

## Chapter 4

# Patron–Driven Acquisitions: A Progressive Model for the Selection of Electronic Resources

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### ABSTRACT

*During a time when libraries are facing reductions in budget, personnel, and space, it is not viable to continue the traditional “just-in-case” approach to collection development. In a user-centric library world, Patron Driven Acquisitions (PDA) has been shown to be an effective acquisition model in building “just-in-time” monograph collections to support the information and curricular needs of a variety of users in different settings. Arizona State University (ASU) Libraries have implemented a PDA model for electronic as well as print books for their users. The chapter explores the history of the use of PDA in a variety of library settings, provides a related literature review, discusses the application of PDA to the purchase of e-books at ASU from the perspective of an Electronic Resources Librarian and a Subject Librarian and Administrator of a branch library, and provides a sustainable model, which may be applied in different types of library settings.*

### INTRODUCTION

While PDA had its origins in the print world, the business model emerged in 1999 and was based on the knowledge that library patrons infrequently or never used many print monographs in libraries. Over time, it has become an effective and efficient model, which assures that materials purchased will be utilized; that precious shelf space will not be overpopulated; and that new

learning modalities and evolving user needs will be met. It is gaining momentum and becoming a popular collection tool in academic libraries as it provides librarians an ability to vastly increase access to information to their constituencies. In this model, vendors are providing MACHiNE-Readable Cataloging (MARC) records for titles that match established library collection profiles. Later on, they are loaded into the library’s local catalog, which allows discovery by patrons, who

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play a central role in potential library purchases. Rather than obtaining materials in anticipation of possible use, PDA allows libraries to make materials available according to the needs of its constituencies.

The PDA model provides enormous opportunities for users and staff. The benefit to users is that they have seamless and immediate access to vast collections. The benefit to Subject Specialists is that their workflows in the area of collection development are streamlined, which allow them to focus on the acquisition of materials that address the special needs of their users. Further, it greatly reduces the need and the expense involved with Interlibrary Loan process for titles not held by the libraries. Finally, in the area of Acquisitions and to some extent cataloging, workflows are completely automated, smooth, transparent, and painless.

ASU is one of the largest public universities in the United States having five campuses. The ASU Libraries have relied heavily upon approval plans to acquire monographs, supplemented by librarian selection. In 2009, the ASU Libraries implemented a PDA model for electronic as well as print monographs for their patrons. Many reasons accounted for this decision including low circulation data, severe budget and staff constraints, and the realization that PDA would assist in providing students and faculty access to huge pool of potential titles. Two Librarians from ASU will discuss nuts and bolts of PDA, and will share the opportunities and challenges they encountered, as well as the sustainability of this model for ASU Libraries, which may be applicable to various types of libraries.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Definition**

PDA is a method by which libraries acquire books that delays purchase until it is used by a patron. It

is also referred as Demand-Driven Acquisitions (DDA) model, which has emerged in 1999, and gaining momentum mainly in academic libraries. It is defined as a just-in-time method for acquiring library materials based on users input, which is in opposition to just-in-case method, which was very common model in libraries for many years. Though PDA is considered as an emerging model, it is not a novel concept. In the early years a similar concept was applied for acquisition of print monographs such as use of suggestion form submitted by users, and use of interlibrary loan requests to satisfy the user needs. But, with the evolution of e-books, and high demand for electronic content from users, e-book PDA model is becoming a popular model among libraries. Moreover, with growth of distance education and online classes, e-books have become an essential collection for libraries as it can cater the need of off-campus users. The purpose of libraries to implement the PDA model is to reduce costs by acquiring only those books, which are requested by users, to align the library's collection with current user requirement, and to increase discovery options for users by providing larger pool of titles. It can be considered as a monographic acquisition system that includes PDA for both electronic and print books, along with a highly selective approval plan that is complemented by librarian selection as needed.

With the shrinkage in library budget, the traditional "just-in-case" purchasing model for majority of libraries is becoming unsustainable. Also, looking at the history, use of the print collection has gone down over time. One frequently cited study revealed that, "20% of the collection receives 80% of the use" (Trueswell, 1969). "This trend is found in most academic libraries across the United States, where it is estimated that many monographs in a typical academic library collection never circulate" (Kent, 1979). "Starting in the late 1970s, the results of several studies showed that users in major academic library collections checked out an astonishingly low percentage of these largely

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