

# Bind or Not to Bind

## Collaborations and Decisions, Decisions

Susan Andrews - Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Susan\_Andrews@tamuc.edu

As more and more libraries look for ways to cut costs, plus save space, our library decided to take a long look at what periodicals we were binding and whether we really still needed to bind all that we subscribed to. There were several things to consider before, during, and after this project. The primary areas were:

- What criteria to use to decide whether a title should be bound or not?
- Who makes those choices?
- If the choice is made not to bind, what happens to those titles?
- What other things must be considered after those choices are made? - Additional labor or special space considerations?
- What now?

\*\*\*\*\*



### Some information about us:

Texas A&M University-Commerce is a medium-sized (10,000 students) rural university. We have a strong graduate program. The library has about 162 databases and around 700 print subscriptions.

### Criteria:

#### 1. Usage of Title

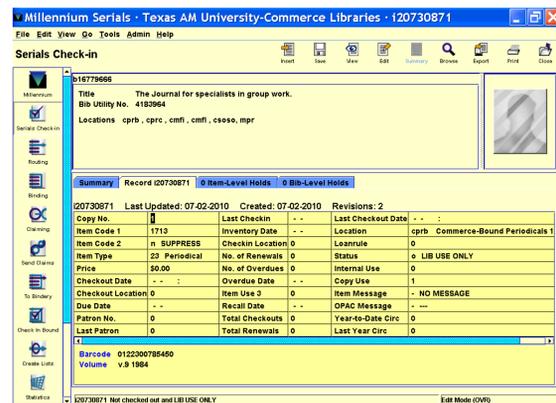
Use studies from 1999 with dots on spines with re-shelves (color and/or shape of the dots changed every 2 years).

- **NOTE:** Problems with this method -
  - Dots fall off (or wind up in hair)
  - Shelves forget dots
  - Decisions to be made about when dots are applied and interpretation of usage dots

About 3 years ago, changed to using generic bound volume record in ILS and counted all use on that record.

- **NOTE:** Problems with this method -
  - Not very detailed information - Age of volumes used? In-house or ILL usage? Was ILL document delivery (our patrons) or other libraries?
  - **Note: Our periodicals do not circulate.**

About 1 1/2-2 years ago – changed to new ILS with 3 in-house usage fields. Designated one - **internal use**, one - ILL for our patrons (**document delivery**), and one - ILL for other libraries.



Also began entering individual volumes as bound, and/or as re-shelved, and counted which type of use before re-shelving.

(This last method was in play for about 1 year when this binding project started.)

- **Note:** Problems with this method -
  - More labor intensive for the Serials Library Assistant and a few extra



steps for everyone involved.

Needed to determine what is high use – According to Hugh Franklin’s article “Comparing Quarterly Use Study Results for Marginal Serials in Oregon State University”, at least 1/3 of uses are missed in use counts.<sup>1</sup>

3 uses were deemed high use. Measurement of usage went back to the last color dots applied for 2-4 years of use.

#### 2. Online Access

If archival access and/or titles in databases considered to be stable and fairly permanent (i.e. JSTOR) – DO NOT BIND. (A significant advantage for us – we are a part of several consortial deals which include permanent archival access to titles). Also, stopped binding JSTOR titles some time ago, but, due to usage and lack of online availability of current issues, we still subscribe to some print (retain 6 years).

Online availability – If title is available in 3 or more reliable, full-text databases, preferably from different providers – DO NOT BIND.

#### 3. Indexing

With a few exceptions (see final criteria), if the title was not indexed, especially in one of our databases, the title was deemed - DO NOT BIND.

#### 4. Final Criteria - A mix of things.

Gifts are not bound (1 exception - journals edited by a faculty member(s)). Continued to bind some items that supported the areas where the University granted the most doctoral degrees – in our case, education. Decided to bind items specific to Texas education, including things from various Texas education associations.

#### Who Made the Final Decisions?

The Collection Development Committee – yes, there were some “discussions” about some titles.

#### What Happened to DO NOT BIND Titles?

With the exception of JSTOR titles – Library retains latest 2 years in current periodicals.

#### Other Considerations?

Less space needed in bound periodicals, but more needed in current periodicals (but it is a fixed amount). Labor maintaining current periodicals evens out with labor no longer used to bind. However, the Library Assistant does more work in the ILS and ILL has added some steps to their procedures.



Money – the periodical bindery budget was halved.

#### What Now?

Revisit usage in 2 years on titles deemed DO NOT BIND – may change decisions. Revisit online availability.

1. Franklin, Hugh. “Comparing Quarterly Use Study Results for Marginal Serials at Oregon State University,” *The Serials Librarian*, vol. 16, no. 1-2 (1989): 109-22.