How to Cut a Third of Your Journal Subscriptions (and Keep Faculty Happy)

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How to Cut a Third of Your Journal Subscriptions (and Keep Faculty Happy)

Abstract
When faced with a 0% budget increase for fiscal year 2010, librarians at Gettysburg College designed a comprehensive review of journal subscriptions. Library staff began by gathering data about format(s), price, publisher, and more. Then subject librarians consulted with academic departments and asked faculty to review titles for relevance to current research and curriculum. 100% of departments cooperated with the review with a mixture of enthusiasm and concern; in the end, most offered to cancel about a third of their journal titles. By trimming multiple format subscriptions, relying on aggregator databases for full text content, cancelling titles that no longer support the curriculum, and cancelling a small number of high-cost subscriptions in favor of document delivery, the library met – and exceeded – its savings target. More importantly, by involving the faculty in every stage of the review process and sharing all available information, the library received absolutely no complaints about cancellations. This poster presentation will include a flow chart of the entire review process, sample review spreadsheets used by faculty in academic departments, and graphs showing cancellations by department. This journal review model is transferable to other academic libraries.

Keywords
journal, cancellation, budget

Disciplines
Library and Information Science

Comments

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**Challenge**
- No materials budget increase
- Cut $80K to absorb inflation

**Opportunity**
- Review journal holdings
- Realign with current curriculum
- Reduce duplication of content

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**Results**

- 1,194 Journal Titles Assessed
  - 385 cancelled (32%)
  - 146 changed format (12%)
  - 663 renewed as-is (56%)

**Cancellations by Reason**
- 1,194 Journal Titles Assessed
  - 16 to document delivery (4%)
  - 226 in library databases (59%)
  - 143 diverted to ILL (37%)

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**Sample faculty review spreadsheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>2009 Price</th>
<th>Still relevant to dept?</th>
<th>EDD OK?</th>
<th>ILL OK?</th>
<th>Current year needed?</th>
<th>Importance to student coursework (circle one)</th>
<th>Importance to faculty research and/or development (circle one)</th>
<th>EDD/CRT</th>
<th>ILL/CRT</th>
<th>Current year cancelled?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The journal of neuroscience</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$6,829.99</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological science : a journal of basic and applied psychological science</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$2,076.10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of youth and adolescence</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$1,764.60</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition &amp; emotion</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$1,611.89</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of personality and social psychology</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>$1,449.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied cognitive psychology</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>$1,435.49</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of applied social psychology</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$1,244.70</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality &amp; social psychology bulletin</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>$1,154.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental science</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>$1,216.17</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Behavioral and brain sciences</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$1,265.92</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of personality</td>
<td>Print + Online</td>
<td>$1,030.59</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<td>Behavioral neuroscience</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>$1,029.08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of experimental psychology : human perception and cognition</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>$1,025.08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological science: learning, memory, and cognition</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>$1,025.08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Janelle Wertzberger & Kathy D’Angelo
Gettysburg College

Strategies for Success

- **Lay a good foundation** - We already had a strong librarian liaison program in place
- **Use the hierarchy** - The library director talked with department chairs early
- **Do a pilot project** - We tested the process with one department before going public
- **Emphasize quality over quantity** - Faculty were asked about journal value for teaching & research, rather than told to cancel x journals or x dollars
- **Keep it simple** - We only asked a few key questions and made it easy for faculty to respond
- **Set a short deadline** - Faculty were asked to respond within a month (most did)
- **Be decisive** - We gave faculty opportunities for input, but librarians made the final decisions
- **Enlist support** - Our collection development assistant helped us approach the project from a fresh perspective (perhaps because she’s *not* a librarian?) and managed massive amounts of data effectively. Thanks, Denise!

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**Cancellations by Cost Savings**

- $32,417 to document delivery
- $50,140 diverted to ILL
- $53,042 in library databases

**Titles Cut vs. Dollars Saved**

- 24% of titles: Document delivery available
- 37% of titles: Diverted to ILL
- 37% of savings: Included in library databases
- 59% of titles: Diverted to ILL
- 39% of savings: Included in library databases
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ALA poster session 6/26/10

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For more information contact Musselman Library:

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Gettysburg College FTE: 2,683

Library materials budget for 2009-2010: $1,571,953

Target amount of dollars to cut: $80,000

Librarian Liaisons involved in decisions: 14

Academic departments and programs: 35

Turnaround time for faculty feedback: 3 days to 3 months

Journal titles assessed: 1,194

Journal titles cancelled: 385

Cancellations recommended by faculty: 113

Cancellations replaced by database access: 226

Cancellations diverted to document delivery: 16

Cancellations shifted to ILL: 143

Subscriptions converted to online only: 146

Journal titles saved during rescue phase: 4

Total cost of journals cancelled: $142,589

Time invested from start to finish: 1 year

Number of faculty who followed the directions: 0