

A New Mode of Acquisitioning Periodicals in Libraries of Universities ----- Oline Acquisition

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Abstract

Acquisitioning periodicals online is a new mode for libraries. It has five procedures, namely information retrieving by net, choosing and booking, document delivery, confirming orders, and electric payment. Comparing with traditional acquisition of periodicals, the online acquisition of periodicals has many advantages, such as the tremendous information, the straightness, the high efficiency, and spanning time and space.

Keywords: Online acquisition, Periodical acquisition, Information of periodicals, Libraries of universities and colleges, New mode

The online acquisition of periodicals in China's libraries is a new mode appeared in recent years. In the traditional acquisition mode, librarians firstly collect the information of periodicals published by presses, then choose some periodicals and input the main items, such as the name, author, ISSN, price, that describe relevant periodicals into the computer system of libraries. Finally, librarians have to send the filled orders to presses. Today under the network environment, libraries' online acquisition of periodicals is guaranteed by technologies. Amounts of information on periodicals are provided by numerous presses online, what serve as the information source of online acquisition. Besides, the standardization and normalization of data of periodicals, and the share of information of periodicals have become important in periodicals' acquisition. Because of the online acquisition, the way of acquisition, and its content and scope have been changed a lot. It has important significance to study and analyze these changes, which can help to improve the quality and efficiency of libraries under the network environment.

Periodicals' online acquisition refers to the whole process in which librarians research, retrieve, download the periodicals' information from the net by computers, and order the needed periodicals according to the situation in their libraries, and pay for their orders.

1. The analysis on the present situation of acquisition in libraries

For a long time, libraries of universities purchase periodicals by means of pre-ordering the directory of foreign and Chinese periodicals. In detail, firstly collect the directory of periodicals issued by the post, presses, and book companies. Then gather necessary information of readers and check the storage of libraries. Finally send the final orders to the presses. The pre-order-by-directory mode has lots of advantages, such as the rich information, the systematic process, the stable information resource, and so one. Therefore, it is the main way to purchase periodicals for libraries at present. However, it also has many shortcomings. Take two points for example.

1.1 In general, the ordered periodicals came to libraries one or two months later because of too many middle stages.

According to the data in our library from 2002 to 2003, 50 percent of periodicals came to library in one or two months, 80 percent of periodicals in three or six months, and 10 percent about one year later. Many periodicals whose values are based on the timeliness became outdated when they came to the library, such as Journals of CET 4 (College English Test 4) and CET 6 (College English Test6), Journals of NCRE (National Computer Rank Examination), Journals of postgraduate entrance examination, and journals of registered employment examination. Because the important points for certain examination change annually, it is impossible for these kinds of journals being used frequently once the examination is over.

1.2 The information provided by the directory of periodicals is not complete.

The information of periodicals provided by the Simple Directory of National Periodicals (Magazine) Pre- Ordered by the Post and the Combined Directory of National Periodicals Pre-Ordered not by the Post is not complete. Data show that periodicals in the two dictionaries account for two third of the total publication. In other words, 30 percent of periodicals do not experience the pre-ordering process before they enter the market. Libraries can not order these kinds of periodicals. In a sense, libraries suffer from this fact.

2. Combine the direct-order method and the pre-order method together

Libraries can adopt both direct-order method and pre-order method to perfect their storage. For different periodicals,

libraries should take different order method.

For periodicals that focus on CET 4, CET 6, NCRE, postgraduate entrance examination, and registered certificate, libraries can order them directly. By this way, readers can get the periodicals in time, avoiding the waste of outlay of books (periodicals).

For periodicals of specialties, because of the less readers and circulation, they usually enter the market by local specialty publishing companies or presses. Librarians in universities can directly come to these companies and presses to choose books and periodicals based on their needs.

