Kent State University
Stark Campus Library
Annual Report, 09/10

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**Introduction**

This report serves several purposes:

1. Reporting important information to campus constituents so that they have a greater understanding of the services provided by the library
2. Serving as an historical record documenting the growth of the library, tracing its development over time
3. Providing a means for analyzing library activities so that effective strategic plans can be drawn and services improved over time
4. Assessing the value and effectiveness of the services provided by the library

While it can be a time-consuming task, the report is a valuable tool that helps the library not only reflect on the past, it provides important information that contributes to planning the future of the library.
Highlights

The focus of this year’s report highlights is a review of print serials, particularly print subscriptions. There is a fundamental problem in that print subscriptions are expensive and usage of those print resources is low and decreasing over time.

The Cost of Print Serials

In terms of cost, most libraries expect their serials to increase each year as subscription prices go up. The Stark Campus Library has maintained approximately the same investment from year to year by canceling titles that appear online. The library has always displayed caution in only canceling titles picked up online in a permanent repository that includes the most current content. The most notable source is the OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center (EJC). Journals that are added to the EJC are owned by OhioLINK libraries and loaded and stored in servers owned and operated by OhioLINK. This makes the content of the EJC reliable and persistent. When a title is added to the EJC there is no reason for the Stark Campus Library to continue to pay for, process, shelve, bind and otherwise maintain a print subscription to the same title. The following chart shows that the average cost for print subscriptions has varied for the past four years, always exceeding $40,000 but never reaching $50,000:

![Cost Print vs Cost Online Chart]

The cost for online serials content (mostly databases) also varies but has not exceeded the cost for print serials. When comparing print and online serials content, it is important to note that the subscription costs do not tell the entire story. Online subscriptions, while requiring a little upfront work to negotiate licenses and configure access, require virtually no additional direct or indirect costs. Print subscriptions usually require addition costs for both processing each issue and volume of a journal as well as for the preservation of the print items (binding and shelving). The additional direct cost is mostly due to the
need to bind several issues of a serial into a bound volume. The following chart shows the cost of binding for the past four years:

With an average of nearly $4,000 additional cost for binding serials, there is an additional, direct cost of almost 10% for print serials. A closer look at direct costs between print and online serials reveals that, using only direct costs, print serials cost nearly a third more than online serials:
As previously mentioned, online serials have no additional costs beyond the subscription. In addition to the cost for binding print serials, there are a number of indirect costs that are difficult to calculate. Each issue of a print serial must be received and “checked in” so that library users can see that they are available when using KentLINK (the library’s online public catalog). When issues do not arrive as scheduled, the library “claims” them (reports that they have not arrived) to the library’s serial vendor (Swets) and then tracks the claim to ensure that it eventually arrives. For binding, when enough current issues of a title are available to be bound together in a single volume, staff gather those issues and prepare them to be sent to the library’s commercial binder (HF Group). When those bound volumes come back from the binder they must be processed and shelved on the second floor of the library. Finally, as each print issue or volume is used, the library records the usage online and re-shelves the item. All of these indirect costs contribute to a significantly higher cost for print serials than the displayed in the charts above. It is just very difficult to itemize those costs.

Usage of Print Serials

Previous annual reports have listed the reasons that online content is typically considered superior to print content (multiple simultaneous users, greater search capabilities, not subject to damage or theft, etc.). It is obvious also, based on usage statistics of both print and online content, that users prefer online content to print. When comparing the use of online serials to print serials the difference is staggering:

It should be noted that the database usage used here includes only six primary resources. The library has access to over 300 licensed databases, either through membership in OhioLINK or as a library within the Kent State University system. So the difference between online and print serials usage is even greater than presented here. It should also be noted that the academic year 08/09 is missing from the above chart. During that year, the process of removing print serials incorrectly involved the deletion of individual item records in the library’s integrated system. Since calculating usage involves adding up
cumulated totals for each item, having those items deleted created a negative usage for the year. The problem has been corrected but that year’s information is left out.

In 2006/2007 the percentage of total serials usage (both print and online) by print resources accounted for 1.39%. Last year that percentage went down to .31%. For as little as print serials have been used over the past few years, with each passing year they are used less. Previous charts have demonstrated the stable but high cost for print serials. Perhaps the most dramatic indicator to consider is the cost per use of serials. The following table shows how the cost per use for print serials compares to the cost per download of an article included in an online database (not counting 08/09):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>06/07</th>
<th>07/08</th>
<th>08/09</th>
<th>09-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ave cost per print article</td>
<td>$80.20</td>
<td>$91.05</td>
<td>$279.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave cost per online article</td>
<td>$1.01</td>
<td>$0.73</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
<td>$0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the subscription cost of print serials is used to establish the cost per use (these calculations do not include either binding costs or indirect costs in maintaining print serials), it creates a dramatic contrast to the minimal cost for online serials. What is most troubling is that, while usage continues to decrease (from 561 uses in 06/07 to 150 uses last year—a 73% decline) and the high cost remains stable, the cost per use has climbed. Last year it cost the library nearly $280 each time someone used a print serial. That happened on average 3 times a week. This compares to an average cost per use of 74 cents for online serials. The chart below tracks the cost per use for both print and online serials:

