Library Publishing and Collection Development Activities: What's the Connection?

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Abstract:

This paper discusses preliminary original survey research into the connections and relationships between library publishing operations and collection development. The focus is North American research libraries and current practice, ideas and relationships are examined. The purpose of the research is to inform collection development department policy and the development of collaborations in a large North American academic research library. The research also has the potential to assist libraries in determining how to best create and integrate library publishing services and their products into library collection development activities. Potential challenges, stakeholder comments, roles and issues for libraries wanting to include library publishing services in collection development activities are presented. Recommendations are offered and directions for future investigation are suggested.

Keywords: Library publishing operations, institutional repositories, library digitization projects, collection development, survey research

Introduction

Although many institutions have implemented library publishing services, there has been little discussion of their relationship to collection development. This paper reports on an environmental scan that explores the relationship between these important activities in North American research libraries. It outlines preliminary original research with collection development officers and library publishing contacts, two major stakeholder groups. Current practice, issues and proposed actions are investigated. The intent of the research is to inform institutional collection development policy and activities related to library publishing for the collection development department of a large academic library and to generally assist library management, library publishing operations administrators and collection development practitioners in policy development, in understanding possible roles and relationships, and in

determining how best to create and integrate library publishing services and the resources they produce into library collection development activities. Potential challenges, roles and issues for libraries wanting to include library publishing services in collection development activities are presented.

Definition

For the purpose of this research library publishing includes library institutional repositories, library digitization projects and library journal or book publishing operations.

Literature Review

Three main themes emerge upon examination of current library literature:

1. How to create and maintain various library publishing operations. Authors discuss various software available, funding, services provided, templates, types and numbers of items published, etc. (Mullins, 2012; Hahn, 2008; Perry, 2011; Collister, 2014; Skinner, 2014; Brown, 2013).

2. The connections and relationships between libraries and library publishing operations and university presses are considered (Chavez, 2010; Brown, 2013; Collister, 2014).

3. Relationships of institutional repositories, digitization projects and library publishing to the open access movement are discussed. (Brown, 2013; Mullins, 2012)

Methodology and Results

The approach to this research was to survey chief collection development officers of North American academic libraries and to survey contacts for library publishing operations.

Survey of Collection Development Officers and Library Publishing Contacts

An email invitation to complete an online survey was sent to chief collection development officers of 61 North American academic libraries. Forty-one of the recipients were members of the American Library Association (ALA), Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) Chief Collection Development Officers of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group and 20 represented university libraries in Ontario, Canada. Three of the collection development officers surveyed represented larger Canadian libraries and were members of ALA ALCTS Chief Collection Development Officers Discussion Group. An email invitation to complete the same online survey was also sent to 104 library publishing contacts in the Library Publishing Directory 2014 (Lippincott, 2014). The recipients were selected from the larger number of contacts appearing in the directory because they represented all of the academic libraries in North America that were listed. No use of human subjects approval was sought as the information gathering was in preparation of our own institutional strategy setting, and hence considered part of normal administrative duties.

The survey included 10 questions including 2 open-ended questions and opportunities for comments throughout. Survey Monkey was utilized. 129 comments were received. Forty-one responses were collected for the 166 survey invitations sent and the response rate was therefore 24.7 %. In the first question respondents were asked to self-identify as collection

development officers, library-publishing contacts or as individuals engaged in both activities. A total of 36 responses were received, 33.33% or 12 identified themselves as collection development officers, 52.78% or 19 identified themselves as library publishing contacts and 13.89% or 5 indicated that they were involved in both activities.

In the second question respondents were asked: "Is the collection development department of your library involved in the development of an institutional repository and what is the involvement?" A total of 41 responses were received, 9.76% said collection development was involved in the design of the institutional repository, 9.76% said that collection development was involved in its operation, 24.39% indicated that collection development collaborated on the development of the institutional repository, 12.20% stated that collection development had a role in repository maintenance, 26.83% indicated collection development provided staff to work on the repository, 2.44% stated they did not know what the involvement of collection development in the repository was, 26.83% shared that there was other involvement without specifying what the involvement was and 43.90% revealed that collection development was not involved at all in the development of the institutional repository at their institution.