For periodicals that are hard to be found in market or urgent in need, librarians can contact with presses and publishing companies directly and renew their storages. One of the grave issues in the combination of pre-order and direct-order is the repetition-check. At present, most libraries of universities introduce the computer management system. Many publishing companies provide with MARC data for customers' acquisition of periodicals (such as the Beijing Baishitong Book Company, the Tianjin Branch of Combined Directory of National Periodicals Pre-Ordered not by the Post, and so on). Therefore, libraries should choose publishing companies who provide with MARC data, have rich periodicals and books, have better credits, and cooperate with them. By this way, libraries can realize the automatism of repetition-check.

3. Principles of periodicals' acquisition for libraries at the network times

3.1 Take the situations of libraries into consideration and use the outlay effectively.

Under the condition of insufficient outlay, it is very important to use the limited outlay rationally and effectively based on situations of libraries. According to the storages and the target readers, libraries make up their purchase plans that can help the purchase focus on certain fields. By this way, the limit outlay will exert its maximum effect. Like our library in university of science and technology, we have to consider not only the teaching and the scientific research but also the nature and the specialties of the university as we make periodical purchase.

3.2 Make best use of information in Internet.

Internet provides us with rich useful information. We can get specific purchase information from the Internet, including the book stores, the presses, the publishing companies' names and addresses, reviews of periodicals, videos, CDs, journals with rewards, popular Journals, and directory of publishers, and so on. By analyzing the information, librarians should download, process, classify, and integrate them properly and timely. Especially in purchasing the digital documents, such as CDs and online journals, it is necessary to make up acquisition strategies based on the library's storage.

3.3 Make the acquisition focus on the utility of periodicals and the feedback of readers by taking the advantages of network.

Along with the development of Internet, most libraries realize the automatism of acquisition, what greatly reduce the work process of librarians. As the information of periodicals is input into the computer, the repetition-check is done at the same time. It makes libraries escape from repeat purchase and reduce expenses. Besides, the statistical work in purchase is also completed by computers. Therefore, librarians can spend more time energies in communicating and collecting information. The emphasis of work begins to focus on the utilities and the feedback of readers.

3.4 Select periodicals carefully and improve the quality of storage.

Because the information in Internet is too much and its qualities, features, and forms are different, it is necessary for librarians to build up certain communication system with the net. By communicating with the net technologists, librarians can find out useful information rapidly and use them effectively. Create a perfect acquisition procedure, what can help to avoid the unilateral, invalid, and lagged-behind purchase of specialty periodicals.

4. The operational procedure of online acquisition of periodicals

4.1 Select online book stores, presses, and book publishing companies.

At present, there are amounts of online book stores (presses, etc.) at home and abroad. It is vital for the library to choose a right online store that provides with nice services, rich books, and competitive prices. According to present situation, the author suggests the Beijing Baishitong Book Company and the Tianjin Branch of Combined Directory of National Periodicals Pre-Ordered not by the Post. Beijing Baishitong Book Company adopts the B-B (business to business) business model, which chiefly provides with books for libraries online. The two suggested by the author have many advantages, such as the complete and timely data, the normalization and standardization, and the service. Beijing Baishitong Book Company and Tianjin Branch of Combined Directory of National Periodicals Pre-Ordered not by the Post send nearly 8000 book records for customers annually, what almost covers all periodicals published by more than 500 publishers in China. Besides, these records can be ordered according to customers' needs. As

customers receive these data, they can retrieve necessary information by names, authors, key words, presses, and ISSN. Apparently, they are specialized for serving libraries and their after-sale services are very good. Therefore, they are the best cooperators of libraries in periodicals' acquisition. In the aspect of assistant channel, Beijing Century Online Book Company is also an excellent option.

4.2 Acquisition periodicals

It is the most key and vital step for the whole online acquisition process, which includes these procedures as follow.

(1) Download data of periodicals

Enter the webpage of online book company and log in. Download data of periodicals published by this company and store in certain fixed folder in the hardware of computer.

(2) Transform data of periodicals

Decompress the data and transform them into the database of the library by the computer acquisition's children system.

