

Budgeting for an Opening Day Collection in “Born Digital” Libraries

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Take a moment to consider the variety of resources and formats available in “born digital” libraries. In addition to e-books, e-journals, and databases, there are anatomical models, geographic information system (GIS) tools, image databases, US Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) board review materials, and video streaming services—all of which will need to be accessed on a variety of information platforms, including desktops, laptops, smartphones, and tablets. How should you plan for an “opening day” collection in a new medical library, and what will be your budget requirements? Being there from day one, with the good fortune to develop the budget to support your collection needs, is a huge advantage. It is critical to understand your institution’s budget process and to develop collections that support new schools of medicine. Furthermore, the library’s budget and collections will be a major focus for the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) when they meet with the library director during their accreditation site visit. This article highlights budgeting, collection development and management, resource discovery, and implications for the future.

The library budget is of utmost importance as it will determine which resources the library will provide. Many types of budgets are possible, and the budget type, as well as instructions on budget preparation, will likely be provided by your institution. For example, in a line-item budget, the institution defines specific categories for items such as books, journals, databases, document delivery, and institutional memberships [1]. As a born digital library, your initial budget request should take into consideration any (so-called) discounted prices offered by vendors to new customers. Also, when developing your five-year budget, be aware that the curriculum content may evolve during the first few years. Include a budget cushion so that additional resources can be added as changes occur.

While your collections should reflect your institution’s overall mission, there should also be a strong curriculum focus. Also, for born digital libraries, collections will be primarily electronic, but plan to budget for some print, as students prefer having print copies of required titles for studying. Identify and schedule telephone interviews with newly established medical school libraries. Collect and review data from the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL). Utilize Doody’s Core Titles or other collection development tools. Obtain recommendations from course directors, researchers, and other stakeholders. Be an active member of the education team,

participate on curriculum committees, and find faculty champions. Encourage librarian liaisons to work closely with course directors and key faculty, to identify resources, and to schedule product trials and training for the needed resources.

There are a number of collection management strategies to ensure that you get the biggest “bang for your buck.” Cooperative, or consortia-based, collection agreements can provide you with the desired resources at the best price. They may comprise a geographic region, such as the statewide California Electronic Library Consortium, or cover just one state, such as the Nevada Council of Academic Libraries. Consortia will not only enhance your buying power, but you will get extra points from your finance leaders and from the LCME when you report your cost savings! Other strategies to consider include cost-sharing with your parent or affiliate institution, patron-driven acquisitions, and rapid delivery of electronic document delivery [2].

Once you have selected your resources, you will want to select a discovery tool and prominently display it on the main page of your library website to make your resources findable to your community of users. Additionally, your website should provide links to training and tutorials, so that library users can learn how to fully utilize the features of your resources. Plan to track resource usage, because several months prior to the renewal date, you will want to determine the cost-per-use and survey your users to find out if the resources are meeting their needs.

Since budgeting for an opening day collection in born digital libraries will emphasize digital resources, which are heavily dependent on technologies, funding will continue to be a critical issue. With this in mind, it would be wise to keep up-to-date with trends in scholarly publishing and to support open access initiatives. With appropriate financial support, born digital libraries and librarians of the future will continue to thrive and to serve the expanding needs of their medical education and other health sciences programs.

References

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2. Kronenfeld MR. Trends in academic health sciences libraries and their emergence as the “knowledge nexus” for their academic health centers. *J Med Libr Assoc.* 2005 Jan;93(1):32–9.