Notes on Operations Experts or Dummies?

Quality of E-Book Pool and User Selections in a Consortial Demand Driven Acquisition Program

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Academic libraries are increasingly purchasing electronic books (e-books) via demand driven acquisitions (DDA) programs. However, there is no guarantee about the quality of DDA titles. This is especially true for consortially managed DDA pools or when pools include all titles from selected publishers. This study analyzes data from EBSCO's GOBI acquisitions platform to assess the quality of the pool and purchased titles from the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL) publisher-based DDA program. Results showed that most available and selected titles were appropriate for academic libraries. Popular and lower level academic titles made up a relatively small portion of the DDA pool but were selected at a proportionally higher rate than other titles. The DDA pool was weighted towards titles that had been previously purchased by few GOBI libraries, but users tended to select titles that had been purchased by more GOBI libraries. Implications of these results are discussed from the point of view of a consortium member library using the DDA program as a supplement to its broader collections of print and e-books.

As academic libraries increasingly use demand driven acquisition (DDA) or patron driven acquisition (PDA) electronic book (e-book) programs for monograph acquisitions, they cede control over what titles are added to their collection. Individual libraries that administer their own programs can exert a measure of control over selections by carefully tailoring the pool of available titles according to their institutions' needs and goals. Participants in consortial programs, however, do not necessarily have this control and instead rely on mutually agreed upon pools.

The lack of control in DDA programs may concern librarians accustomed to having title level control over their collections. One fear is that library users may lack the expertise to select high-quality titles, spending the library's limited budget on marginal or unsuitable titles. An example of this concern is related to the *Dummies* series of instructional books that some librarians feel is inappropriate for an academic collection. Authors of studies of PDA programs, such as Schroeder et al. and Goedeken and Lawson, have specifically excluded books from the *Dummies* series from their library's PDA/DDA programs.[1] Exclusion of *Dummies* books, however, is not universal. Dinkins listed *Dummies* books among the titles available as part of her library's PDA program and suggests that they may be valuable to users but unlikely to be chosen by librarians.[2]

To achieve a balance between allowing users to access the books they want and avoiding dedicating too many resources to non-scholarly materials, it is helpful to have a sense of the impact on the collection when libraries allow users to select titles from a pool that includes access to all types of titles. This type of

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analysis is difficult because it is often hard to discern the quality or content level of titles on a large scale, particularly when many non-academic titles lack obvious indicators like the word "dummies." This paper analyzes the user selections triggered for purchase as part of the Colorado Alliance for Research Libraries (CARL) DDA program. It uses data from GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO (GOBI) to assess content level, quality, and prevalence in libraries to better understand user selections. Unlike other studies, it also examines the non-selected titles from the DDA pool, providing a context for selection and facilitating a better understanding of selection rates for different types of titles. Although GOBI's data lacks the richness and depth of expert knowledge provided by selective review sources like *Choice Reviews*, this study uses GOBI data because it is comprehensive enough to include information about a large majority of the titles included in the CARL DDA program.

Background

The CARL DDA Program

The Kraemer Family Library (KFL) at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) participates in several programs offered by CARL. In fiscal year (FY) 2012, CARL proposed a joint publisher-based DDA program for consortia members, and KFL chose to participate. The participating libraries initially chose twenty-four publishers for the program, and some publishers dropped out over time. The current DDA includes titles published by Wiley, Princeton University Press, University of California Press, Jossey-Bass, Bloomsbury, and several smaller publishers. Titles published before 2012 or that cost more than $250 are excluded from the program, and the pool is not otherwise restricted. ProQuest provides new discovery records, updates, and deletions monthly via a file transfer protocol (FTP) site, and participating libraries are responsible for downloading the records and entering them into their systems. After titles are triggered for purchase, a lead library provides updated bibliographic records to the other participating libraries, usually every two to six weeks. Although the full bibliographic records indicate which are discovery records and which are purchased titles, the catalog's public view does not distinguish between the two because this information is not relevant to users or for discovery.

In 2016, CARL began working with ProQuest to transition the DDA to an Access-to-Own (ATO) program. For detailed information on the program's logistics, see Denker's paper detailing the CARL DDA program from its inception to the switch to an ATO program.[3] A major change with the ATO program was the allocation of more funds to short-term loans instead of immediate purchases. With the new model, CARL staff asked ProQuest to approach the current DDA publishers with the new ATO proposal. After months of negotiation between ProQuest and the publishers, CARL members were given a list of publishers who agreed to the new access-to-own model. Several publishers, including Oxford University Press and Harvard University Press, stopped participating after the transition to ATO. It was not clear whether these publishers dropped out because they disliked the available terms of the ATO or if they had lost interest in participating in DDA for consortia.[4] All participating CARL libraries are asked annually whether they will continue with the program for the following year. Costs for the next year are calculated using a flat fee common to all libraries and adding an additional charge based upon the library's share of use. Costs for KFL have remained stable, with only one year where costs increased above the predicted amount.

GOBI Profiling of Titles

GOBI, currently owned by EBSCO and formerly known as Yankee Book Peddler (YBP), facilitates the acquisition of books, primarily for academic libraries. Among the services GOBI provides are approval plans, where newly published books are automatically sent to libraries if they meet the criteria in that library's profile. To facilitate this process, GOBI reviews newly published titles and applies several designations. Titles are assigned one of six Content Levels: General-Academic (GEN-AC), Advanced-Academic (ADV-AC), Professional (PROF), Basic Studies (BASIC), Popular (POP), or Juvenile (JUV). Titles are also profiled according to their quality and appropriateness for an academic library collection and assigned one of the following YBP Select ratings: Basic-Essential, Research-Essential, Basic-Recommended, Research-Recommended, Specialized, or Supplementary. While GOBI assigns all profiled titles a Content Level, only titles deemed to be of sufficient quality are given a YBP Select rating. Additionally, GOBI shares a Library Activity number for each title that indicates how many libraries have purchased that title from GOBI. Since this number does not include non-GOBI purchases, it provides only a relative indication of a title's prevalence in libraries. The data available from GOBI is limited to a few ratings and it is unclear how well these ratings correspond with other measures of book quality. Nonetheless, the authors elected to use GOBI's data because it was the only source available to them that was comprehensive enough for the scale of the study and because of their previous experience with the platform as selectors.

