

University of Mary Washington

Eagle Scholar

Administrative and Professional Faculty
Research

Administrative Faculty

2021

Using an Evaluation Grid to Holistically Assess Library Databases

Summer Durrant

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.umw.edu/administrative>



Part of the [Collection Development and Management Commons](#)

Using an Evaluation Grid to Holistically Assess Library Databases

When evaluating subscription-based databases, academic librarians primarily rely on cost-per-use statistics to guide their decision-making. Although this metric is useful, it does not provide a complete picture of a resource's value to the institution. To adopt a more holistic approach, the University of Mary Washington implemented an evaluation grid, which was used to assess 61 products the library subscribed to during the 2019-20 academic year. In addition to product cancellations, results were used to identify areas for improvement. Using an evaluation grid enabled UMW Libraries to make high-quality renewal and cancellation decisions in an objective and transparent manner and effectively communicate these decisions to various stakeholders. Libraries wishing to holistically assess their databases can adapt the evaluation grid to meet their local needs.

Keywords: academic libraries; collection assessment; collection evaluation; holistic assessment; electronic resources

INTRODUCTION

Academic librarians have relied on cost-per-use (CPU) statistics to evaluate databases for more than two decades (Baker and Read 2008). While CPU is an important statistic, as it is easily calculated and allows for ranking and comparing resources, it often falls short of providing sufficient information to make high-quality renewal and cancellation decisions (Sheldon 2018). Undoubtedly, many librarians have experienced the frustration of reviewing these statistics only to find themselves advocating to keep resources with high CPU because they are core disciplinary resources or provide unique content, or proposing to cut products with low CPU because the interfaces are difficult to use or the vendors are slow to resolve recurring technical issues (Smith and Smith 2016; Wical and Kishel 2013).

Given the current financial environment of flat or even reduced collections budgets, coupled with an ever-growing number of new products in the marketplace, particularly datasets, archival, and streaming video collections that are of high interest to users, academic libraries need a more robust tool to evaluate continuing resources to ensure they are making the best use of limited funds (Shapiro 2012). In addition to CPU, this tool would consider a broad range of metrics, including how a product supports teaching and research at the institution, whether its pricing model is sustainable, the quality of the user interface, and how well it integrates with existing library systems and supports established e-resource management workflows.

This article discusses how the University of Mary Washington Libraries implemented an evaluation grid, which was largely adapted from the Virtual Library of Virginia's (VIVA) Value Metric framework, to holistically assess its subscription-based databases and bundled collections of content like e-book, journal, and streaming video packages. Using an evaluation grid enabled the library to clearly define what makes for a "good" resource based on local needs and values, thus creating an objective and transparent assessment process. It also facilitated high-quality decision-making for product renewals and cancellations. When cancellation decisions were reached, they were effectively communicated to stakeholders, helping to build confidence that the library is a good steward of institutional resources. Additionally, analyzing the results revealed unique insights on how to strengthen the collection that might otherwise have been missed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many academic librarians recognize the need for a holistic approach when assessing subscription-based databases and have begun developing new tools to accomplish this (Kelly 2021; Duncan and O'Gara 2015). Some of these instruments are straightforward

and consider a handful of metrics, while others are complex with lots of criteria scored with rubrics. Most are quantitative in nature, but some incorporate qualitative elements like faculty and subject librarian comments. More importantly, they provide numerical scores so products can be ranked and compared. Often, a funnel approach is also used to further separate resources into different categories for prioritizing cancellation decisions (Sutton, 2013). While many of these tools were created in response to budget cuts, nearly all authors noted their continued importance in ongoing collection assessment efforts (Lantzy, Matlin, and Opdahl 2019; Gohn and Remy 2017).

One of the earliest examples is Fouady and McManus' (2005) decision grid that was implemented at the University of Maryland at College Park Libraries to establish a clear and unbiased process for making cancellation decisions. To achieve this, the authors observed they would need "more quantitative than qualitative standards" to produce "concrete rankings" of their electronic resources (535). The decision grid contains five criteria that examine accessibility, cost effectiveness, audience breadth, content uniqueness, and an overall team rating based on subject librarian feedback. Each criterion is scored from one (best) to three (worst), which are summed to create a total product score. Products are then sorted into three groups based on "natural breaks" in the data to determine their priority level for cancellation (536).

Building on Fouady and McManus' (2005) work, Harker, Crawford, and Enoch (2014) adapted the decision grid for use at the University of North Texas Libraries. Although their version includes similar criteria, they introduce several changes to how criteria are measured and scored. Rather than using a rubric to score cost effectiveness, for example, actual values for CPU and annual price increase are inputted. The remaining three criteria—content uniqueness, breadth of audience, and ease of use—are rated by subject librarians with a revised rubric and weighted based on their perceived

importance. To standardize scores, percentiles are calculated for each criterion and averaged to create a composite score. Resources are then assigned a status of “keep” or “drop” to guide cancellation decisions (Enoch and Harker 2015).