The library needs to reevaluate its investment in print serials and look to strategies for reducing their costs and/or increasing their use.
The following includes a description of some specific highlights of library activities for the academic year 09/10:

**Teaching Area**

The campus purchased equipment to support the library’s instructional efforts in its teaching area on the first floor. 24 netbook computers were purchased as well as a large, wall-mounted SmartBoard and ceiling mounted projector. Finally, a laser printer was set up for use when classes are taught so that students do not need to pay for their printing when they come to the library for class instruction. All of these technological changes have greatly served to improve how the library performs class instruction.

**More Web Development**

The university rolled out a new version of its online content provider service called CommonSpot in February 2010. Over the course of the past academic year the library took that opportunity to add more content to its website. Most notably, it added more information about its various collections and provided online access to its Rare Book collection and various archives collections (Featured Speakers, Faculty publications, etc.). The library also added information about specific library services for teaching faculty.

**Reference Statistics**

At a meeting to discuss various ways to coordinate public service initiatives throughout KSU libraries, it was agreed that each library would begin using SiteScripter for recording reference statistics. The Kent Campus has been using this service for years. It is an online service that allows librarians to record the type of reference question (in-person, phone, or instant message), the level of difficulty according to the READ (Reference Effort Assessment Data) scale, as well as a short description of the question and how it was answered. It is hoped that after several attempts to gain more valuable information about the library’s reference service, SiteScripter, while not the perfect solution, will provide the data needed to adequately assess the library’s ability to answer reference questions.
Stark State Digital Library and Librarians

By the start of the spring semester in 2010 Stark State College of Technology hired two professional librarians, Marcia Addison, Director and Sara Klink, Assistant Director. The Stark Campus Library worked to familiarize these new librarians with our library services. A new database was developed to list all of the online resources available to Stark State users: http://local.stark.kent.edu/database. A retreat with all Kent State and Stark State librarians was held in June. Issues such as which Stark State classes should be taught at the library and which in the Stark State Digital Library were discussed. It is hoped that Stark State users will benefit from both its new Digital Library and two professional librarians and the services the Stark Campus Library will continue to provide.

Staffing the Circulation Desk

After reviewing the results of the last LibQUAL+ survey, conducted during the spring semester of 2009, the library once again recognized that it needed to enhance the type of customer service it provides directly to the public. The survey results did not indicate that users are dissatisfied with the service the library has provided in the past, just that the library showed some weakness in not having a greater presence of full time staff assisting users. As a result, the library began scheduling full time staff at the circulation desk between the hours of 9am and 4pm, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters.

Designating the Second Floor as Quiet Space

Comments from the LibQUAL+ survey revealed another area where users had concerns. Although the Library as Place has changed dramatically over time and libraries in general (particularly academic libraries) have become spaces where many users work in groups, some individuals still prefer to use the library as a place for individual, quiet learning. With so many public PCs and multiple classrooms on the lower level, during long semesters there is a steady stream of users coming in and leaving the library. In addition, as described in the section of this report on Library Usage, more people than ever before are coming in to use the library. As a result, the library decided to designate the second floor as its “Quite Area.” A new sign was displayed at the top of the stairs asking users to be considerate of others. Fewer complaints have been noticed and when a user becomes a nuisance, having the new policy and sign to refer to has made it easier to manage the noise level.
Archives

During the spring semester three students began inventorying and organizing the library’s archival collections. One student, Theresa Tope, working on her honor’s project went through the collection in the Director’s Conference Room describing each piece. She eventually categorized items and separated them into different cabinets. Another honors student, Christina Rodriguez, used some archival materials and created a display of the campus history. She also held an open house at the end of the semester to open the exhibit. Finally, library school practicum student Cassandra Isenberg helped further organize the archival collection and created a finding aid as part of her master’s degree.
The following individuals comprised the library staff for the 09/10 academic year:

- Rob Kairis, Library Director (Professor)
- Judy Kooistra, Collection Development Librarian (Associate Professor)
- Maureen Kilcullen, Reference Librarian (Associate Professor)
- Roger Davis, Serials Librarian (Assistant Professor)
- Mary Birtalan, Cataloging and Interlibrary Loan (Library Associate)
- Jeanne Hawley, Acquisitions (Senior Library Assistant)
- Jeffery Moore, Circulation/Student Worker Supervisor (Senior Library Assistant)