Literature Review

Early Perspectives on DDA

As PDA and DDA programs developed in the early 2010s, they were often viewed with enthusiasm or dread. Anderson predicted that the move to PDA programs as the standard method of collection was inevitable.[5] He wrote that library collections are "built on speculation" and despite expert knowledge and the ability to select good books, subject selectors are "unable to guess with real precision the exact needs of the library's specific patrons."[6] He predicted that to maintain relevance, libraries needed to adapt to the new information environment, in part by being able to fulfill immediate patron needs on demand. Walters, in contrast, argued that "many PDA programs fail to support the broader educational mission of the university" and are "likely to diminish collection quality." [7] He believed that library patrons, particularly undergraduates, often lack the knowledge and expertise needed to make selections that would improve the collection and meet their institutions' long-term needs. A few of the other potential problems with PDA programs that he described include the tendency to create shallow or poorly balanced collections, the ability to deplete funds too quickly, and limitations in the availability of titles in e-book format.

Studies of DDA programs suggest that libraries have taken a moderate course of action. DDA programs at academic libraries have expanded rapidly, but they have not become the dominant method of collection building. Authors of many studies of DDA programs believe that they have been generally successful but do not suggest that they are perfect or can replace other methods of selection. For example, Bennett notes that North Carolina State University is "very happy" with their DDA program, but their DDA pool remained relatively small, with only 64,000 titles in the pool compared with an overall e-book collection of 870,000.[8] He cites the unpredictability associated with DDA programs as the reason they maintain a relatively small pool of titles. Walker and Arthur found that the University of Alabama's DDA purchases provided a higher return on investment in terms of cost-per-use than traditionally purchased materials, but they were explicit that they do not suggest libraries abandon their traditional acquisitions methods.[9] Foremost among their reasons was the limited materials available via DDA programs, as the majority of high-quality research titles are not accessible through these programs.

Assessing the Quality of DDA Purchases

Costello's book *Evaluating Demand-Driven Acquisitions* provides a comprehensive overview of the various ways to measure DDA acquisitions.[10] She dedicates chapters to different criteria for measurement, including cost, diversity, and usage. Measurement of quality is addressed in the chapter titled "Assessing for Collection Standards." Costello provides an overview of the difficulties of assessing the quality or appropriateness of selections and defining what constitutes a "good" collection. She gives consideration to the tension between providing materials for immediate and long-term needs, the relationship between use and value, the question of to whom value is provided, and several other challenges.

Shen et al. assessed the quality of patrons' PDA selections by comparing them to librarians' hypothetical selections from the same pool of records.[11] The authors used data from the YBP acquisitions platform, specifically the YBP Select rating and Content Level designation, to compare patron and librarian selections. Of the 637 patron selected titles, only 116 were also chosen by librarians. Nonetheless, they found that "librarian and patron selections overall were remarkably similar in their content levels, with the exception that librarians selected significantly fewer popular titles."[12] With regard to YBP Select rating, patrons and librarians both selected the largest number of Research-Recommended titles, but patrons selected more supplementary titles than librarians.

Gilbertson et al. evaluated the quality of their patron selections based on how many other WorldCat libraries owned the title.[13] They found that 221 of the 225 selected titles were in more than fifty libraries. They admitted that it is questionable whether library ownership is an adequate measure of title quality, but they found the data useful when used in conjunction with other measurements of the program's success, including number of uses and cost.

Comparing DDA Pools and Purchases

A few studies have compared characteristics of the pool of available DDA titles to the titles that were eventually purchased. Shepherd and Langston reviewed a PDA pilot program for the California State University (CSU) Library Consortium that was undertaken to strengthen their shared collection of e-books.[14] Part of their study compared the Library of Congress (LC) classifications of titles in the PDA pool to the classifications of the purchased titles. They found, "In general, the number of books purchased in each subject was proportional to the number of books represented by that subject in the entire collection."[15] Egan et al. did a similar analysis when reviewing a PDA plan at the City University of New York (CUNY) system. They reviewed statistics from Ingram that included the LC classification and publisher for each title purchased. Their analysis found "no significant gaps between the representation of subjects in the collection and in the selection of those subjects by

Table 1. DDA pool and purchases by Content Level

Content Level	Number of Titles in Pool	Percent of Pool	Number of Purchases	Percent of Purchases
ADV-AC	12129	48.8%	1083	46.3%
GEN-AC	2919	11.8%	565	24.1%
PROF	3652	14.7%	407	17.4%
POP	1517	6.1%	240	10.3%
JUV	53	0.2%	1	0.0%
NONE	4571	18.4%	44	1.9%
Total	24841		2340	

patrons."[16] Their analysis of publishers showed that they "fared similarly," but they noted an exception where one publisher's books "represented 9.6% of records, but titles selected for purchase made up 12.9%."[17]

Method

For this study, lists of purchased and unpurchased DDA titles were generated using records from KFL's Sierra integrated library system. A local note in the records marks all titles that are part of the DDA program and indicates which titles have been purchased. In the CARL DDA program, discovery records are added and subtracted periodically. As a result, measuring the characteristics of a DDA pool is like aiming at a moving target. By contrast, records for books purchased as part of the DDA are continually added and never removed. To minimize the discrepancy between the purchased titles and discovery pool from which they are drawn, data was extracted in May 2018, immediately following the addition of the most recent group of purchased titles and right before the addition of new discovery records. This ensured that all the titles in the pool had at least some opportunity to be triggered for purchase, but the duration of this opportunity varied because some records had been in the system longer than others.

