistics of the DDA plan to meet the needs of users, librarians, and the institution in a financially responsible manner. DDA usage statistics provide a novel way for library employees to learn more about their users and their use of e-books. Library employees have begun to investigate which specific disciplines would benefit from the e-book format. These DDA applications assist in making informed collection development decisions, while meeting users' needs in an innovative, creative, and fiscally responsible manner.