Ebooks meet Opportunity: The University of Ottawa Experience

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University of Ottawa – located in Canada’s capital
uOttawa Quick Facts

• North America’s largest bilingual university (English/French)
• One of Canada’s top 10 research universities
• In 2011, joined the Times Higher Education World University Rankings top 200.
• An ARL member (as of 2010)
• Students and faculty from 150 countries
• In Fall 2013: 42,587 students enrolled
  – 36,042 undergraduates
  – 6,545 graduates
• 10 Faculties: Arts, Social Sciences, Education, Management, Science, Engineering, Common Law, Civil Law, Health Sciences and Medicine.
• Four libraries (Arts & Sciences, Health Sciences, Law, Management)
uOttawa Library Snapshot

• Collection budget: $16.8 m CND (2014-15)
• ~60% dedicated to serials & other ongoing commitments
• 160 FTE staff: 45 Librarians and 115 administrative staff
• 25,095 journal subscriptions
• 101,529 accessible e-journals
• 838 research databases
• 2,341,559 print books
• 1,168,728 ebooks
2003-2014:
Period of unprecedented growth

• Students +35%
• Faculty with academic rank +22%
• Programs +50
• Acquired national and international recognition
In 2010 the university released a strategic plan with the vision to make uOttawa “one of the great universities of our time”

Four strategic goals focus on student experience, research excellence, Francophonie and bilingualism, internationalization

**Goal 2: Research excellence** specifically discusses the role of the library: “build a world-class library and core facilities to support a world-class research university”
Impact on the uOttawa Library

**Opportunity**

- Unique moment to revision the Mission, Vision, Values and Goals of the library
- Library recognized as a strategic partner, supporting research excellence through the library collections and teaching
- Since 2009 there has been a **39% increase** to the collections budget

**Challenge**

- Space shortages on campus; no new space for the library
- Total library staff has remained stagnant since 2009 – 160 FTE, including 46 librarians
- Currently operating with a staff 40% smaller than academic libraries at universities of similar size and scope
- Maintain balance of our uniquely bilingual collection
- No ERM
Mission, Vision, Values, Goals

Mission
The uOttawa Library advances the discovery and communication of knowledge by connecting members of our community with global resources that support research, teaching and learning.

Vision
To be a recognized leader among research libraries, ranking among the top 5 in Canada.

Values
- User-focused services
- Innovation and responsiveness
- Our bilingual community
- Strong partnerships
- Our people

Goal 1
A rich, inspiring student experience

Goal 2
Research excellence

Goal 3
Francophonie and bilingualism: a competitive advantage that is central to our mission

Goal 4
Developing leaders through internationalization
Goal 2 – Supporting Research Excellence through Collections

Provide access to world-class resources

• Develop strong digital and print research collections that rank among the top five research libraries in Canada.

• Acquire and promote collections of scholarly significance – print, digital, multimedia – to enrich the research and teaching environment on campus and make this unique material accessible to scholars worldwide.

• Continue to manage and promote unique locally held digital resources to ensure accessibility and sustainability.
Collection development policy: The virtual library

- Prefer purchasing digital resources over subscription/leasing options to secure permanent access
- Acquire digital resources directly from the publisher rather than a vendor or aggregator whenever possible
- Avoid duplication of format, in order to use our acquisitions budget in a cost-effective manner
- Privilege the digital format over the print format for journals, unless there are valid reasons for doing otherwise, since our user community has come to expect online access wherever available
- Acquire digital resources that respond to the needs of faculty and students in an increasingly interdisciplinary environment
Collection development policy: The virtual library

• Acquire digital resources that are appropriate to the strategic areas of development defined by the University, in order to advance the goals of the University and support the researchers working in these areas

• We pursue opportunities to digitize library print collections as appropriate. The library has digitized the French cultural heritage of its collection (out-of-copy materials). This is freely available at http://archive.org/details/universityofottawa/.