The GOBI platform was used to collect additional information about each title. An International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for each title was exported from Sierra and used to query the GOBI database. To expedite searches, the ISBNs were batched into groups of eighty, the largest number of results that GOBI can display on a single screen. GOBI allows the export of bibliographic data through its interface, but the process for downloading and compiling results was cumbersome given the number of results to be examined. As an alternative, the search result information was harvested using the Data Miner plug-in for the Google Chrome browser. Information from the "Full Item Display" was harvested and the following data was isolated and separated into columns: Title, Year, Content Level, YBP Select, Classification, Library Activity, and Language. After the initial information was recorded, titles were marked if the word "dummies" appeared anywhere in the full item display, typically in the title or series statement. Titles from the Dummies series were isolated for analysis because they are well-known, intended for a low-level audience, and plentiful in the DDA pool. An initial review of the data was done using Microsoft Excel, and additional analysis was done using RStudio, an integrated development environment for R, a statistical programming language.

Results

A total of 26,738 records from the CARL DDA program were in the KFL system at the time of the study. Of these, 24,841 (92.9 percent) had GOBI records. All the titles that had been triggered for purchase had GOBI records. Titles lacking GOBI records were excluded from the study and are not included in any subsequent percentages. A total of 2,340 titles were marked as purchased, representing 9.4 percent of the pool available in GOBI.

Language

CARL did not restrict the DDA pool by language, and non-English titles were included if publishers made them available. The DDA pool included 4,080 Non-English titles (16.4 percent of records). An overwhelming majority (95.2 percent) of non-English titles were in German, and most were published by De Gruyter or Wiley. Nearly all purchases were for English titles (99.8 percent). Only 4 of the 4,080 non-English titles in the DDA pool (0.1 percent) were purchased.

Dummies Titles

The DDA pool included 1,258 *Dummies* books, making up 5.1 percent of titles. *Dummies* titles were triggered for purchase 168 times, resulting in 7.2 percent of all purchases.

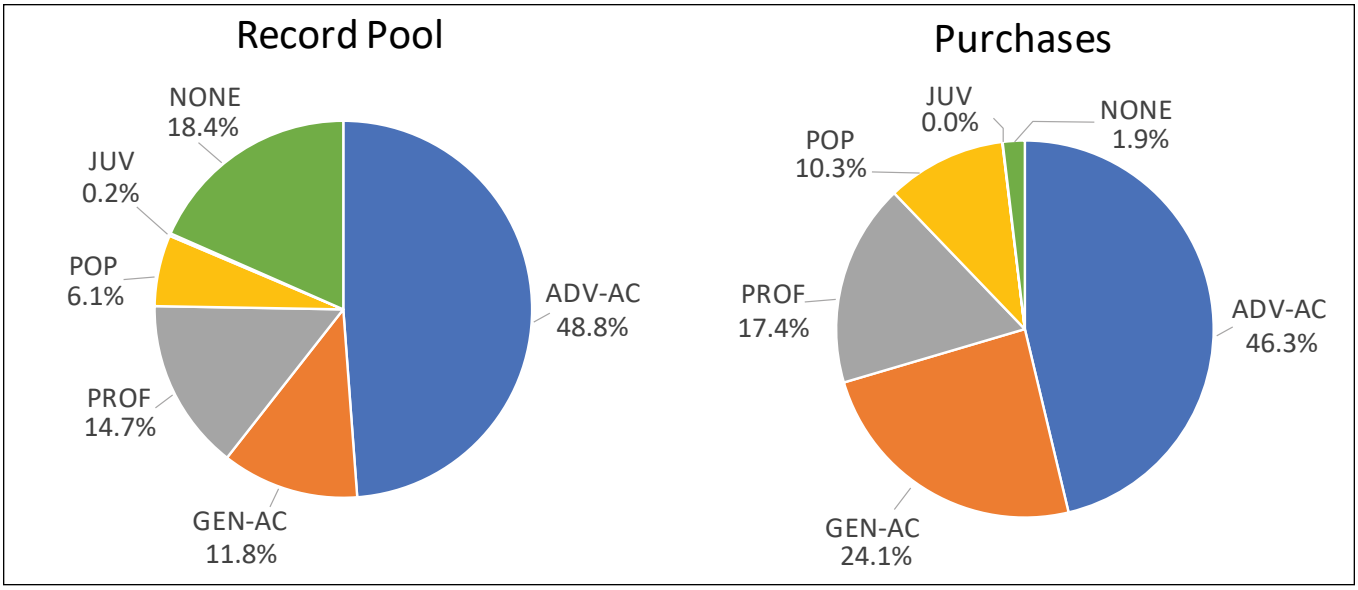

Figure 1. Composition of DDA record pool and purchases by Content Level.

