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**What does "Roll with the Times or the Times Will Roll Over You" mean to libraries and vendors?**

The theme of this year's Charleston Conference is timely and apropos. There have been tremendous changes in both libraries and the publishing world in the past ten years. In order for libraries to remain relevant, they have to look for new ways to meet patron demand at the point of need. Students and researchers increasingly favor more flexible and mobile electronic resources over physical ones, to the point that many academic library budgets now allocate 80% or more of their funding to electronic resources. Often they have to accomplish this with budgets that do not keep pace with the increasing costs. The challenge for vendors is to provide the right resources in ways that patrons want to use them, and are viable for libraries to provide. Libraries need fair pricing that fits their budgets, and publishers need healthy profits to ensure continued development of products and services, and to also support the long-tail of scholarly publishing which have fewer sales.

In the past ten years, the focus of academic libraries' monographs collections, for example, has shifted away from approval profiles and librarian-selected "just in case" purchasing models. It is well known that a large percentage of library collections that are purchased with this model never circulate. Libraries that continue to purchase with these old models risk becoming less relevant to their users over time. Patrons have a plethora of options to instantly access information outside of the library. Shifting to "just in time" purchasing models allows libraries to provide access to the materials that patrons need, right at the point of need.

Libraries and vendors have explored many ways to accomplish this in the past few years. Shifting approval profiles to include e-books provides more instantaneous access for users, but still may not be the exact books that patrons want to use. Analysis of usage statistics may pinpoint patron preferences for specific publishers, platforms, or subject areas, which can help libraries identify larger e-book collections to purchase. More recently, libraries and vendors have experimented with various demand-driven and evidence-based models. Although these models solve both the issues of instant access and the most desired materials, it remains to be seen how viable these models will be in the long term, for both libraries and vendors.

The demand for instant access to e-journals started prior to large-scale entry by libraries into the e-book world. Journals with no electronic options today generally have more limited growth potential and clout. In most fields, the majority of high impact journals are viably available online. But libraries have new choices for providing journal content beyond subscriptions and InterLibrary Loan. There are more options to purchase individual journal articles when low demand does not justify the subscription cost. Vendors who do not offer individual journal article purchases miss out on this additional stream of revenue.

The Journal of Visualized Experiments (JoVE) is one example of a successful innovation for making content more visual and usable. Streaming video in general satisfies the needs of patrons who are more mobile and have increasing expectations of instant access. Faculty have expectations that the materials they want to use in their classes will be available in formats suitable for online learning software, such as Blackboard. Innovative streaming video services such as Kanopy help to fill these demands. Even the traditionally slow-changing world of textbooks is poised for rapid change in the next few years.

Innovative formats, better electronic access, more user-friendly platforms, added interactivity – the changes in the resources libraries can offer to patrons over the last ten years is astonishing. Without a doubt all these innovations contribute to the increasing complexity of resources, which costs money. Some cost is offset by automating formerly manual processes. But the fact remains that costs are increasing for all parties.

Besides “roll with the times” and “the times will roll over you”, there is a third option: stay ahead of the times. Libraries, as the intermediaries between patrons and vendors, are best positioned to query patrons and tune into trends on campus, and pass this information on to vendors. The most proactive vendors develop new pricing models and new ways to provide access that meet patron and library needs. Libraries, in turn, reward the proactive and innovative vendors with new business. Vendors all want a bigger piece of the library funding pie, which is more or less static in the short term. The pie does not increase simply because vendors increase their offerings or are innovative. By definition, vendors who do not keep up with the times will find themselves with a smaller piece of the pie.

For libraries, staying ahead of the times also increasingly involves promoting their value to stakeholders and to their institutions. Libraries can be proactive not only by tuning in to their patrons’ needs and trends, but also by increasing their funding. Because the inflation rate of library resources is significantly above the inflation rate in the general economy, libraries that are not proactive in increasing their funding will find their buying power eroded over time.

Adding to the complexity is interdependency – researchers at institutions contribute to the content that publishers publish, which libraries purchase to meet the needs of patrons, which include researchers. Eventually dinosaurs fade away – they lose their funding or profitability (hence the need for innovative services such as Portico). Needs drive innovation which drives change, which has a ripple effect in the whole interdependent system. No longer can libraries or vendors continue to do things because “it’s the way we’ve always done it” and expect to thrive. Nothing can be taken for granted in today’s rapidly changing landscape. The trick will be to keep finding the sweet spots that meet patrons’ changing needs, maintain healthy profitability for vendors, and are still within the budgets of libraries.