Rationale for alternative acquisition trial

University libraries see an average of 8% or so increase in journal pricing each fiscal year, while also battling stagnant or decreasing holdings budgets. After a particularly difficult journal reallocation in 2005, which left disciplines in the sciences at Murray State University with significantly fewer journals than they were accustomed to, the library administration and Sciences Librarian sought alternatives to provide a more cost-effective acquisition model. In 2009, Murray State signed on with Elsevier, one of the leading scientific publishers in the world, to offer mediated transactional access through the ScienceDirect platform. The platform offers both journal articles and book chapters to registered users at a flat, one-time debit of a library account.

Access & Procedures

Access to the PPV accounts are mediated through invitation emails to faculty only. Unmediated access is possible through ScienceDirect, but as we are working with debiting an account, MSU librarians thought it would be best to mediate as to prevent careless use. Faculty are sent an invitation email by request or generated by a subject librarian, and given access to the debit account. Faculty members, when logged in to their accounts, may set up alerts for new issues or new items on certain keywords, or simply search the database to generate lists of articles that may be purchased.

Clicking “Continue” charges the account, and then opens up the full-text article. Accounts are divided up by colleges and schools simply to keep track of how much money has been spent by different disciplines, but we do not keep track of which accounts purchase which or how many articles.

Support & Further Reading


Against the Grain, December 2009-January 2010 Special Issue: PPV
Assessment of a Transactional Access Trial as an Acquisition Method for Journal Articles

Data Analysis

- # Unique journal titles w/ at least one purchase: 448
- Approximate amount of copyright fees saved: $13,260
- # Articles purchased OVER the “rule of 5” per one journal: 1329

March, September, and November are by far the most productive months

# Journal articles purchased from FY 2009-2012: 1946
# book chapter purchases, same time: 134
Total number of purchases: 2080

Qualitative Analysis

Utilizing this method of access for journal articles allows for trends in research at your institution. This means fewer journal changes from year-to-year, and fewer gaps in our collections. The faculty have embraced this new acquisition model wholeheartedly, and have shown their appreciation for creative models for acquiring needed materials.
Moving Forward

1. Investigating other PPV/transactional access options
2. Re-tasking ILL and offering other options, such as document delivery
3. Subscribe to journal titles that lose their cost effectiveness to PPV
4. Begin to transition journal subscriptions with low but consistent use to the PPV model

Conclusions
It is impossible to determine the exact dollar amount that we have saved with this service, as we are unable to determine how many of these articles wouldn’t have been purchased if they weren’t instantly available within the interface. Suffice it to say, however, that the figure is in the tens of thousands accounting one or two journal subscriptions and copyright fees saved alone.