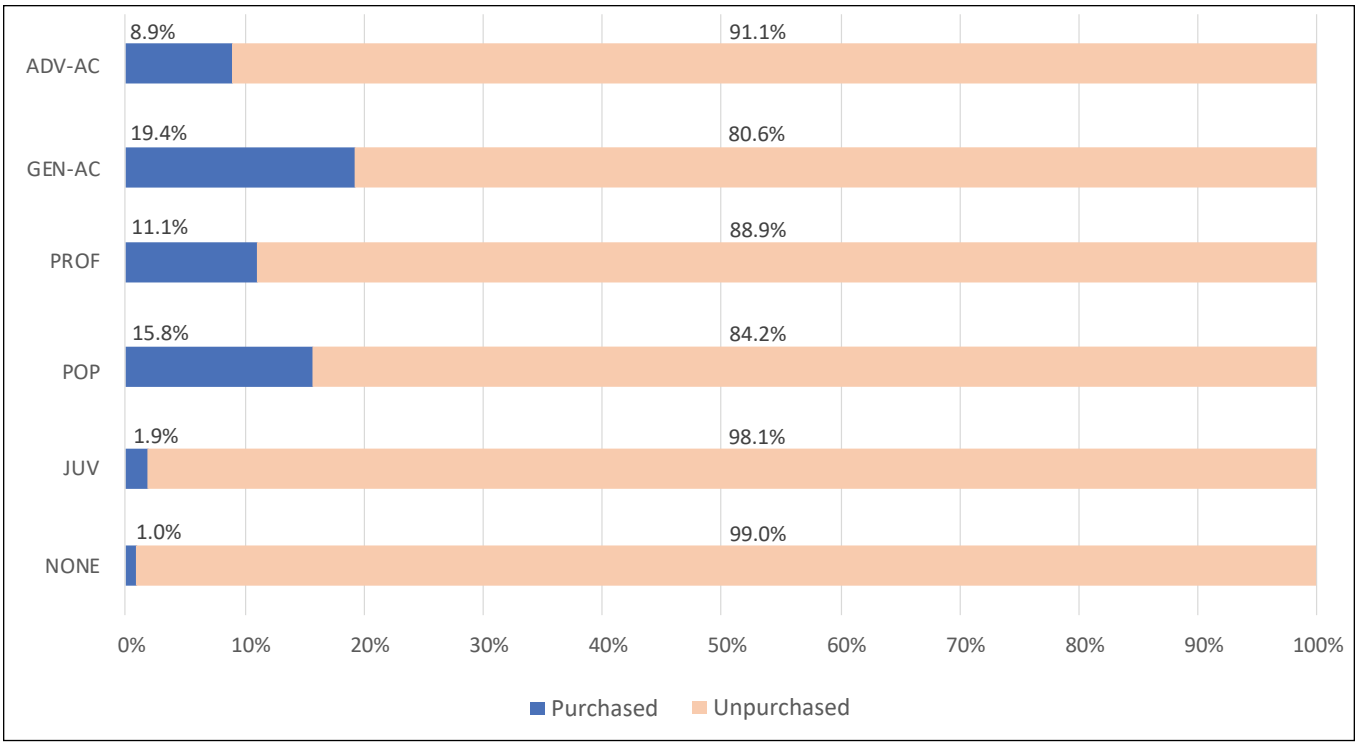

Figure 2. Purchased and unpurchased titles by Content Level.

A higher percentage of the *Dummies* titles pool were triggered for purchase (13.4 percent) than non-*Dummies* titles (9.2 percent).

Content Level

Table 1 displays the number of titles available in the pool and the number of purchases at each Content Level. Figure 1 illustrates the composition of the overall pool and purchased

Table 2. DDA pool and purchases by YBP Select Rating

YBP Select Rating	Number of Titles in Pool	Percent of Pool	Number of Purchases	Percent of Purchases
Research-Essential	160	0.6%	35	1.5%
Research-Recommended	7087	28.5%	677	28.9%
Basic-Essential	143	0.6%	41	1.8%
Basic-Recommended	1656	6.7%	311	13.3%
Specialized	811	3.3%	57	2.4%
Supplementary	6552	26.4%	709	30.3%
None	8432	33.9%	510	21.8%
Total	24841		2340	

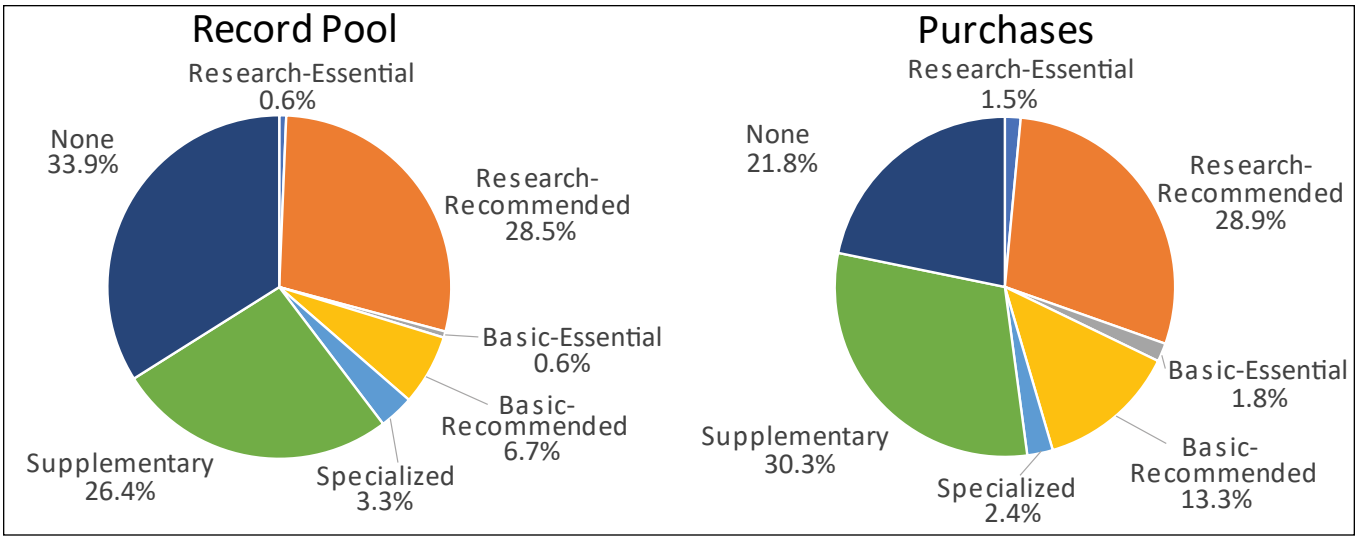

Figure 3. Composition of DDA record pool and purchases by YBP Select rating

titles in terms of Content Level. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of titles purchased from the overall pool for each level.