Question Number 2

Answer Choices	Responses	
Design of the institutional repository	9.76%	4
Operation of the institutional repository	9.76%	4
Collaboration on institutional repository development	24.39%	10
Maintenance of institutional repository	12.20%	5
Provide staff for repository work	26.83%	11
Collection development department not involved	43.90%	18
Don't know	2.44%	1
Other (please specify)	26.83%	11
Total Respondents: 41		

The next question explored the involvement of the collection development department in library digitization projects. Respondents were asked: "Is the collection development department of your library involved in digitization projects and what is the involvement?" Of the forty respondents 37.50% indicated that collection development had no involvement in digitization projects in their library, 22.50% indicated that collection development was involved in the design of projects, 37.50% stated collection development collaborated on digitization projects while 22.50% indicated that collection development was responsible for overseeing projects. 17.50% pointed out that collection development maintained the digitized collections while 32.50% suggested that collection development provided staffing for digitization projects. 2% indicated they did not know what involved there was by collection development and 40% indicated there was other involvement without specifying what the involvement was.

Question Number 3

Answer Choices	Responses	
Design of projects	22.50%	9
Collaborate on projects	37.50%	15
Oversee projects	22.50%	9
Maintain digitized collections	17.50%	7
Provide staff for digitization work	32.50%	13
Collection development department not involved	37.50%	15
Don't know	5.00%	2
Other (please specify)	40.00%	16
Total Respondents: 40		

Question number four examined the relationship of collection development to library journal and book publishing operations. The respondents were asked: "Is the collection development department of your library involved in journal/book library publishing operations and what is the involvement?" An overwhelming 67.65% of the 34 respondents that answered this question indicated that collection development in their library has no involvement in journal or book publishing operations. 11.76% indicated collection development had involvement in the design of publishing operations, 14.71% stated collection development collaborated on the publishing operations and 14.71% revealed that collection development in their library is responsible for overseeing the operation. 23.53% provide staffing for the operations and 17.65% of those answering the question revealed that collection development selects the titles published by the library journal or book publishing operation.

Question Number 4

Answer Choices	Responses	
Design publishing operation	11.76%	4
Collaborate on publishing operation	14.71%	5
Oversee publishing operation	14.71%	5
Provide staff for publishing operation	23.53%	8
Select titles to publish	17.65%	6
Collection development department not involved	67.65%	23
Don't know	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 34		

Comments suggested that in many cases as one librarian stated: "there isn't a strong connection between the collection development operations and the publishing operation" A

publishing connection survey respondent stated that "the publishing operation was started with a librarian and staff from collection development, but as the program has grown, that connection has been lost" but another optimistically suggested that "the systems are in place and available for the Liaison Librarians to promote and utilize in collaboration with others in the Libraries." A publishing contact also pointed out that: "in new procedures just adopted (but not yet used), the Associate University Librarian for Collection Development and Management must approve all new journals to be hosted by the Libraries (along with the library publishing coordinator)."

Questions 5 to 7 explored ideas as to what respondents thought the involvement of collection development in library publishing operations should be. In question 5 those surveyed were asked: "Do you think the collection development department of your library should be involved in the development of your institutions repository and what should the involvement be?" 14.29% of the 33 who answered the question thought collection development department should not be involved in institutional repositories at all but and large majority (74.29%) thought that collection development should collaborate on repository development. 20.00% thought collection development should be involved in the design of the repository, 22.86% believed that they collection development should be involved in the operation of the repository, 22.86% thought involvement of collection development in the maintenance of the repository is important and 22.86% thought collection development should provide staff to work on the repository. 5.71% indicated they did not know what should happen.

Question Number 5

Answer Choices	Responses	
Design of the repository	20.00%	7
Operation of the repository	22.86%	8
Collaboration on repository development	74.29%	26
Maintenance of institutional repository	22.86%	8
Providing staff for repository	22.86%	8
Collection development department should not be involved	14.29%	5
Don't know	5.71%	2
Total Respondents: 35		

In their comments both collection development officers and library publishing contacts agreed that an "important role is to promote the repository to faculty and students and to help them take advantage of its services" as well as to provide outreach. Collection development officers also pointed out that "supplying guidelines and support for liaisons in recruiting content for repository" is also an important role. Publishing contacts suggested that librarians could assist in making the institutional repository accessible through the catalogue, that each library should do what suits its institution best and that the collection development policy should address the institutional repository. One respondent worried that "treating the IR too much like a "collection" can undermine its success as a publishing platform."