(3) Select and order

Read the data by the children system and review them step by step. Choose the right periodicals for the library and input the ordered number into the computer. Store the data and complete the selection.

(4) Generate the digital order

Output the completed data of acquisition and store them into a fixed folder (usually in form of EXCEL). Then a digital order is generated.

(5) Send the digital order

Mail the digital order to the online book store (or online press or book company).

4.3 Accept and check the periodicals and return unwanted ones

After receiving the orders, the press or book company will inform the customer by E-mail or phone to confirm the order. As everything is OK, the company will collect periodicals according the order and deliver them. In general, the press or the book company will choose a transportation company to send the periodicals for the customer. As the library receives the delivered periodicals, librarians will check them by data stored in the computer. Once they find any error or any unwanted periodical, they will return them back to the press or the book company.

4.4 Settlement

The online purchase usually adopts the electric settlement, using digital currency to pay for the goods. The computer will calculate the charges automatically. And the purchaser will fill in the digital order, including the name, the E-mail address, the target address, the delivery way, and other details. In special, the target address and the delivery way must be selected together. Otherwise, the order can not be handed in. Then, the purchaser must choose the way of payment, such as credit card, bank transfer, or remittance by post. However, for most online companies in China, seldom really realize the online payment. Most companies are at the stage of "online order, and offline settlement".

5. Advantages of online acquisition of periodicals

5.1 Rich and detailed data of periodicals

It is not necessary for the online press, namely the virtual book store, to allocate goods or prepare sufficient stocks. And its operation does not limited by capitals. It can issue the data of periodicals without any restriction. Therefore, the online book store usually can provide with rich data of periodicals. For example, the Amazon online book store (or press) in America collects 3.1 million kinds of periodicals published by 50 thousand presses, providing with millions of records of books. It is impossible for a traditional book store (or press) to reach such a scale.

The online company can provide with not only periodicals' names, authors, presses, prices, ISSN, and sizes, but also the covers, part of contents. By this way, purchaser can understand and master the features of periodicals to a great degree, which will benefit the acquisition of periodicals.

5.2 High purchase ratio of periodicals

In a traditional way, purchaser has to come to the company (or the post) by himself or herself to make purchase, which consumes not only time but also energy. The online purchase can help the purchaser to find the right periodicals for the library by different ways, such as sorts of high-effective and fast search engines. Besides, by means of filling in the digital order, the digital payment, and the auto settlement of computer, it can improve the efficiency of purchase greatly. The whole purchase process merely costs several hours. At the same time, the online

company (or press) can deliver or post the ordered periodicals in a short time, which greatly shortens the time period in communication. For example, the Amazon book store guarantees that the domestic readers in America can receive the periodicals in two days, and the foreign readers in one week.

The online purchase can help to obtain amounts of high-quality periodicals. Because the online book store can provide with numerous information, the purchaser can find out high-quality periodicals by compassion, which serves as a base for a better storage of the library. In contrast, the traditional purchase mode is close and limited, which affects the quality of periodicals in order to a great degree.

5.3 Trans-time service mode

The online book store is a virtual mode. Its operation does not be limited by space and time. Therefore, it is not necessary for the purchaser coming to the real book store to buy the ideal periodicals. It saves time, energy, and capitals. Besides, many unnecessary and complex procedures are simplified or reduced, which greatly improve the efficiency of purchase, reducing the costs of periodicals' circulation. Meanwhile, the online book store breaks the limits of geological space. Only if the purchaser has a online computer, he or she can purchase periodicals from anywhere at anytime. The purchaser can visit the book market in other regions online, which makes the acquisition of periodicals more convenient.

As a professional book purchaser in library, it is necessary to overcome the old long-term habit of selecting periodicals and books from the paper directory. A professional purchaser should renew his or her ideas and meet the new challenges, improving his or her knowledge management level and the consciousness of innovation from an angle of information development, trying to provide with the most excellent information services for readers by least costs.

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