Nearly half the titles in the pool (48.8 percent) were at the ADV-AC level. GEN-AC titles were less common (11.8 percent), as were PROF titles (14.7 percent). POP titles were even less common (6.1 percent), and there were very few JUV titles (.2 percent). There were no BASIC titles in the pool. Some titles lacked a Content Level (18.4 percent).

ADV-AC titles were the most purchased in terms of total number of e-books. The Content Level with the highest percentage of available titles selected was GEN-AC, and POP titles were selected at a similarly high rate. Titles with no assigned Content Level were rarely purchased.

YBP Select Rating

Table 2 shows the number of titles available in the pool and the number of purchases for each YBP Select rating. Figure 3 illustrates the composition of the overall pool and purchased titles in terms of YBP Select rating. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of titles purchased from the overall pool for each rating.

The most common YBP Select ratings in the pool were Research-Recommended (28.5 percent) and Supplementary (26.4 percent). Basic-Recommended titles were less common (6.7 percent), as were Specialized titles (3.3 percent). Research-Essential and Basic-Essential titles were relatively rare (.6 percent each). About one third (33.9 percent) of titles lacked a YBP Select rating.

Results showed that titles with a YBP Select rating were selected for purchase at a higher rate than those without a rating. More Research-Recommended rated titles were selected than Basic-Recommended titles, but a greater percentage of available Basic titles were selected. Although Research-Essential and Basic-Essential titles made up a small portion of the overall purchased titles, a much greater percentage of the available Essential titles were purchased than Recommended titles.

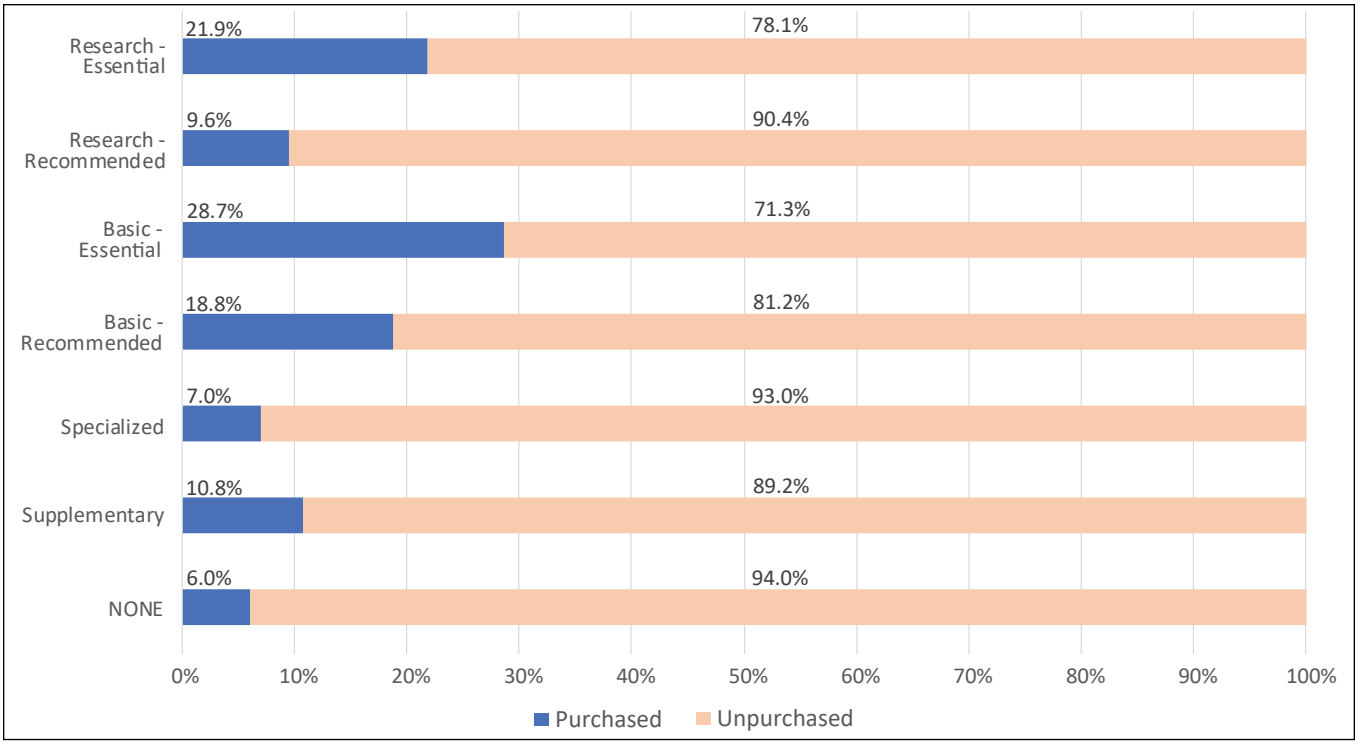

Figure 4. Purchased and unpurchased titles by YBP Select rating.

Table 3. Content Level and YBP Select Rating cross-tabulation table

Content Level\YBP Select Rating	Research-Essential	Research-Recommended	Basic-Essential	Basic-Recommended	Specialized	Supplementary	NONE
ADV-AC	157	7,012	2	8	137	3,170	1,643
GEN-AC	2	23	141	1,646	0	661	446
PROF	1	50	0	2	674	2,410	515
POP	0	0	0	0	0	311	1,206
JUV	0	0	0	0	0	0	53
NONE	0	2	0	0	0	0	4,569

Content Level and YBP Select Cross Tabulation

Table 3 provides a cross-tabulation of Content Levels and YBP Select ratings. Generally, titles with YBP Select ratings of Research-Essential or Research-Recommended were at the ADV-AC level, and titles with YBP Select ratings of Basic-Essential or Basic-Recommended were at the GEN-AC level. Specialized titles were mostly at the PROF level. Supplementary titles were most commonly assigned the ADV-AC Level, but many were assigned the PROF Content Level. Titles with a POP level, not typically the focus of academic collections, rarely had YBP Select ratings and were considered Supplementary when they did.