In question number 6 participants were asked: "Do you think the collection development department of your library should be involved in library digitization projects and what should the involvement be?" Only 6.06% thought that the collection development department should not be involved in digitization projects while a huge 78.79% thought that the department should collaborate on projects. 36.36% indicated the involvement should include design of projects, 42.42% thought overseeing projects was appropriate, 30.30% believe collection development should maintain digitized collections and 24.24% collection development should contribute by providing staff for digitization projects. 9.09% responded that they did not know what the involvement should be.

Question Number 6

Answer Choices	Responses	
Design of projects	36.36%	12
Collaboration on projects	78.79%	26
Overseeing projects	42.42%	14
Maintaining digitized collections	30.30%	10
Providing staff for digitization work	24.24%	8
Collection development department should not be involved	6.06%	2
Don't know	9.09%	3
Total Respondents: 33		

In their comments both library contacts and publishing contacts agree that collection development should be involved in selecting projects, recruiting scholars with appropriate expertise and choosing material to be digitized for the collections as well as in prioritizing projects. Respondents again suggested that each library should choose projects to meet the needs of the institution. Library publishing contacts also suggested that collection development could provide funding

Participants were then asked: "Do you think the collection development department of your library should be involved in the development and operation of journal/book publishing operations and what should the involvement be?" 22.86% indicated that they thought collection development should not be involved while 60.00% of the 35 respondents stated that the collection development department should collaborate on journal and/or book publishing operations. 11.43% thought the involvement should be in designing the publishing operation, only 14.29% thought that collection development should oversee the publishing operation but 31.43% stated that collection development department should provide staff for the operation and 31.43% expressed that collection development should be involved in selecting titles to publish. 8.57% indicated that they did not know what the involvement should be.

Question Number 7

Answer Choices	Responses	
Designing the publishing operation	11.43%	4
Collaborating on the publishing operation	60.00%	21
Overseeing publishing operations	14.29%	5
Providing staff for the publishing operation	31.43%	11
Selecting titles to publish	31.43%	11
Collection development department should not be involved	22.86%	8
Don't know	8.57%	3
Total Respondents: 35		

Through the comments in relation to question number 7 it is evident that the involvement of collection development in library journal and book publishing operations appears to be the most controversial of library publishing areas. One collection development officer just wrote "no" when asked about publishing operations and others stated that publishing is really a scholarly communication support function and should be separate from collection development. Some respondents indicated that collection development should be involved in licensing, author's rights support, and contributing expertise through liaisons. Publishing contacts generally agreed with that the roles collection development officers thought are important for collection development departments but again added funding as an important contribution that could potentially be made by collection development departments.

In addition to opportunities to comment throughout the survey questions 8 to 10 were open-ended permitting respondents to freely contribute their opinions. In question 8 those surveyed were asked: "What benefits, if any, do you foresee in forming closer collaborations between collection development departments and library publishing operations? Certain themes emerged amongst the groups surveyed.

Collection development officers stated that the benefits of collaboration could include mutual education, enriched collections, information sharing, creating closer partnerships with users, support for the development of alternative publishing models and increased understanding between stakeholders. A sampling of comments follows:

- From the perspective of collection development, potential benefits include no-cost deposit of published works. Partnership is an opportunity to better understand each other's perspectives and challenges.
- Can reduce work overlap, share responsibilities, and be more strategic about collection development decisions - developing a digital collection is still collection development.

- There can be a real synergy here. Collection development and library publishing have a shared goal of providing scholarly resources to the university community, based on appropriate criteria and parameters There is much that each can learn from the other. Collaborating on a collection development policy that includes resources like journal and book publishing, and the IR, is important.
- The presence of the press within the library's fold offers opportunities to compare notes and share information concerning the challenges facing academic publishing today.
- Filling niches, forging closer partnerships with researchers students and faculty, bringing together disparate awareness of school trends/content use trends on campus, and contributing to alternate sustainable models to monopolistic commercial publishers are all potential benefits.

