



Access

News from the University Libraries

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JOURNAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

LIBRARY AIMS AT GENERAL REVIEW

In 1979-80, the University Libraries spent \$491,485 to acquire 10,705 current serials. This amount is slightly less than half of our total expenditures for library materials. We are receiving 18% fewer serials now than we were in 1971 although we have increased our expenditures by 80%, which demonstrates the effect of escalating serials cost, and illustrates the effect of the 196% increase in the average price of periodicals published in the U.S. between 1971 and 1980.

The term serials is applied to a variety of publications. At Notre Dame, the most common are journals, or periodicals. The average price per periodical varies enormously among fields, the most expensive being chemistry and physics journals, with an average annual price of \$137.45. Some of our periodicals cost well over a thousand dollars, although these are frequently journals which publish a more than average number of pages, e.g., one journal subscription is \$3,229 but 44 volumes were published in 1979.

Such expensive periodicals are tempting targets when budget-cutting is required, but the dilemma of libraries is illustrated by the finding that of 83 biochemistry journals recently surveyed, the 15 most frequently cited accounted for almost 50% of the total cost of the 83. The problem has been exacerbated by the 1976 Copyright Law which limits the number of articles that can be copied from a single journal. So far tech-

nical innovations assisting the dissemination of information have limited application and the argument that the federal government which subsidizes research should also subsidize the communication of its results is unlikely to be accepted in the near future.

Periodicals are not the only, nor necessarily the most expensive serials. What are called serial services, although not as numerous as journals, can involve significant sums of money. A survey of major U.S. serial services showed that the average price per title was \$195.21, and some were much more expensive. However, the necessity of such titles as Art Index, Book Review Digest, Business Periodicals Index, Social Science Index, Bibliographic Index, Tax Services and Soviet Translations are obvious. Annuals are also serials, as are newspapers. Rising prices of the latter (a survey of selected U.S. dailies reveals a 224% increase in price between 1969 and 1978) have caused us to restrict our list of newspaper subscriptions to the major ones.

The Libraries receive other titles, often not bibliographically defined as serials, which nevertheless represent a continuing commitment of funds. These titles are published irregularly over an indefinite period, and each volume is billed upon receipt, often with little uniformity in price per volume. Some are works issued in parts, such as the collected edition of an author's works or a dictionary or encyclopedia.

Others are monographs published in series. Less than 15% of the Libraries' total serials expenditures fall into this category although their proportion of the total number of titles is higher. Obviously, predicting the annual cost of these is very difficult, especially since one standing order may yield several volumes in one year, and none the next year, and another series may publish a volume only once every two or three years.

A few libraries, frustrated by the difficulty of keeping track of such orders and their capacity for wreaking budgetary havoc, have cancelled them all, relying on purchase of the individual volumes as they are published. This is an extreme step, because it risks missing important volumes which go out-of-print quickly and because of the costs attendant on individual ordering. It is not an action that we are presently contemplating. Prudence in establishing these standing orders requires careful attention not only to the quality and relevance of volumes in a series but also to their consistency, frequency, and to the question of whether new volumes will be noticed as they appear. Because these standing orders can be cancelled at any time, however, a review of our current list can be postponed until after subscriptions are examined.

There has been, for a very long time, a steady increase in the number of serials as well as their prices; but not until about 1970 did libraries become conscious of a shift in their acquisitions budget from monographs to serials. Then we began to hear that "not to decide is to decide," and serials reviews got underway in earnest. Library literature has been dotted ever since with descriptions of the methodologies of reviewing serials purchases and the results. Librarians take no pleasure in writing such articles; one said it was like describing "how I drowned the kittens."

The methods for serials review are determined to some extent by its motivation, which may range from a mandated percentage cut in serials expenditures to a desire to evaluate the scope, quality, accessibility and usefulness of the existing collections. Many criteria have been used to decide on retention: relation to university programs; price; language; accessibility through indexing and abstracting; reputation; availability elsewhere; and, of course, use. The first and last of these are the most important, but also the most difficult to

apply in any but the most obvious cases. The degree of relevance to program can be judged very differently by different people, and measurements of use are a tantalizing, but time-consuming and controversial option. Various use measures have been tried: circulation statistics (of little value when circulation is restricted); shelving counts; sheets for users to sign; tapes on issues; and other ways that attempt to discover, at least, if a certain journal was ever used by anyone. Virtually all reviews of serial collections seek to tap faculty opinion. It has been done most effectively by asking faculty to rank journals in terms both of their perceived quality and their frequency of use.

The Notre Dame Library has not conducted a comprehensive serials review for over five years, although we did a more restricted one last year. Our 1975 review, performed because serials expenditures threatened to consume most of the acquisitions budget, reduced our serials list by several hundred titles and alerted users to the scope of the problem. We are now initiating a new serials review, one in which we hope to achieve wider faculty participation than in 1975. We are fortunate this time in having an automated system to produce a review list and a final list of proposed cancellations that will allow all faculty members, no matter what their departments, to object to the disappearance of a title important to their work.