About one third (33.9 percent) of the titles lacked a YBP Select rating, and just short of one-fifth (18.4 percent) had no Content Level. Common reasons given as to why titles lacked Content Level or YBP Select rating were that they were low level or a recent reprint of another edition. A large portion of the titles with no Content Level were non-English titles. This may be because YBP was traditionally focused on servicing academic libraries in English-speaking countries.

Number of Purchasing Libraries

The pool of available records was heavily skewed towards titles with low Library Activity values, meaning that few

Table 4. Library Activity summary statistics

	Minimum	1st Quartile	Median	Mean	3rd Quartile	Maximum
DDA Pool	0	7	30	48.8	69	845
Purchased	0	37	72	96.7	131	845

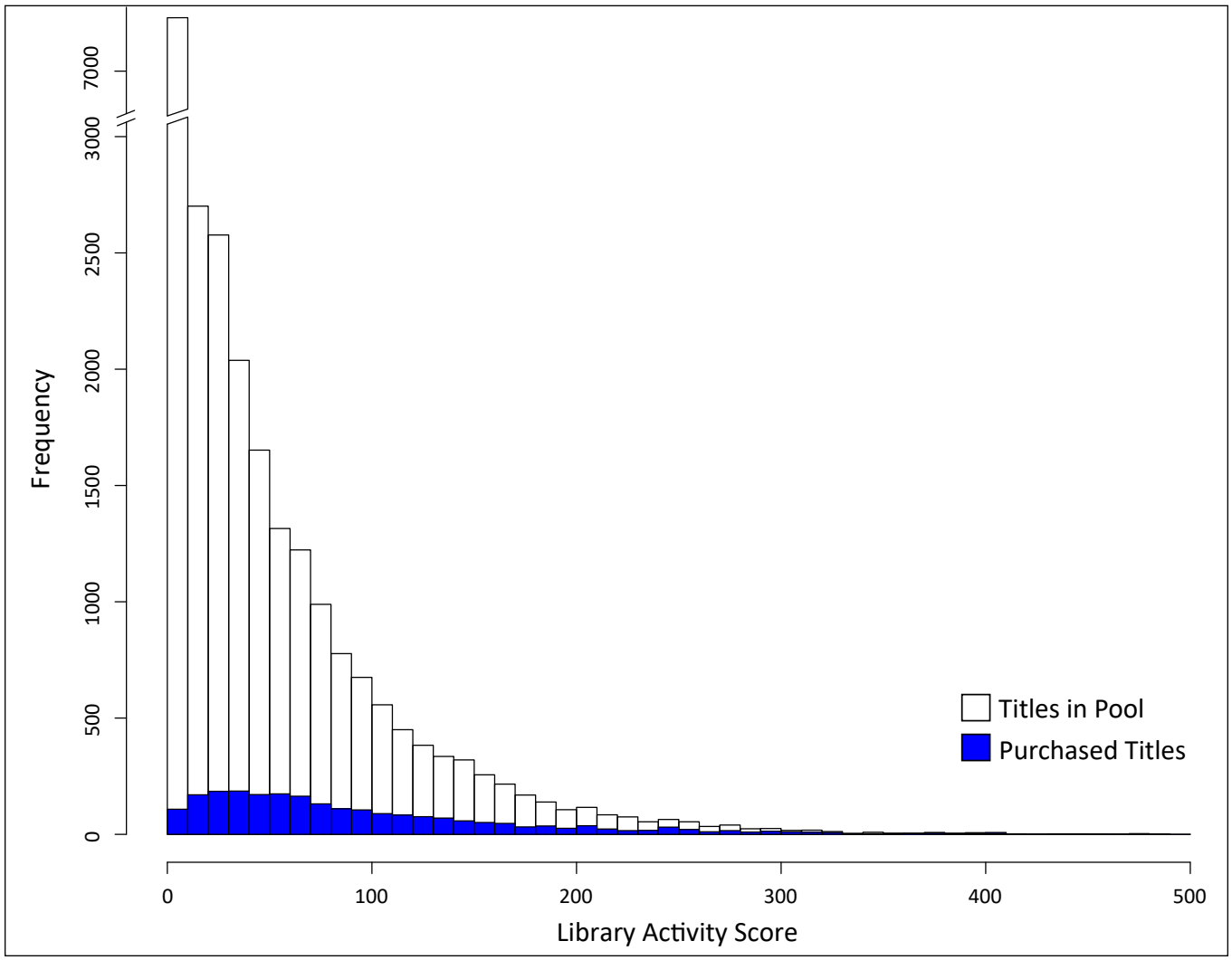

Figure 5. Histogram of Library Activity.

libraries had purchased them via GOBI. The median Library Activity value for the pool was thirty, and 3,232 titles (13.0 percent) had a Library Activity value of zero.

Titles selected for purchase tended to have much higher Library Activity values than those that were not selected. The median value for selected titles was seventy-two, and only fourteen titles (.6 percent of purchases) had a Library Activity value of zero. Sixteen of the twenty titles with the highest Library Activity (80.0 percent) were selected for purchase, as were sixty-two of the top hundred (62.0 percent). Titles with median or above Library Activity value were purchased at a rate of 15.3 percent. This is higher than the overall rate of purchase (9.4 percent), and much higher than the rate of purchase for titles with a below median Library Activity (3.6 percent).

Table 4 provides a summary of the distributions of Library Activity for the DDA pool and purchased titles. Figure 5 is a histogram that displays the number of titles available and number of titles purchased at various Library Activity values.

Discussion

The overall pool of titles in the CARL DDA was generally appropriate for academic libraries. A majority of the available titles were geared to academic audiences, and there was a reasonable number of specialized or supplementary titles that could be valuable to researchers. Initial concerns that an unregulated pool of titles would introduce an overwhelming quantity of low-quality titles into the collection proved largely unfounded.