Similarly, at the University of Vermont Libraries, Nuth (2018) developed an electronic resources renewal scorecard. The scorecard contains comparable metrics as the previous two decision grids but with additional improvements to the rubrics and point system. The direction of the rating scale is reversed so criteria are scored from four (best) to one (worst), which is more intuitive when totaling numbers. Additionally, some metrics, like CPU, are given quantitative benchmarks, making them easier to rate. Metrics also have different weights based on their relative importance and the highest score a resource can receive is 100 points. Again, products are placed into categories to guide decision-making but with clearly defined cutoff points. Products that score 80 points or higher are renewed while products that score 74 points or below are cancelled. Products in between 74 and 80 are placed on probation and mitigation strategies are employed to see if their scores can be increased.

Despite their value, these tools have a couple of limitations. First, they contain a small number of criteria that are broadly defined. Each criterion takes into consideration multiple factors, but only a single overall rating is given. For example, audience breadth (renamed information need in Nuth’s scorecard) looks at whether a product is a core resource, how well it aligns with the curriculum, and the size of the degree program(s) it supports. Pulling out these individual components and rating them separately would be easier and produce a more accurate assessment. Second, all products, regardless of format, are evaluated with the same set of criteria. This means that important format-specific metrics, such as whether streaming videos have closed captioning or e-books are DRM-free, are excluded. Thus, incorporating format-specific metrics while

preserving the ability to compare products across the collection would be extremely beneficial.

VIVA's Value Metric framework provides solutions to these limitations. The framework consists of a set of format-specific grids that are used to numerically score consortial resources based on the shared values of its members. Each grid contains a header with basic product information and different sections with metrics nested under them. These sections vary based on product format, but alignment with curriculum and cost effectiveness are common to all. To account for format differences, separate grids are used to evaluate databases, streaming media, e-book packages, and journal packages. Additionally, the framework takes a granular approach to defining metrics. Each metric considers a single aspect or component of a resource. Related metrics are grouped together under sections. All grids add up to 100 points, making it possible to rank and compare resources across formats (O'Gara and Osterman 2017; O'Gara et al. 2016).

These tools collectively helped inform the development of an evaluation grid at UMW Libraries. In particular, the evaluation grid was largely modeled on VIVA's Value Metric framework. The granularity of defined metrics and flexibility of accommodating multiple formats made it an ideal template and starting point. However, since this tool was designed from the perspective of a consortium, a number of metrics had to be adjusted or swapped out to meet the needs of a single institution. These institution-specific metrics were drawn from those used by Foudy and McManus (2005), Harker, Crawford, and Enoch (2014) and Nuth (2018) as well as local needs and values.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation grid has two main sections. The first records basic information about the

product, including name, vendor, acquisition method, resource type, and supported degree program(s). Acquisition method indicates whether the product is licensed directly from the vendor, through a membership organization like Lyris, or as a consortial cost share. Resource type specifies the format of the content and is selected from the options of database, data and statistics, digital images, e-book package, journal package, and streaming video. Each product is assigned the degree program(s) it supports, up to a maximum of three. Multidisciplinary resources are given a general assignment of MULT. There is also a free-text field to document comments from stakeholders.

The second section contains the metrics that are used for rating products and is divided into four categories: (1) content and curriculum alignment, (2) cost effectiveness, (3) user experience, and (4) product administration. Content and curriculum alignment examines a product's subject coverage and the extent to which it supports one or more degree programs at the university. It considers whether a product is a core resource for the program(s) it supports, how many other products support the same program(s), the size of the program(s), and the uniqueness of the content. This section strives to balance the need for both highly specialized resources and general multidisciplinary databases. It takes a comprehensive look at the collection ensuring that programs are adequately supported while minimizing duplication of content. Cost effectiveness investigates how much a product is used in relation to its cost, which is measured by CPU, and its annual price inflation. User experience looks at the quality of a product's interface. The first metric is common to all products but the last six are specific to a product's resource type. For example, streaming videos are scored on whether they provide embed codes, closed captioning, transcripts, and public performance rights. The final section, product administration, assesses how easy or

difficult it is to manage a product. It asks if the product works well with the library's integrated library system, proxy server, and discovery layer. It also examines how often problems arise and if the vendor is responsive in answering questions and resolving problems.

