Reviewing A&Is and Aggregators in a Large Research Library Collection

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Our Questions

• What is the role of A&I databases and aggregator packages in today’s world when discovery technology is relatively mature and widely adopted in academic libraries, and libraries license much full-text content directly from the publishers?

• To what degree do these products overlap in their coverage?

• What products continue to serve the needs of faculty and students?
Agenda

• Introduction
• Process
• People
• Methodology
• Challenges
• Outcome
The University of Toronto

Student Enrolment (Fall 2016 – 17)

Total Enrolment 88,766

Source: University of Toronto Quick Facts https://www.utoronto.ca/about-u-of-t/quick-facts
Faculty & Staff (Fall 2015)

- Faculty Members: 14,240
- Staff Members: 6,659
- Librarians: 149
The University of Toronto Libraries

• The largest academic library system in Canada, with 44 libraries
• Over $32 million spent on library materials in 2015-2016
• Comprehensive research collections serving a large and diverse research and teaching community, on three campuses
• One of the top ranking ARL libraries
Changing Roles of A&Is and Aggregator Packages in Library Collections

Historically...

• A&I databases evolved from paper to electronic, one of the early products to become online
• Key tools for content discovery at the time
• Discipline specific
• Provided controlled vocabulary/thesaurus that faculty and students relied on for academic work
• Librarians introduced these tools to students as part of library instruction
Over time...

- More products, more in-depth indexing
- Products covering multiple disciplines, with extensive coverage of years, more material types
- Google, Google scholars
- Library discovery systems
- Some A&Is gradually got “upgraded” to full-text aggregator packages
- Aggregator packages grew larger, with high annual subscription fees
Changing Roles of A&Is and Aggregator Packages in Library Collections

As a result...

• Libraries collected many products with
  • Duplicate indexing coverage
  • Duplicate full-text coverage

• Cost continues to grow
  • Annual increases higher than CPI or library budget growth
  • Vendor changing license models
  • Vendor bundling or merging products
At the same time...

- User needs and behavior changed with technology
- Demand for scholarly content increased, e.g.
  - Historical digital collections
  - New science journals
  - Print books and ebooks
  - Tools for bibliometrics analysis
Project Goals

• Update collections to meet the needs of today’s users
• Identify low-value databases
• Redirect funds towards new scholarly full-text content
• Streamline services
• Foster collaboration among libraries and librarians in collection review and decisions
• Enhance familiarity with our extensive electronic holdings
• Build a culture of assessment
Forming a Working Group

- Collection Development Management Committee (CDMC) updates managers from all libraries on CDD initiatives and develops shared projects

- CDMC was approached to form a working group and begin reviews
  - Aggregator start date: July 2015
  - A&I start date: January 2017
Getting Staff Involved

• Call for volunteers went to managers first, then to all staff
• Working group chairs went to other library committee meetings to discuss the project
• List of databases sent to all staff to add comments
Group Work

- ProQuest Central Review: 16 group members
- A&Is – Life Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences, Humanities
- Groups of 8-10 people
- Selectors, reference staff, technicians, scholarly communications librarians
- Assessment librarian and metadata librarians
Evaluating Title Overlap

| 0005-2175 | ProQuest Career and Technical Education | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ProQuest Career and Technical Education | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ABI/INFORM Global | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ABI/INFORM Global | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ProQuest SciTech Collection | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ProQuest SciTech Collection | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ProQuest Research Library | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | Business Source Premier | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
| 0005-2175 | ProQuest Research Library | Aviation Week & Space Technology |
Methodology

Uniqueness

Use

Relevance and scholarly value

Functions and features
Using Templates for Organizing Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>CSM component databases</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>link to template of arguments for keeping</th>
<th>link to vendor title list</th>
<th>date coverage</th>
<th>subject coverage</th>
<th>composition (peer reviewed articles, reports, proceedings, books, etc)</th>
<th>primary audiences (UG, G)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOKLINE (1999 - current) Information</td>
<td>cancel</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1/hxw9D3-SCNnC-GyUV7PEkgYWUfWwQWMkWb/t/ep/keeping">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1/hxw9D3-SCNnC-GyUV7PEkgYWUfWwQWMkWb/t/ep/keeping</a></td>
<td>1999 - current</td>
<td>Toxicology, chemicals, pharmacological, antidotes - journal articles</td>
<td>Both UG and G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virology and AIDS Abstracts (1982 - current) Information</td>
<td>cancel</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1/hxw9D3-SCNnC-GyUV7PEkgYWUfWwQWMkWb/keeping">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1/hxw9D3-SCNnC-GyUV7PEkgYWUfWwQWMkWb/keeping</a></td>
<td>1982 - present</td>
<td>virology in humans, animals, and plants with topics ranging from replication cycles to oncology to AIDS</td>
<td>Both UG and G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOSIS Previews (electronic resource)</td>
<td>keep</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1/hxw9D3-SCNnC-GyUV7PEkgYWUfWwQWMkWb/keeping">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1/hxw9D3-SCNnC-GyUV7PEkgYWUfWwQWMkWb/keeping</a></td>
<td>1960 - current (optional backfiles from 1920)</td>
<td>acoustics; agricultural economics &amp; policy; agricultural engineering; agriculture, dairy &amp; animal science; agriculture, multidisciplinary; agronomy; animal; anatomy; anthropology; archaeology; art area</td>
<td>Both UG and G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Saving Time with GoldRush

• Used in A&I review projects
• Checks overlap between titles (via ISSN)
• Does not check date overlap
• A comparison was run between selected science and humanities A&Is and overlap results between vendor supplied title lists and GoldRush before reviews began
• Future use by selectors for renewals and new subscriptions
GoldRush Example

Citation only comparison

Set 1: EBSCO INDUSTRIES --- Humanities Abstracts (H.W. Wilson) has 64 unique, with 613 common and a total of 677 journals.

Set 2: EBSCO INDUSTRIES --- Humanities International Index has 1559 unique, with 613 common and a total of 2172 journals.
Once the Data is Compiled, Now What?

- Is it unique?
- Is the usage high?
- How much should price count?
- If it doesn’t meet unique and usage criteria, what next?
  - Low use, high overlap – look at date coverage for journals to make sure coverage is otherwise available
  - Check titles – are they peer-reviewed? In English? Open access?
  - Look at program size - how many students/faculty doing research in this area? Does usage make sense for size?
  - Staff feedback – is this used in instruction, lib guides, research consultations? What do they know of faculty using it?
Review Challenges

- Buy-in from staff
- Timelines
- Data available
- Shifting content
A&I and Aggregator Results

• High overlap in PQC; kept 4 of the 30 databases
• A&I – 36 databases recommended for cancellation so far
• Database watch list for A&Is with declining usage or significant overlap
• Communication with all library staff and liaison meeting to prepare for faculty questions
Lessons Learned from Aggregator and A&I Reviews

• Aggregator – data available or easily available made it easier to meet deadlines

• A&Is more challenging
  – Databases with no usage stats
  – Some had title lists without ISSNs
  – Narrow subject areas
Benefits to Our Collection and Staff

• Cancellations – little used, duplication either indexing functions, or FT duplications
• Developed methodology that can be continuously refined and practiced
• New librarians, non-collections librarians involvement to increase familiarity with holdings
• Teamwork while building capacity and experience with assessment
Challenges and Opportunities

• Face legacy issues of acquisitions practices
  • A&I databases licensed for perpetual access
  • Product bundles

• Work with vendors to influence their practices
Questions?

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