Nonetheless, the CARL DDA pool includes a few classifications of titles, for example non-English titles and titles lacking a Content Level, which are very unlikely to trigger purchases. If the library had control over the pool of titles, it would likely exclude these titles. They do not appear to be in demand, and if they appear in search results, they could detract user attention from more relevant titles. In a previous study at KFL, Jabaily et al. found that the WebPAC heavily favored recently published items, likely pushing older, but more relevant, items lower in search results.[18] The study showed that the library's discovery search was better at ranking results and mitigating discovery problems associated with adding large collections of records. Although it is unclear whether the addition of large quantities of low value records harms discovery, the inclusion of the titles does not appear to be a source of financial risk, and as such does not lead to concerns that would discourage KFL's further participation in a consortial DDA program.

The percentages of user selections for the CARL DDA program were similar to the results found by Shen et al. in terms of YBP Select ratings and Content Levels.[19] The biggest differences were that the CARL DDA program purchased a smaller percentage of titles lacking a YBP Select rating (22 percent versus 43 percent) and Content Level (2 percent versus 7 percent). This difference is possibly due in part to changes in GOBI's profiling rather than solely to differences in user preferences. Given the high percentage of titles with no YBP Select rating, especially in Shen et al., comparisons are best made in Content Level classifications. Figure 6 illustrates the differences in the distributions of selections by Content Level. Compared to the program studied by Shen et al., the CARL DDA Program showed a higher percentage of GEN-AC (24 percent versus 16 percent) titles, and a lower percentage of ADV-AC (46 percent versus 53 percent) titles. It also showed a higher rate of PROF (17 percent versus 12 percent) titles. The two programs had a similar purchase rate for POP titles (10 percent versus 11 percent). While it is possible that some of the differences are a result of the lower percentage of unrated titles in the CARL DDA, this cannot account for all the differences. Not knowing the pool of available titles in Shen et al.'s study, it is difficult to ascertain whether differences are due to differences in user preferences or differences in the pool of available titles.

Whether these distributions represent an appropriate balance is subjective and depends on the library's mission and goals. In assessing their results, Shen et al. noted that patrons are more likely than librarians to select popular titles, but concluded that "students and faculty performed admirably in the selection of titles appropriate to or recommended for an academic setting."[20] In contrast, Walters interpreted Shen et al.'s data as evidence that "undergraduates often lack the knowledge and expertise needed to make good selection decisions."[21] He focused on the fact that "only 30 percent of patrons' selections were included in the librarians' lists of relevant e-books" and "patrons were more than twice as likely to select nonacademic titles."[22]

For now, the purchases triggered by CARL users have not led to concerns at KFL. The high percentages of research and academic titles indicate that most titles are aligned with the institution's research and teaching missions. Given the distribution of titles in the DDA pool, it makes sense that the highest number of purchased titles were at the ADV-AC Content Level. The higher rate of acquisition for GEN-AC titles is reasonable given the large undergraduate populations at UCCS and other CARL institutions.

The authors of this study consider the 10.3 percent of purchases for POP materials acceptable for KFL. Although POP titles were overrepresented in purchases based on their percentage of the overall pool, a large majority of POP titles (84.2 percent) were not purchased. Some libraries, like that at the University of Mississippi, have eliminated DDA access to popular materials and textbooks.[23] The authors of this study believe such an action is reasonable and that popular materials should not be the core of an academic library's collection. But KFL's DDA program is a supplement, rather than a replacement, for traditional collection strategies, and the library collects relatively few popular materials using traditional methods. As a result, there is more concern about the unintended consequences of limiting user choices too narrowly than about the purchase of supplemental or non-academic titles.

An anecdotal review of the POP titles selected by users showed that most were not the type of leisure or genre fiction titles that many would associate with a popular designation. Many of the selected e-books are focused on helping individuals teach themselves skills like computer programming, interpreting data, or grant writing. Other titles are intended to supplement learning in challenging academic classes such as calculus and organic chemistry. Limiting access to these titles may make it more difficult for users to pursue their own learning or to get the basic help they need. Some librarians may cringe at the idea of purchasing *Dummies* books, yet these books may be appealing to users. Several KFL librarians have expressed a desire to provide access to *Dummies* titles, or books from similar