We do not anticipate a shortfall in the money budgeted for current subscriptions next year, since allowance has been made for an anticipated inflation rate. However, serials as well as monographs should reflect the current emphasis of curriculum and research in the University and we must now inquire whether our expenditure for serials achieves that purpose. Therefore, we are asking for the cooperation of faculty members in examining the current subscriptions in their fields.

A recent study identified the primary motivation for both cancellations and new subscriptions as a shift in the relevance of journals to the professional activities of users, rather than their costs or availability elsewhere. If we retain all present subscriptions, we may not be able to provide adequately for the new subscriptions, nor to respond to the demands for

increased numbers of monographs. The creation, in 1980, of a Standing Committee on Serials to approve all new subscriptions was designed to insure that as much information as possible is gathered about each proposed title, that careful consideration is given to its contribution to teaching and research activities, and that equivalent standards are applied in evaluating all new titles. We are emphasizing consideration of priorities in deciding on both additions to, and eliminations from, the serials list.

Soon you will be contacted by your departmental library coordinator or library liaison officer who will explain in detail the procedure of the serials review. Cancellation decisions must be made final before the start of the Fall semester in order to assure that they will take effect before 1982, and so that we can begin to consider possible new subscriptions. Therefore, we expect the review to be completed by the end of this semester.

Maureen L. Gleason

IN MEMORIAM

PAUL RYAN BYRNE, 1889-1980

(Editor's note: Originally published in Library Information, December 1980)

Paul Ryan Byrne, former Librarian at Notre Dame, died November 2, 1980 at the age of 91. A memorial Mass in his honor was celebrated on December 6th in the chapel of Holy Cross House on campus.

Byrne was born January 6, 1889 in Moravia, New York. After receiving his Ph.B. degree from Notre Dame in 1913, he pursued studies at New York State Library School at Albany leading to the Bachelor of Library Science degree in 1915.

He gained varied and valuable experience as Reference Assistant at Ohio State University Library and in the Documents Section of the New York State Library. Subsequently he moved to New York City, where he organized and administered the library of the National Bank of Commerce. During World War I, he supervised U.S. Army library operations of the 8th Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and of the Philippines Department in Manila. In June 1922, he returned to his Alma Mater to assume the position of Reference Librarian. His demonstrated competence resulted in his promotion to Acting Librarian in November 1924 and to Librarian in 1925.



Byrne agreed with his predecessor's philosophy of the noble "profession of books" in deploring the less than modest circulation of books at Notre Dame and sought implementation of the University's program that called for the establishment of branch libraries

and the recruitment of additional librarians to staff them capably. One of the many problems was solved by his gradual elimination of unorthodox "branch libraries" in more than a few professors' offices.

During the period of 1927 to 1931 his vision and wisdom were instrumental in executing the transfer of the book collections from the Dewey Decimal Classification to the Library of Congress classification.

He contributed articles to professional journals and was active in library organizations. In 1936-37 he served as President of the Catholic Library Association. He also held memberships in the American Library Association, the Indiana Library Association and the National Catholic Education Association. His occasional lectures on librarianship reflected his abiding academic attachment. His patience and planning proved rewarding. The \$5,000 allocation for books, periodicals and binding in the

fiscal year 1923-24 had risen to more than \$250,000 for the total library budget in 1950-51.

Following a career of thirty-seven years of service as a librarian, thirty of which were devoted to Notre Dame, Byrne relinquished his post as Librarian in 1952 and took up the duties of Curator of the

Wightman Art Gallery located in the new O'Shaughnessy Hall. Finally in 1958 he returned to his home in Syracuse, New York, where doubtlessly he derived comfort and satisfaction from reminiscences of his long and loyal affiliation with the University of our Lady.

John J. Philippsen

STUDENT RESEARCH SKILLS AND LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

LIBRARY OFFERS FLEXIBLE PROGRAM

Because of our past experience, many of us in the academic world tend to confuse the term "library orientation" with the term "library instruction." This semantical problem is at the root of a misunderstanding that results in many of our students lacking even the most elementary research skills. Library orientation is a term that refers to a library tour through which a patron is made familiar with the physical arrangement of a library. Library instruction is a generic term that refers to the orientation process, supplemented by many other instructional activities. Although for many years in the library world a simple orientation tour seemed to be the limit of many libraries' instructional efforts, this is no longer true for most libraries, and is certainly no longer true at Notre Dame.

However, a simple awareness of the scope of the instructional program in an academic library does not necessarily result in a synergistic response to student needs by teachers and librarians, because students' ineptitude in using the library often goes unrecognized by the faculty. It is the librarians' experience that, however bright the incoming freshman, he or she is nevertheless ill prepared for work in a large research library. The problem that prompted the President of Columbia University to observe (in 1883):

The average college student . . . is ignorant of the greater part of the bibliographic apparatus which the skilled librarian has in hourly use, to enable him to answer the thousand queries of the

public. A little systematic instruction would so start our students in the right methods, that for the rest of their lives . . .

has become more acute as librarians have acquired hundreds of thousands of books, and the bibliographic structure for organizing and gaining access to this information has consequently become more sophisticated. This problem was recently re-expressed by a University of Texas study group:

The Undergraduate Library's teaching role is mandated by entering students' inability to deal with a complex, multi-million volume library system. A diagnostic library skills test . . . has confirmed what daily reference encounters and requests from instructors suggest: students have a very limited understanding of how information is organized in libraries.