In addition to the full time staff listed above, library science graduate student Cassandra Isenberg started her practicum in the Stark Campus Library in the spring. Her interests are in organizing and providing finding aids for the library’s archive collection. In May, Jeffery Moore accepted a fulltime position in the Special Collections Department on the Kent Campus. Finally, there was a major staffing development in the spring. Stark State College of Technology advertised for a full time, professional librarian. At the conclusion of the hiring process, it was decided that two librarians would be hired. Kent State University at Stark looks forward to working with Marcia Addison (Director of Campus Library) and Sara Klink (Assistant Director of Campus Library) in providing the best possible library service to Stark State users.
Interlibrary Borrowing and Lending

Both ILL and circulation activity increased last year, circulation more so than ILL. Although this closed the gap slightly between the two measures of print usage, the ratio remained at about a 60-40 split; 61% of the total activity was for interlibrary borrowing while 39% was traditional circulation:

The gap is wide enough to make it hard to imagine a time in the future when traditional circulation activity exceeds ILL borrowing. Still, since there was a 13% increase in circulation activity, it will be interesting to see if the gap narrows.

Overall lending doubled last year while borrowing increased only slightly (2%):
priority the following year. When lending decreases it becomes a higher priority library for lending for the next year. This inevitably results in significant variances in activity from year to year.

**Borrowing**

While it is a bit difficult to interpret any meaningful trend over the course of the past 15 years, the last three years have seen a nearly 40% increase in activity. Of course, those three years only compensated for the sudden, single year drop in 06/07 of about the same amount.

**Lending**

As mentioned previously and in previous reports, the dramatic swings from high activity to low activity in book lending are likely related to the OhioLINK algorithm for setting each library’s priority for lending:

Starting in 2007 the activity went up 26%, then down 36% in 2008, and up 49% last year.
Information Literacy

Overall the library taught 5 more classes last year than the previous year. But while the library taught 30 additional Kent State classes, the number of Stark State classes dropped by 25 (a more than 40% decrease):

The most obvious explanation of the Stark State decrease in teaching is the hiring of two librarians at Stark State (mentioned in the Staff section of this report). Although Stark State does not have a traditional library, it does have a “Digital Library” where library instruction takes place. So while fewer Stark State classes were taught by Kent State librarians, without having the data describing the number of classes and students taught by Stark State librarians in their Digital Library it is not possible to know exactly how many classes received library instruction. With this change, it is natural to assume that Kent State librarians would end up teaching fewer Stark State classes.
Collection Development

All aspects of library spending were down last year:

Total spending decreased by 19%. Some of this can be explained by the strategic decision to move from print standing orders to the online version of the same title (mostly for large sets of reference titles, as discussed in this and previous annual reports in the Highlights section). Moving from paying approximately $200 a print volume to sharing the cost of online access with other Kent State libraries (particularly the Main Library at Kent) has reduced costs significantly. These types of costs are categorized as Library expenditures (as opposed to expenditures resulting from faculty requests). Since Library expenditures went down by 12%, it is fair to account for that decline through savings to standing orders. That should be viewed positively, since the library is not sacrificing content, just accessing it differently (online) and sharing the cost.

Still, purchases by faculty went down by 38%. This is cause for some concern. The library has invested considerable efforts in its approval plan, allowing individual faculty to regularly choose from a set of “slips” describing new publications. The biggest change to that plan occurred a couple of years ago when those slips were delivered electronically via email. There does seem to be some lingering confusion for some faculty and it is likely that that may be at least part of the reason faculty ordering has declined. Regardless of the reason, the library will need to make greater efforts to encourage faculty to take a greater part in building its collection.
This section on usage focuses on four areas:

1. Head Count
2. Reference Statistics
3. Circulation
4. Database Searches

**Head Count**

The chart below speaks for itself. More and more people are using the library than ever before. In fact, in only 3 years attendance in the library has doubled:

The biggest increase was for activity on the second floor. That activity rose by 19%. It is hard to know if designating the second floor as the library’s quiet space had any influence. Adding 16 public PCs certainly has contributed to increased use of the floor.
Reference Statistics

During the process of discussing ways to better coordinate services across all KSU campuses, the issue of reference statistics was addressed. As discussed in the Highlights section, it was agreed that all campuses would begin using the service employed by the Kent Campus called Sitescripeter in the coming year. As a result, and because efforts over the years at Stark have proved less than successful at describing how the library has responded to reference inquiries, there is little of value to report this year. It is hoped that with the adoption of Sitescripeter, the library will at long last have a valuable resource to measuring reference activity.