Each category is weighted based on its perceived importance. Cost effectiveness and user experience are both worth 30 points, and content and curriculum alignment and product administration are worth 20 points each. Within each category, individual metrics are similarly weighted based on their importance. In total, the evaluation grid contains 20 metrics. The highest score a product can receive is 100 points, which represents an ideal product based on the needs and values of the library. A copy of the evaluation grid is provided in Appendix A.

The evaluation grid was used to assess 61 products UMW Libraries subscribed to during the 2019-20 academic year. For the most part, all subscription-based databases and bundled collections of content were included. A few products, however, that supported collection development activities rather than teaching and research, like *Choice Reviews*, *Resources for College Libraries*, and *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, were excluded because they fell outside the scope of the assessment. Products were scored at the end of the fiscal year when final usage statistics became available.

To determine how well subscription-based resources performed overall, a benchmark was set that products would receive an average score of 80 points or higher. Additionally, a percentile rank was calculated for each product. Products that scored at or below the tenth percentile were considered for cancellation.

RESULTS

Products received an average score of 71.4 points on the evaluation grid, with 36 as the lowest score and 96 the highest. Products that scored at or below the tenth percentile,

which was 51 points or fewer, were flagged for potential cancellation. This resulted in seven products being placed under review for non-renewal. One area of interest when analyzing the results was how products performed on the different categories of the evaluation grid. Specifically, did products lose more points on certain categories compared to others? As Figure 1 shows, products missed the most points on cost effectiveness (11.7 points) followed by content and curriculum alignment (8.0 points). Within these categories, two metrics accounted for the majority of lost points—CPU and the number of resources to support degree program(s).

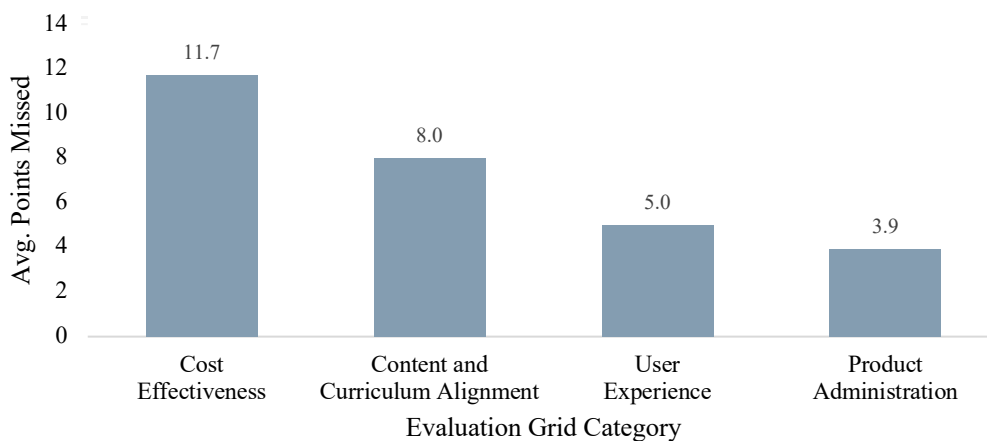


Figure 1. Average Number of Points Missed by Category on Evaluation Grid

On the cost effectiveness category, a number of products did not score well on CPU. This metric is worth 15 points, which is the heaviest weight given to any criterion on the evaluation grid, and products lost an average of 7.1 points on it. Points were awarded depending on the range a product's CPU fell within. Products received the maximum of 15 points if its CPU was less than \$1.00, 12 points if it was between \$1.00-\$1.99, 9 points if \$2.00-\$2.99, 6 points if \$3.00-\$3.99, 3 points if \$4.00-\$4.99, and zero points if its CPU was \$5.00 or more. These tiers were determined based on the previous three years of CPU statistics for databases. Additionally, they were chosen to be slightly aspirational and favor products with a low CPU.

Figure 2 shows that 31% of products (19 total) had a CPU of \$5.00 or greater and received zero points on the metric. It is interesting to note that many of these products scored higher than the 51-point cutoff for the tenth percentile and therefore were not marked for further review. Moreover, the total score for these 19 resources ranged from 36 to 72 with an average of 61.7 points, indicating that apart from a high CPU, most products were otherwise a good fit for the collection.