This is likewise descriptive of the situation at Notre Dame. Students do not arrive here already in possession of library research skills; however, the assumption that underlies many courses is that students do possess the necessary skills. Frustration is built into this situation: frustration on the part of the student who, without the proper instruction, finds the library confusing; frustration on the part of the faculty member whose students' work does not evidence optimal research or data gathering skill; and frustration on the part of the librarian who sees both parties confounded.

The Library at Notre Dame does have a program that remedies this sort of difficulty. The major elements of the program aimed at responding to students' research needs are as follows:

1. a library orientation/instruction tour followed by a library research assignment,
2. three to five hours of instruction in subject bibliography given at a time when students are selecting majors,
3. graduate instruction as needed,
4. workshops aimed at solving specific course related problems.

The Reference Department in the Memorial Library is the focus of this individual program. The department invites both academic departments and individual faculty members to explore with them the ways in which they

may cooperate to make student use of the library more efficient, productive, and less frustrating. We particularly solicit the interest of those who regularly give assignments which require data or research that sends their students to the library. We are willing on relatively short notice to provide workshops (a one hour tour, class presentation, and/or bibliography) and to assist students with nearly any research problem. We have in the past covered such topics as white collar crime, marketing data, short story research, legislative histories, and many others. If you wish to participate in any of the instructional programs, contact the Coordinator for Library Instruction at extension 6258, or see the present author in Room 117, Memorial Library.

Patrick J. Max

STATISTICAL SOURCES

A WEALTH OF DATA AVAILABLE

Almost every private and public organization, large and small, compiles statistics on their operations or for their members' use. Usually they are published and available to non-members. There are statistics on almost any socio-economic subject for almost every country and its political sub-divisions. Census data alone is overwhelming. The use and importance of statistical data are taught in social science courses. Statistics are a vital part of faculty and graduate research. However, it is often difficult to determine if, and where, specific statistics are available.

In the past fifteen to twenty years there has been a steady increase in the publication of bibliographies, compilations and guides to statistical data. Wasserman's Statistical Sources and Harvey's Statistics Africa, Statistics America, and Statistics Europe are standard compilations of official national and international sources.

The United States Bureau of the Census provides several guides to its publications in addition to its catalog. Its Directory of Federal Statistics for Local Areas and its

Guide to Industrial Statistics compactly outline the various data compiled and indicate the areas involved whenever they are selective. The census catalog describes every census publication including census data available only on computer tapes. The Statistical Abstract of the United States tabulates federal and some non-federal data and gives the source of each table. Use of these sources can lead to more detailed and more recent data.

In 1973, Congressional Information Service, a non-federal publisher, began the American Statistical Index covering all statistical publications since the 1960's by more than four hundred active federal statistics producers. Every statistical table in these documents is indexed by subject and name, by demographic, economic, geographic and industrial categories, by title, and by agency report number. Since 1974 the index has come out monthly with annual cumulation. The monthly issues cover the documents published during that month with about a two month delay in publication. Thus, the April issue indexes and abstracts documents published in April and is printed

in early June. The Document Center in the Memorial Library receives about seventy-five per cent of these documents. Microfiche copies of all of the indexed documents are available from the publisher for a nominal fee.

The success of this index and the requests of users led the publishers to start another index in 1980. The Statistical Reference Index selectively covers more than 2,600 titles from non-federal organizations, corporations, state agencies, research centers, and other significant sources. Its format and publication is identical with the American Statistical Index with microfiche copies of many titles available. The publishers' address and price is given for each title that is not available on microfiche.

The United Nations Statistical Office publishes a series of statistical papers describing the various data available from international agencies. United Nations and other international statistics are included in the Wasserman and Harvey titles and in periodical indexes such as Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin.

The Microtext Reading Room in the Memorial Library has four major statistical compilations available. Published guides to their contents are kept on the index shelves in that room. Economic Surveys, 1920-1961 contains economic, financial and

trading data compiled in ninety countries by British embassy or consulate personnel in each country. European Office Statistical Series on Microfiche is based on Cambridge University's European Research project and provides data on twenty-two countries from 1841 to 1965. Blake's Western European Census, 1960, and English Language Guide should be used with the Cambridge material because it translates into English the table titles and terms found in census publications for these countries. Latin American and Caribbean Official Statistical Series on Microfiche reproduces the documents listed in Harvey's Statistics America. International Population Census Publications: Series I, 1945-1967 and Series III, post-1967 provide microfiche copy for all titles in the International Population Census Bibliography. Series I is stored on over seven hundred and fifty microfilm reels and Series III is ongoing with current titles as they become available. Copies of any material in these four sources may be obtained in the Microtext Reading Room.

The Data Base Office (Room 116, Memorial Library) has several statistical sources available online. Predicast Statistics is one of the most comprehensive with domestic and international historical data from 1957 to date and forecasts through 1990 or 2020 for countries, products, industries, economic activity and demographics.

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