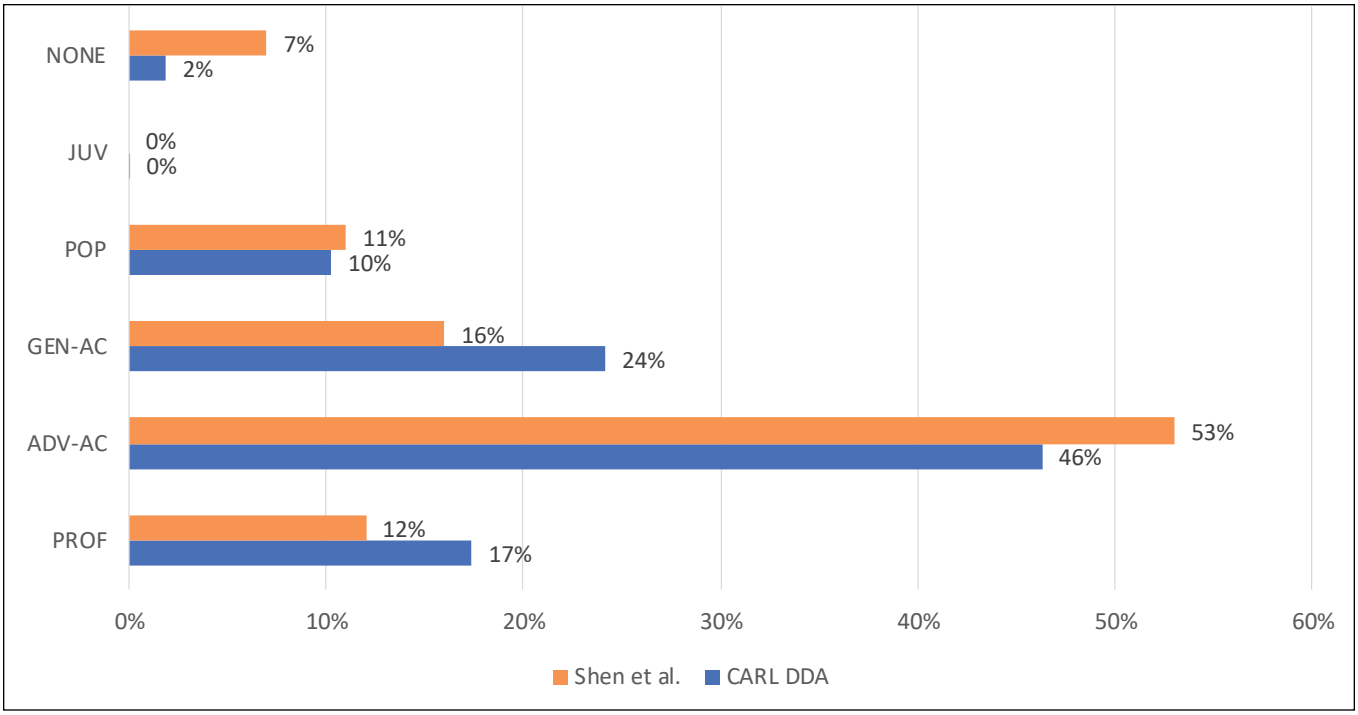

Figure 6. Comparison of user DDA selections by Content Level in Shen at al. and CARL DDA.

series, even when they hesitate to purchase them with their selector funds. Another consideration regarding these titles is the number of nontraditional students at UCCS and their potential need for refresher materials. Many of these students may be uncomfortable asking the library to purchase these materials, but their availability in a DDA program allows them to find and select titles on their own.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is a potential concern that purchased titles may be too specialized or professionally focused. These titles could be especially problematic in a consortial DDA program if one library's specialized programs lead to purchases that are too narrow to serve other participants' needs. An anecdotal review of the Specialized YBP Select rated titles showed that many of these titles are focused on engineering and nursing. This is good for users at UCCS, as these are areas where the university has a large number of graduate students and faculty. Other librarians in the consortium, however, may be less pleased if their institutions do not have programs in these areas. Nonetheless, "Specialized" titles were selected at the lowest rate of any of the titles with YBP Select ratings (only 7 percent of available specialized titles were purchased).

The relatively high median Library Activity value for the purchased titles can be interpreted in a few different ways. It may suggest that users avoided obscure books and did not select overly specialized titles that will have little value to others. It also indicates that users usually selected titles that were considered acceptable by some academic librarians. However, it may indicate that user selections could contribute to the conformity of collections. If the goal of a DDA program is to provide access to books that would not otherwise be purchased, the high median Library Activity value could indicate that it is falling short in this respect.

The skew of the DDA pool towards titles with low Library Activity values indicates that there are large numbers of available titles that are rarely selected by academic librarians. Librarians may not have the time or resources to sort through these titles, but triggered purchases for DDA titles with low Library Activity values indicate that at least some of these titles are of interest to users. There were 445 titles purchased from the portion of the DDA pool with a Library Activity count below the median of thirty (19.0 percent of purchases). These purchases included many lower level titles, including 181 from the POP Content Level (40.7 percent of below median purchases). *Dummies* titles alone accounted for 131 of the 445 titles purchased with below median Library Activity counts (29.4 percent). But there were also many high Content Level purchases with below median Library Activity counts, including 127 PROF Content Level titles (28.5 percent of below median purchases). An advantage of DDA programs is that they allow users to identify titles valuable to them, and a validating outcome of this study was the indication that niche or specialized

titles appeared to be selected in moderation. Of course, this study did not measure user satisfaction with their selections or their future use, so it is unclear how well the purchased materials met user needs.

The library's continued participation in the CARL DDA program is predicated on the view that it is a supplement rather than a replacement for traditional collection strategies. The FY 2018 contribution for participation in the CARL DDA program was less than 10 percent of the total book budget. If the DDA program occupied a larger share of the acquisition budget or was the library's primary method of acquisition, it would be necessary to be more critical of the DDA program's performance and a study focused on title-by-title assessment, not broad categorization, would be necessary. Another aspect that this study did not consider is the breakdown by subject across the DDA program and whether materials in all major areas of study on campus are represented. If DDA becomes a more central collection development tool for the library, a closer look at subject distribution of the pool and purchases will be necessary.

Conclusion

This first attempt to analyze the quality and level of a DDA pool and purchases has been revealing and reassuring but has also made it clear that further study is warranted. While the available titles and purchases for the CARL DDA program appear to be broadly appropriate for academic libraries, this study's limitations do not enable a clear determination of the role that these titles play in the library's collection. Future researchers might compare indicators of quality for DDA titles to those in e-book packages or print titles. They may also consider other important factors like subject area, publication date, or usage data. This study was limited to a single snapshot in time, but given the regular changes to DDA record pools, it may be more useful to monitor how a pool's quality changes over time. Finally, this study focused only on titles that reached the number of views required to trigger a purchase, and examining titles for which there was more limited user interest could be revealing.

As libraries continue to take advantage of new and evolving acquisition methods, it is becoming increasingly important to monitor the quality of collections on a large scale. The authors hope this study can be one example of how the composition of a DDA pool and the resulting purchases can look. They also hope the study's method of quality assessment will inspire other libraries to assess their large-scale e-book acquisitions to determine if they are in line with their library's collection needs. The authors have made the dataset available with permission from GOBI.[24]

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