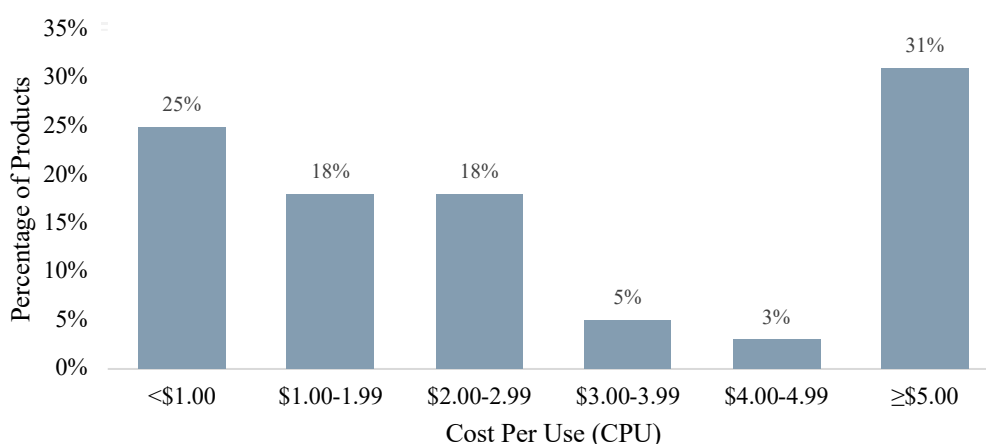


Figure 2. Percentage of Products by Cost Per Use (CPU)

Within content and curriculum alignment, products missed an average of 3.5 points on the second metric that examines the total number of resources the library has to support degree programs. Specifically, it considers the impact that cancelling the product under evaluation would have on the degree program(s) it supports. A degree program with relatively few resources supporting it, for example, would be more adversely impacted by a product cancellation than a degree program with greater support.

Information from UMW Libraries' A-Z Database list was used to score this metric. This list contains more than 200 resources, including all current subscriptions, perpetual access content, and consortial resources. Each resource on the A-Z Database list is mapped to the degree program(s) it supports. Additionally, two to four "best bets" are identified for each degree program to highlight core resources in the discipline.

These mappings are reviewed annually by subject librarians to ensure they are up-to-date. This data was compiled to determine the total number of resources the library has for each degree program. These mappings were also used to populate the degree program(s) field on the evaluation grid for products being assessed. When scoring the metric, products that supported degree programs with less than 14 resources were given 6 points, 14-15 resources received 4 points, 16-17 resources received 2 points, and more than 17 resources were given no points.

Interestingly, as Figure 3 illustrates, 39% of products (24 total) scored a zero on this metric because they supported degree programs with more than 17 resources. A closer examination revealed that most subscription-based products supported a small number of programs in the humanities and social sciences, particularly history, political science, and English. These programs were also strongly supported by consortial resources and large archival collections purchased in the past. Conversely, relatively few subscriptions supported science programs, such as biology, computer science, and geography, even though they are similar in size. There were also substantially fewer resources in the overall collection, when taking into consideration consortial resources and perpetual access content, to support these science programs. This suggests a potential imbalance in the collection that is skewed toward supporting humanities and social science programs.

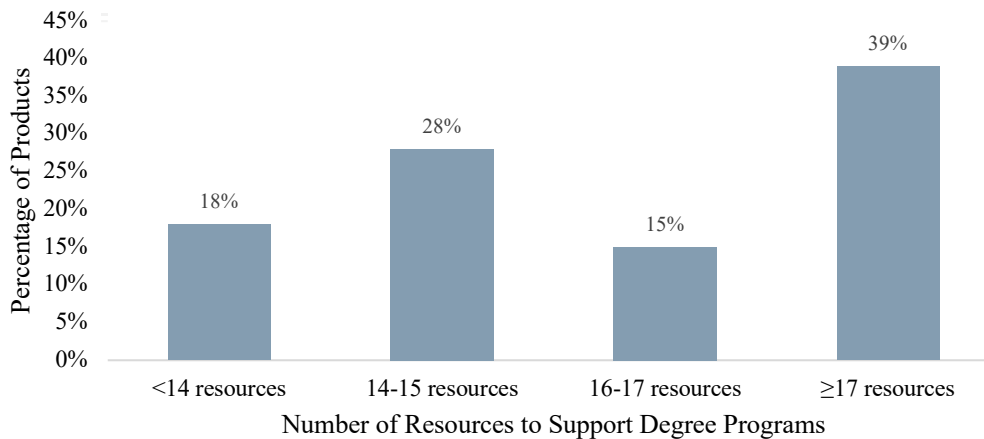


Figure 3. Percentage of Products by Number of Resources to Support Degree Programs

DISCUSSION

The results of the evaluation grid were primarily used to identify products for cancellation. Of the seven products placed under review because they scored at or below the tenth percentile, four were eventually not renewed. Using percentiles to sort resources into different groups based on their priority for cancellation proved to be a flexible approach that enabled UMW Libraries to select an appropriate cutoff point based on the anticipated size of cuts needed for the upcoming fiscal year. If more aggressive cuts were needed, the library could easily have chosen a higher cutoff point and reviewed products that scored at or below the twentieth percentile, for example, thereby creating a larger pool of candidates to consider for cancellation.