• The library establishes publisher agreements for blanket purchases of ebook collections, wherever appropriate and cost-effective, based on an assessment of needs and value
Library Strategy for ebooks

• Frontlist agreements
• Backlist and package collections
• Consortial opportunities in Canada
• Demand-driven acquisition pilot projects in certain subject areas
• E-preferred approval plan
• E-book firm orders
Publisher Frontlist Agreements

- Established frontlist agreements with 17 major scholarly publishers
- Purchase the whole list of forthcoming publications for that year
- Batch load the records as they are released

Benefits
- Eliminates the need for title-by-title selection by subject specialists
- Greatly reduced workload in Acquisitions
- Approximately 17,800 ebooks purchased through frontlist agreements in 2014.
Publisher Backlist and Package Collections

• Normally purchase subject-based collections on the recommendation of a Specialist
• License terms from our frontlist agreements apply

Benefits
• Efficient way to fill gaps in the collection
• Backlist pricing is often deeply discounted
• Eliminates the need for title-by-title selection by subject specialists
• Greatly reduced workload in Acquisitions

Drawbacks
• Risk of duplication with our print holdings
Consortial opportunities in Canada

uOttawa is a member of:

• Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN)
• Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL)
• Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI)

Benefits

• Favorable pricing and license terms are negotiated by the consortia
• Model licenses guaranteeing consistent terms are often used across different publishers and vendors
Ontario Council of University Libraries

Association of Canadian University Presses

- Landmark agreement
- Ebooks made available from 16 Canadian University presses
- Frontlist and backlist collections available
- 4,336 titles available on the Scholars Portal platform
- Limited DRM, 1 concurrent user
Demand-driven acquisitions

- Pilot project in DDA launched in July 2012 in Religious Studies and History
- Goal of helping to fill the gap in historical collections (due to low funding in the 1990s)
- Ebrary platform
- Ebook purchase, 1 concurrent user option
- Integrated with the approval plan and frontlist purchases to prevent duplication
- A total of 5,982 discovery records loaded during the project period
- 692 ebooks were purchased in the pilot
- DDA is currently running in History, Science and Engineering, acquire 10-20 books per month
Other Strategies

E-preferred approval plan
• Where the print and ebook format are simultaneously published, Subject specialists can opt to prefer e-books in their approval plan profiles

E-book ‘title-by-title’ orders
• Specialists may place ebook orders directly in GOBI when the ebook format is available
• Preferred platforms: Ebrary, EBL, EBSCOhost
• Single, multi-user options
• Limiting the ebook platforms makes the user experience more consistent
Print and electronic books 2009-2014

![Bar chart showing the number of print and electronic books from 2009-2014. The y-axis represents the number of books, ranging from 0 to 2,500,000. The x-axis represents the years 2009-10 to 2013-14. The chart shows a steady increase in electronic books from 2009-10 to 2013-14, while the number of print books remains relatively constant.](chart.png)
Ebooks as a percentage of the total monograph collection 2009-2014

- 2009-10: 16%
- 2010-11: 16%
- 2011-12: 16%
- 2012-13: 16%
- 2013-14: 33%
Impact on Librarians

• Librarians can now spend more time on teaching, research, and developing innovative library services in support of the other library goals and less time on collection development

• Must be prepared to support the clients as they access material in electronic formats on ever changing devices

• Training in GOBI for Librarian selectors – selecting number of concurrent users, preferred platform, etc.

• Some Librarians may miss the creative control that comes with crafting a collection
Impact on Technical Services

• Changes to the staff roles and responsibilities
  – Integrate the print and online ordering & receiving workflows
  – Re-organization and training
  – Staff enjoy the new complexity of the work
• Increase in access/troubleshooting questions → far greater technical comprehension required from staff
• New tools to maintain (SFX, PRIMO, Usage Rights database)
• E-resources staff increased by 1 FTE
• Orders placed by ordering clerks have decreased 26% since 2011 → impact on future staffing
Challenges

• Ebooks are much harder and time consuming to keep track of than print!
• Spend more time talking to the vendor to resolve issues with big purchases
• Workflows need to be revamped → who needs to know what, how is information displayed to users, who is responsible for what?
• Each package/publisher has its own idiosyncrasies which impacts workflows
• More consistency from publishers is needed
• Differing quality of MARC records, platforms, customer service.
• Difficult for us to fulfill our mandate to purchase French materials due to lack of availability
• Operating without an ERM
Future directions

• Greater collaboration between Acquisitions and Metadata and Resource Description (aka Cataloguing)
  – Currently duplication in effort in checking for availability
  – Possibility that Cataloguing staff could work in the link resolver
• Improve task/record keeping methods, centralize information
• Revaluate priorities, e.g. the cost-benefit of time spent tracking titles within package or frontlist purchases
• Keep stats to reflect current work realities
Closing thoughts

uOttawa’s ebook strategy

• Increased the depth and breadth of the monograph collection in support of the Library and University’s Strategic Vision

• Improved discoverability of and access to world-class digital resources

• Meets users’ expectations of a 21st century library

• Creates new challenges to solve within Technical Services