Most library publishing contacts agreed that closer collaboration between library publishing operations and collection development could be beneficial for gaining mutual knowledge and understanding. They also suggested that publishing operations could benefit from the contacts and expertise of collection development staff and therefore better selection decisions for all materials, better decisions on what to publish, perhaps increased numbers of titles produced and better service to users would result. Additional benefits suggested were better discovery and indexing of library published materials as well as the potential availability of improved data for metrics. The following are some of the comments provided:

- The broader involvement could mean more titles published as well as titles published in the university's subject foci.
- Better discovery and indexing of library published materials
- Collection building, in whatever form it takes, should involve collection specialists in all departments. I want a library where the collection policies, in addition to typical serials and monograph collecting, cover the repository, publishing, digitization, and data.
- Better vetting of items to be published. Are they currently available elsewhere? Is there scholarly value to the items being published?
- More comprehensive and appropriately targeted publications. Better service to the university community and beyond. Greater engagement of liaison librarians in facilitating and adopting needed changes in scholarly communication.
- Help with things like the provision of subscription data, metrics, etc.
- Ensuring library publishing operations and institutional repositories are integrated with other library holdings, and are recognized as significant parts of the library's collections.
- Collection development librarians can add a valuable perspective regarding the potential audience for library-published materials, as they are usually subject specialists in a given area and have a working knowledge of the core works in that area.

There were a few less positive comments like the following:

- The benefits are for the collection development staff. They need something to do.
- Respect for the work I do and the effort involved.

Respondents with dual roles also agreed that closer relationships between collection development and library publishing operations could be beneficial. One respondent stated that:

- The content, whether it is commercial or published by the library, is all part of overlapping scholarly ecosystems. There are meaningful implications for viewing all collections through this lens. Open access content, for instance, is becoming more integrated into our collections. Also, many of the criteria used to select specific publications in a commercial environment also apply in selecting and evaluating journals for library publishing.

In question 9 those completing the survey were asked: "What challenges, if any, do you foresee in forming closer collaborations between collection development departments and library publishing operations?" Again, certain themes dominate. The comments from collection development officers generally focused around the need to break down barriers related to organizational structures, cultural differences and silos, and to increase staff numbers and improve skill sets. The following are some of the responses of collection development officers related to the challenges perceived in forming closer ties with library publishing operations:

- Getting people to not think of anything "digital" as being alien or somehow different from traditional library work and organizational silos.
- Organizational structures need to adapt to the new scholarly communications landscape, to make this collaboration more effective and feasible. The traditional and the non-traditional models need to dovetail to embrace the new realities, and organizational changes need to happen to enable this synergy. There are common issues to be addressed collaboratively.
- Cultural differences, because the repository crowd tends to be younger and is mostly made up of programmers and other highly technical types. Traditional subject experts and scholar liaison types are also needed for these projects, but there does seem to be a gap in attitudes and priorities between these groups. Even greater is the cultural gap between the traditional university press folks and the library people.
- Complexity of work necessitates staffing changes and expansion of skill sets to do so. Limited staff with limited skills in my department such that we are scrambling just to keep the trains running.

Library publishing contacts had several comments to make related to the drawbacks of establishing closer working relationships with library collection development departments. In some cases respondents felt it might be a burden for them to involve collection development staff in publishing activities and that the negatives might outweigh any possible benefits. The following is a sampling of the comments received from library publishing connections:

- Staff is cranky and need to learn how to do new things. Frankly, I find it to be a burden to get them involved. It'd be easier to hire new people.
- Our collection development is combined with technical services into one department and, therefore, [staff is] more accustomed to working "behind the scenes." They may not be in favor of soliciting works to publish. They may also think very traditionally and not be accustomed to looking for materials outside of academic journals and monographs.
- Librarians are bad at the big picture. Also, since we've invested so much as a profession in keeping digital projects (in the broadest sense) separate from collection

functions (and many other library functions), it will be difficult to convince people to disinvest in their turf and be more open to others.