Deciding which products to not renew was an objective and transparent process. The evaluation grid allowed UMW Libraries to make data-driven decisions based on a broad range of criteria. If CPU had been used as the sole criterion, as had been done in the past, the library most likely would have made different cancellation decisions. Several products with high CPU were retained because other factors balanced out their scores. This knowledge provided the library with confidence that the best decisions were being made for users given its stated goals and values. Further, communicating

these decisions to stakeholders, such as subject librarians, faculty, students, and university administrators, was also much easier as a result. One product (coincidentally, the one that scored the lowest) was inquired about by several faculty members. With the evaluation grid, the library was able to provide a clear explanation for why the product was cancelled, noting specific problems with the user interface, high CPU and annual inflation rate, and a substantial amount of overlap with other available full-text resources. These shortcomings could be placed into context with other products in the collection, showing that, overall, the product did not compare favorably. Cancellation decisions are never easy; however, being able to provide a clear and reasonable justification helps build trust that a great deal of thought and attention to detail went into the decision.

The evaluation grid has also been beneficial in guiding discussions with vendors about their products. It has enabled the library to articulate its values while demonstrating to a vendor how its product compares to the established benchmark as well as other resources in the collection. So far, this has opened the door to several productive conversations with vendors to negotiate lower annual increases and share desired enhancements to the user interface and online administrative portal. Having the results of the evaluation grid on hand during vendor discussions helps frame the conversation in ways that highlight what is important to the library.

A secondary use of the evaluation grid results was to identify areas where the collection could be strengthened to increase future scores. This was motivated by the fact that the average score of 71.4 fell short of the desired 80-point benchmark. In addition to product cancellations, were there strategies UMW Libraries could employ to raise scores in subsequent years, thus ensuring that subscription-based databases better

align with its values and goals? After reviewing the results, two recommendations emerged.

The first recommendation focuses on decreasing CPU for products with a CPU of \$5.00 or more, which can be achieved by increasing usage and/or reducing subscription costs. Products can have a high CPU for a variety of reasons, including users are unfamiliar with the resource or have trouble discovering the content, the product is too expensive relative to the size of the degree program it supports, or the content is no longer relevant for class assignments or research projects. While it is possible to remedy the first two scenarios, cancellation is likely the best course of action for the third. Unfortunately, it's difficult to know the precise cause(s) for a high CPU at first glance, so soliciting feedback from faculty and subject librarians as well as experimenting with different approaches for remediation is necessary.

To increase usage, UMW Libraries will first confirm that products under review are properly setup in various library systems, including the Database A-Z list, knowledge base, discovery layer, and proxy server, to ensure the content is discoverable and accessible to users. Next, subject librarians will be asked to review products to determine if any can be added to their subject guides or incorporated into research consultations and library instruction sessions. Finally, products will be targeted for general marketing efforts, such as featuring them on display monitors in the library building, on the library website's homepage banner, and social media sites (Fry 2014). To heed Jackson's (2016, 38) advice that marketing library collections is an ongoing process that "works over a long period of time," products will be given a full academic year to begin showing increases in usage.

For products that support small degree programs, it may not be possible to sufficiently increase usage to lower CPU. In these cases, UMW Libraries will attempt to

renegotiate pricing with vendors. Most products are priced based on the size of the institution, which is typically measured by Carnegie Classification or student full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. This puts small programs, particularly in the sciences where products are already more expensive, at a sharp disadvantage. It's hard to anticipate how often this approach will succeed, but as Donovan (2018) points out, many vendors are willing to partner with libraries to find creative solutions to pricing. In the past, some vendors have agreed to reclassify UMW as a smaller program within Carnegie's Master's Colleges and Universities category. Others have been willing to waive annual price increases to help reduce costs. Thus, being flexible and open minded to a wide range of options is key when working with vendors.

The second recommendation considers next steps for investigating a potential imbalance in the collection. As the results highlighted, humanities and social science programs, particularly history, political science, and English, had substantially more resources supporting them than science programs; however, other factors, not accounted for in the evaluation grid, such as cost and database size, need to be considered before determining whether such an imbalance exists. Certainly, some programs may need more resources than others, and product counts alone, which the evaluation grid relies on, do not tell the full story in terms of expenditures, usage, and amount of content; however, the finding warrants further investigation. As Finch and Flenner (2016, 765) aptly observe, discovering a potential imbalance in the collection "provide[s] an excellent starting point for conversations" with stakeholders. Therefore, a good place to begin would be to gather more data on how programs are supported, including input from faculty and students across departments to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the collection and how well it meets their needs. Of course, if an imbalance does exist, redressing it is a process that will take time; however, as new