Circulation

Overall circulation activity increased by 11% last year:

With a sharp decrease in 08/09 (15% drop), the library is nearly back to the level of activity it recorded during the 05-07 years. In looking back at the past decade of activity, clearly there was a rise in circulation starting at the turn of the century. However, after reaching an all time high during 05/06, circulation activity has generally declined since. It will be interesting to see if last year reversed a trend or if the general trend continues downwards. Mirroring the overall circulation of all collections but in a more dramatic fashion, the use of the general collection increased by 42%:
Database Searches

The library has provided statistics for usage of online databases for as long as it has subscribed to them. They can be found on the library’s web site at the bottom of the About the Library web page:

http://stark.kent.edu/Library/AboutTheLibrary.cfm

These statistics are only for a small fraction of the databases available to Stark Campus users. While users have access to over 300 different databases, the library is not able to track the use of all of them. Many, if not most, are licensed through OhioLINK and statistics are provided at the institutional level and not broken down by campus. Of those that the library can track, it selects the ones it feels are most useful for its users. Since each database reports activity in a different format, the library simplifies the data by placing them into three categories:

1. *Sessions*, the number of times users accessed the database
2. *Searches*, the number of unique searches entered during a session
3. *Full Text*, the number of full text articles downloaded during a session

The chart below shows a seven-year trend for use of the databases tracked by the library:
The most notable information is the huge jump in searches over the past two years. The one explanation that would seem to account for this involves the library’s concern over the online content compared to previously subscriptions to print content for the same titles. In particular, some the library found significant discrepancies between the print and online versions of some Gale databases (Literary Criticism series, for example). This was explained as a result of copyright problems for the publisher when it created the online versions of print content; the copyrights did not always allow the publisher to include the content in its online database. In addition, the library discovered an entire volume of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* that the publisher simply neglected to scan (it has since been scanned). To investigate these variances between the purported level of online content, the library used student workers to search and compare the print and online content. This is a likely explanation to the 177% increase in searching from 07-08 to last year. Although of lesser note, the amount of full text downloaded last year increased from the previous year by 34%. Again, it is likely that the print vs. online content issue is a likely source of that jump in activity as well.
Teaching Area
A number of classes that come into the library for instruction are growing larger each year. Geology classes in particular can have enrollments of 60-80 students. In order to accommodate those large classes and as a way to expand the area used for both teaching and individual study, the library has emptied several ranges of book shelves at the end of the reference collection. This was accomplished after discarding several large series (like *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*) that are now online. The library plans to request additional tables and chairs to fill in the extra space.

Proxy Borrowing
Sometimes users are not able to come in to the library to pick up materials requested online. For others, having someone they trust pick up their materials is a convenient. To allow this to happen the library is considering ways to establish *proxy* borrowers; individuals (spouses, for example) identified by a library user who can regularly come in to the library and pick up materials on behalf of another user. A form will be developed requiring the individual to formally identify their proxy.

iMacs
By the start of the 2010 fall semester the library plans to replace one of the public PC pods with 4 iMac computers. With more courses needing applications better handled by Apple computers, and to provide more diversity in computer interfaces, the decision was made to allow students the opportunity to use iMacs along with the many PCs in the library. In addition, there is a plan to create an iMac lab in the Fine Arts building. That room could be used for classroom instruction as well as an open lab. Library iMacs will be available to users in the same way PCs are now. Except for rare occasion when the Fine Arts lab is not available and the 4 iMacs in the library need to be reserved, they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.
Instant Message Reference

At the end of the spring 2010 semester, librarians from all campuses met at the Stark Campus University Center to engage in strategic planning to help improve services across all 8 campuses. Among the many ideas considered was including all campuses in an instant messaging reference service. The Kent Campus has been doing this for some time, so the initiative was more a way to involve regional campuses, including Stark, in providing the service. The service is offered using www.meebo.com. Stark anticipates manning the service for 1-2 hours a week. Users who are online on a KSU library webpage will be able to simply click in a box and open a chat session with the librarian currently staffing the service. Although not as interactive as some of the previous chat services available to Kent State users (the OhioLINK Chat reference service, for example), Meebo does allow multiple users to chat with a librarian. Librarians can also send links directly to users.

Libguides

In the spring of 2010 KSU libraries agreed to start subscriptions to Libguides. This service provides a method for libraries to create interactive web pages. Many libraries use this service and KSU plans to use it in a number of different ways. The Stark Campus plans to create and use guides for different purposes. Some will be created to help guide students during a live instructional session. Others will be used as a supplement to what happens during a classroom session. Some guides will be created to provide instruction not connected with a live class session while others will be created as subject guides.

Archives

The work begun by two honors students and a practicum student with the library’s archival materials (mentioned in the Highlights section of this report) will be continued into the next year. The plan is to continue to organize the various collections and find better ways to make those collections accessible to more users. For some materials, yearbooks and campus newspapers, as examples, the materials will be cataloged and added to KentLINK. For other, less-traditional types of sources (pictures, event programs, etc.) another system will need to be developed (perhaps a digital archive where the items are scanned and displayed with metadata created to enable searching for the item on the internet.)