- They always seem more concerned with spending money so never have time to be involved in digital work
- Collection development departments are challenged by shrinking staff and reduced budgets, and this additional responsibility might not get the attention and time it needs to flourish.
- The collection in our library publishing program and institutional repository are largely driven by faculty need, and not internal collection development policies.
- There is the potential for competition for limited funding between those who want to buy externally produced materials (collection development librarians) and those who want to fund internal produced materials (library publishers).

Those respondents with dual roles agreed that there are several potential challenges:

- Institutional culture and history, mainly.
- We have to live in two worlds at once; the commercial environment of price increases, etc., while still supporting the open access movement and library publishing. We do this with a budget that doesn't keep pace with inflationary price increases. These are both high priorities, so we manage it, but it can make for difficult decisions and planning.

Lastly, those surveyed were asked to: "Please add any comments you would like to make regarding the relationship of library publishing operations to collection development departments?"

Collection development officers were optimistic and added that:

- This is a strategic issue for academic libraries, as managing scholarly communications in the new landscape is becoming a key indicator of library value and innovation to the community,
- I am not at all opposed to closer collaborations between collection development departments and library publishing operations, but that relationship has not been needed in our current organization structure. We are beginning to develop a digital humanities program that may bring some collection development librarians into closer collaboration with our university press.
- It would be an excellent strategy for diversifying content made accessible to researchers.

The final comments made by library publishing contacts were a little more negative overall and suggested some reluctance to embrace forming closer connections between library publishing operations and collection development departments. They also suggest that funding publishing operations through collections budgets would be desirable. What follows are some of the final comments made by library publishing contacts:

- I'm having a hard time seeing the connection between collection development and library publishing. Collection development is already a fully functioning job area with plenty of things to do, and it has an internal focus as well. Library publishing, with its external focus, should be supported within the library as a separate function.

- "Collection development" tends to be conservative ... snobs that think they buy the best stuff. We're buying less and publishing more. I don't know if their attitudes align well with a publishing service model. Customer service is passive at best and typically apathetic.
- Funding library publishing from the collections budget is the next step but few libraries are bold enough to do so as it requires defending the publishing role to faculty.
- I don't know that Collection Development should run the institutional repository, but I definitely believe there should be collaboration with them and the publishing of items. Their input on what items are to be published is valued at our institution.
- I do not view library publishing programs and institutional repositories primarily as collections. Rather, they are a set of services we provide our campus, with the resulting collection more a byproduct than the primary goal.
- It has been my experience that over the years, collection development has gradually shifted from focusing on building collections to setting up processes and workflows to manage vendor relationships. The end result of this "we value what we pay for" mentality leaves open access (and by definition much of library publishing) outside the scope of collection development staff. It will take a lot of work to break this cycle.

Respondents with dual roles had no further comments.

Discussion/Implication

While there was some consensus on the importance of collaboration, on the benefits of participation in some publishing activities and on the desirability of participation by collection development departments in digitization projects and institutional repository development, there was less agreement that the collection development department should be involved in library journal and book publishing operations and on what the role should be. This may be due to the number of concerns and variables identified, most eloquently in the survey comments. Future studies would of necessity also need to include examinations of the attitudes and viewpoints of publishers, editors, and university press managers among others.

Conclusions

Even though the information collected is from a preliminary environmental scan and extensive further research and analysis is needed for a formal definitive study into relationships between collection development activities and library publishing operations, results do provide some interesting and important insights into the ideas, attitudes and relationships of two of the major stakeholder groups impacted by and involved in the creation of library publishing operations. My best advice to collection development departments and library liaisons is to begin by building bridges, breaking down barriers, and creating closer collaborations with those involved in all types of publishing operations within our institutions. Flexibility in roles is key. Outreach and participation in projects will demonstrate willingness to participate in non-traditional collection development activities and strengthen bonds across areas. If repository development, digitization projects and book and serial publishing operations are not already established and underway in your institutions get in on the ground floor by collaborating and partnering with others interested in developing these types of services and collections.

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