products are evaluated for addition to the collection, greater thought and attention can be given to making sure that all programs are equitably supported.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the evaluation grid proved to be an invaluable tool for holistically assessing subscription-based databases and bundled collections of content. It enabled UMW Libraries to evaluate products based on a broad range of metrics, rather than relying primarily on CPU. In doing so, the library was able to make high-quality renewal and cancellation decisions that could be effectively communicated to stakeholders in an objective and transparent manner. Calculating percentiles for product scores made it easier to sort resources into different categories for prioritizing cancellations. Analyzing the results also provided new insights on how the collection could be strengthened, including improving CPU for products that otherwise scored well and investigating a potential imbalance in how degree programs are supported. The evaluation grid's flexible framework makes it a highly customizable tool that can be adapted to meet the needs of other academic libraries. Metrics, categories, and resource types can be added, removed, or adjusted. Metrics and categories can also be reweighted to better reflect the goals and values of other institutions.

Moving forward, UMW Libraries plan to continue using the evaluation grid on an annual basis with a few modifications. First, a new resource type for reference works will be added. When scoring products, it became clear that resources like *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* and *Oxford Music Online* did not fit well within any of the existing resource types. These products were scored using the e-book package metrics, which were not entirely applicable. Creating a new resource type with format-specific metrics for reference works will help to ensure these products are accurately scored in the future. Second, in collaboration with VIVA, several new metrics will be added to

measure accessibility and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). For accessibility, a general metric will be added to the user experience category to evaluate vendor platforms, particularly site navigation and alternative text for images. Additional format-specific metrics (e.g., audio description for streaming video) will be identified for each resource type. Lastly, a DEI metric will be included under content and curriculum alignment to determine the extent to which a product's content represents diverse and inclusive perspectives.

REFERENCES

- Baker, Gayle, and Eleanor J. Read. 2008. "Vendor-Supplied Usage Data for Electronic Resources: A Survey of Academic Libraries." *Learned Publishing* 21 (1): 48-57. doi:10.1087/095315108X247276.
- Donovan, Georgie. 2018. "The Myth of the Tough Negotiator." *Against the Grain* 30 (2): 22-23. doi:10.7771/2380-176X.8037.
- Duncan, Cheri Jeanette, & Genya Morgan O'Gara. 2015. "Building Holistic and Agile Collection Development and Assessment." *Performance Measurement and Metrics* 16 (1): 62-85. doi:10.1108/PMM-12-2014-0041.
- Enoch, Todd, and Karen R. Harker. 2015. "Planning for the Budget-ocalypse: The Evolution of a Serials/ER Cancellation Methodology." *The Serials Librarian* 68 (1-4): 282-289. doi:10.1080/0361526X.2015.1025657.
- Finch, Jannette L, and Angela R. Flenner. 2016. "Using Data Visualization to Examine an Academic Library Collection." *College & Research Libraries* 77 (6): 766-778. doi:10.5860/crl.77.6.765.
- Foudy, Gerri, and Alesia McManus. 2005. "Using a Decision Grid Process to Build Consensus in Electronic Resources Cancellation Decisions." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31 (6): 533-538. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2005.08.005.
- Fry, Amy. 2014. "The Biggest Winner: Using Statistics to Assess the Effectiveness of an E-Resources Promotion Campaign." *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* 26 (1): 1-16. doi:10.1080/1941126X.2014.877330.
- Gohn, Katie, and Charlie Remy. 2017. "Proactive and Prudent: A Report of a Holistic Cyclical Electronic Resources Review Pilot at the University of Tennessee at

- Chattanooga." *The Serials Librarian* 73 (1): 44-52.
doi:10.1080/0361526X.2017.1309335.
- Harker, Karen R., Laurel Crawford, and Todd Enoch. 2014. "Keeping it Real: A Comprehensive and Transparent Evaluation of Electronic Resources." *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*.
doi:10.5703/1288284315563.
- Jackson, Jennifer. 2016. "Making the Most of Library Collections, While Multitasking: A Review of Best Practices for Marketing and Promoting Library Collections." *Against the Grain* 28 (4): 38-40. doi:10.7771/2380-176X.7458.
- Kelly, Madeline M. 2021. *The Complete Collections Assessment Manual: A Holistic Approach*. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman.
- Lantzy, Tricia, Talitha Matlin, and Judy Opdahl. 2019. "Creating a Library-Wide Collection Management Cycle: One Academic Library's Approach to Continuous Collection Assessment." *Journal of Library Administration* 60 (2): 155-166. doi:10.1080/01930826.2019.1677092.
- Nuth, Alana M. 2018. "Consistent, Holistic, and Objective: Using a Scorecard for Electronic Resource Evaluation and Renewal Decision-Making." *Collection Management* 43 (3): 209-222. doi:10.1080/01462679.2018.1472049.
- O'Gara, Genya, and Anne Osterman. 2017. "Determining Value: The Development of Evaluation Metrics for Shared Content." In *At the Helm: Leading Transformation: The Proceedings of the ACRL 2017 Conference, March 22-25, 2017*, edited by Dawn M. Mueller, 179-185. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.
- O'Gara, Genya, Madeline Kelly, Julie Kane, Anne Osterman, Cheryl Duncan, Crystal Newell, Beth Blanton-Kent, and Summer Durrant. 2016. "Valuing Consortial Resources: A Framework for Assessment." *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*. doi:10.5703/1288284316430.
- Shapiro, Steven. 2012. "Database Cancellation: The 'Hows' and 'Whys.'" *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* 24 (2): 154-156.
doi:10.1080/1941126X.2012.684564.
- Sheldon, Karen. 2018. "Using a Workflow to Reduce Database Costs without Affecting Collection Needs." *Pennsylvania Libraries: Research & Practice* 6 (1): 49-56.
doi:10.5195/palrap.2018.173.

- Smith, Michael M., and Jane A. Smith. 2016. "What's the Use? A Cost-per-use Study of Selected Business Databases." *International Information & Library Review* 48 (1): 11-20. doi:10.1080/10572317.2016.1146037.
- Sutton, Sarah. 2013. "A Model for Electronic Resources Value Assessment." *The Serials Librarian* 64 (1-4): 245-253. doi:10.1080/0361526X.2013.760417.
- Wical, Stephanie H., and Hans F. Kishel. 2013. "Strategic Collection Management through Statistical Analysis." *The Serials Librarian* 64 (1-4): 171-187. doi:10.1080/0361526X.2013.760394.

APPENDIX A

UMW Libraries Evaluation Grid

Section I: Product Information

Provide basic information about the product being evaluated. For acquisition method, indicate whether the product is licensed directly from the vendor, through a membership organization like Lyasis, or as a consortial cost share. Select a resource type that best matches the format of the content from the options of database, data and statistics, digital images, e-book package, journal package, and streaming video. Use the A-Z Database list subject mappings to determine the degree program(s) the product supports, up to a maximum of three. If a product supports more than three degree programs, give it a general multidisciplinary (MULT) designation.

Product Name:

Vendor:

Acquisition Method:

Resource Type:

Degree Program(s) Supported:

Comments:

Section II: Evaluative Criteria

Score the product using the evaluative criteria in each of the four categories: (1) content and curriculum alignment, (2) cost effectiveness, (3) user experience, and (4) product administration. Calculate a score for each category, as well as a total score for the evaluation grid. The highest total score a product can receive is 100 points.

Content and Curriculum Alignment (20 pts)

1. Is the product considered a core resource for the degree program(s) it supports? (4 pts)
 - Yes (4 pts)
 - No (0 pts)

Instructions: Select yes if the product is listed as a best bet in the A-Z Database list for any of the degree program(s) it supports. For multidisciplinary resources, select yes if the product is a best bet for any degree program.

2. How many total resources support the same degree program(s)? (6 pts)
 - Less than 14 resources (6 pts)
 - 14-15 resources (4 pts)
 - 16-17 resources (2 pts)
 - More than 17 resources (0 pts)

Instructions: Use the A-Z Database list to determine the number of resources mapped to the degree program(s) the product supports. If a product supports more than one degree program, use the average. Multidisciplinary resources are given the average of 14-15 resources.

3. What percentage of degrees awarded does the product support? (6 pts)
 - 6% or greater (6 pts)
 - 4.0-5.9% (4 pts)
 - 2.0-3.9% (2 pts)
 - Less than 2% (0 pts)

Instructions: Use the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) report on the number of degrees awarded by program for the previous academic year: (https://research.schev.edu//Completions/C1Level2_Report.asp).

4. How much of the content is unique? (4 pts)
 - Most (>75%) of the content is unique (4 pts)
 - Some (25-75%) of the content is unique (2 pts)
 - Little or none (<25%) of the content is unique (0 pts)

Instructions: Use ILS/ERM to run an overlap analysis or contact the vendor to determine an approximate percentage of unique content.

Content and Curriculum Alignment Category Score:

Cost Effectiveness (30 pts)

5. What is the cost-per-use for the product? (15 pts)
 - Less than \$1.00 (15 pts)
 - \$1.00-\$1.99 (12 pts)
 - \$2.00-\$2.99 (9 pts)
 - \$3.00-\$3.99 (6 pts)
 - \$4.00-\$4.99 (3 pts)
 - \$5.00 or more (0 pts)
6. What is the annual increase for the product? (15 pts)
 - Less than 2% (15 pts)
 - 2.0-2.9% (12 pts)

- 3.0-3.9% (9 pts)
- 4.0-4.9% (6 pts)
- 5.0-5.9% (3 pts)
- 6.0% or greater (0 pts)

Cost Effectiveness Category Score:

User Experience (30 pts)

Instructions: Answer question 7 for ALL resource types. Questions 8-13 are specific to the resource type, and only ONE should be answered. Refer to the resource type identified for the product in Section I.

7. Does the product interface have the following features and/or functionality? (14 pts)
- | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| a. Basic search | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Advanced search | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| c. Refine search results with facets | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Permalinks | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| e. Create and export citations | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| f. Personal accounts to save results, etc. | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| g. Apply library branding | Yes (2 pts) | No (0 pts) |

Format Specific User Experience Criteria. For questions 8-13, answer ONE question based on the product resource type.

8. Does the **database** have the following features and/or functionality? (16 pts)
- | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| a. Download full-text content | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Full-text content delivered in multiple formats (e.g., PDF, HTML) | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| c. Configure link resolver to connect to full-text content in other resources | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Ability to print, save, and email results during session | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
9. Does the **data and statistics** collection have the following features and/or functionality? (16 pts)
- | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| a. Download full-text content | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Full-text content delivered in multiple formats (e.g., CSV, SPSS, SAS) | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| c. Documentation provided to understand study methodology and variables | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Online data analysis and/or visualization tools | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
10. Does the **digital images** collection have the following features and/or functionality? (16 pts)
- | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| a. Download full-text content | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Full-text content delivered in multiple formats (e.g., JPEG, PNG) | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |

- | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| c. High resolution images (300 dpi or higher) | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Image zoom and pan tools | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
11. Does the **e-book package** have the following features and/or functionality? (16 pts)
- | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| a. Download full-text content | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Full-text content delivered in multiple formats (e.g., PDF, EPUB) | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| c. DRM-free content | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Ability to read content online | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
12. Does the **journal package** have the following features and functionality? (16 pts)
- | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| a. Download full-text content | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Configure link resolver to connect to full-text content in other resources | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| c. Ability to easily browse to a particular journal, volume, or issue | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Articles have linked cited references | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
13. Does the **streaming video** package have the following features and/or functionality? (16 pts)
- | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| a. Embed code to easily add films to CMS and/or course websites | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| b. Videos have closed captioning | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| c. Videos have transcripts | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |
| d. Videos have public performance rights | Yes (4 pts) | No (0 pts) |

User Experience Category Score:

Product Administration (20 pts)

14. Does the vendor provide an online portal to administer the product? (4 pts)
- Full suite of admin tools (4 pts)
 - Partial suite of admin tools (2 pts)
 - No admin tools (0 pts)

Instructions: Full suite of admin tools includes the ability to update IP ranges, view access entitlements, customize interface (e.g., apply library branding, configure link resolver, etc.), manage administrator accounts, and obtain usage statistics. If vendor provides some of these features, but not all, choose partial suite of admin tools.

15. Does the vendor provide usage statistics? (4 pts)
- COUNTER 5 usage statistics (4 pts)
 - Non-COUNTER usage statistics (2 pts)
 - No usage statistics (0 pts)

Instructions: If vendor provides COUNTER usage statistics, but they are not Release 5 compliant, select Non-COUNTER usage statistics.

16. Is off-campus access available through a proxy server or other authentication service? (2 pts)

- Yes (2 pts)
- No (0 pts)

17. Is an electronic collection available in the ILS/ERM? (4 pts)

- Electronic collection with titles (4 pts)
- Electronic collection without titles (2 pts)
- Must create a custom electronic collection (0 pts)

Instructions: This metric looks at how easy or difficult it is to manage the product. Select electronic collection with titles if it is possible to activate a collection with full title information in the ILS/ERM. If a collection exists in the ILS/ERM, but catalog records or a KBART file must be loaded to provide title-level information, choose electronic collection without titles. Select the third option if the collection must be created and catalog records or a KBART file loaded to add titles.

18. Are item-level records discoverable in discovery layer? (2 pts)

- Yes (2 pts)
- No (0 pts)

19. Have any technical problems been reported in the past year? (2 pts)

- No technical problems reported (2 pts)
- Occasional problems (1-3) reported (1 pts)
- Frequent technical problems (4+) reported (0 pts)

Instructions: Only count issues that are on the vendor's side, such as unplanned product downtime or missing access to subscribed titles.

20. How responsive is the vendor when contacted with questions or technical problems? (2 pts)

- Issues resolved in timely manner (2 pts)
- Issues resolved but with delays (1 pts)
- Vendor unresponsive (0 pts)

Instructions: If a vendor has not been contacted with questions or technical problems in the past year, give the highest score.

Product Administration Category Score:

Total Evaluation Grid Score: