Demystifying Library Acquisitions: Insight on How Academic Libraries Select Dissertations for Their Collections

TxETDA Conference

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Why This Topic

Because. . .

Unresolved Questions Brought up By Sandy Thatcher at Last Year's Conference

- "And so it came to pass that, according to **Yankee Book Peddler's** former resident sage, **Hellmut Schwarzer** , libraries began to ask their vendors to inspect the front matter of each book for any signs that it had its origin in a dissertation and, if such evidence was uncovered, to omit that book from the lot purchased through the approval plan. As far back as six years ago, **Schwarzer** told me, these instructions resulted in 40% of the sales of these books to libraries disappearing."
- From the University Presses – Dissertations into Books? The Lack of Logic in the System. *Against the Grain*, April 2007, Vol. 19 Issue 2, 75-77

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And Because. . .

Article in *Chronicle of Higher Education*

- "The press has come to assume that 'most libraries and library vendors will not buy or recommend purchase of ensuing books that are based substantially on them [ETDs].'"
- "Any dissertation that's on the Internet and has taken on a life of its own, that would be a selling point to me. . . There's [potential] for an even greater market for a revised, edited, well-marketed version."
- "The more crucial question for us. . . is whether the author can explain the extent to which and how the submission differs from the original."
- The Road From Dissertation to Book Has a New Pothole: The Internet. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 4/8/2011, Vol. 57 Issue 31, pA28

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Gain an Understanding of How. . .

- Academic libraries' use approval plans;
- Approval plans could impact the purchase of books created from dissertations
- To discuss issues of concern with graduate students

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What is an Approval Plan

- Efficient way for libraries to add some – **not all** – books to their collections
- Use detailed profiles/plans to set parameters for selection process

Approval Plan Language

- Profiles/plans – a series of gates
  - a targeted publisher list,
  - a defined set of non-subject parameters, and
  - subject-specific instructions.
- Global rules
- Slips
- Exclude
- Revised and unrevised dissertations

Approval Plan Basics

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First Gate

- Series – Books the library already receives on standing order;
- No books in these series can come through the approval plan;

Next Gate

- Publisher
- Does the library want to “ship”, “slip”, or “exclude” books from specific publishers?

Non-subject Criteria

- Binding (Spiral or Looseleaf)
- Format – includes unrevised or revised dissertations
- Language
- Non-book format
- Place of publication
- Price ceiling
- Reprints
- Many, many more

Subject Criteria

- Uses Library of Congress Classification system
- Can be very broad – BM – all Judaism
- Can be very granular – BM650-747 – Practical Judaism
- Even if dissertations "gated" at the format level, library could decide to set an exception at the subject level

More Approval Plan Language

- Basic-Essential
- Research-Essential
- Basic-Recommended
- Research-Recommended
- Specialized
- Supplementary

Sample Approval Plan -- Religion

- Books – Research-essential; Basic-recommended; Research-recommended; Specialized
- Slips – Basic-essential; Supplementary
- Slips – specified for some specific subject areas
- Exclude – Judaism, Practical Works

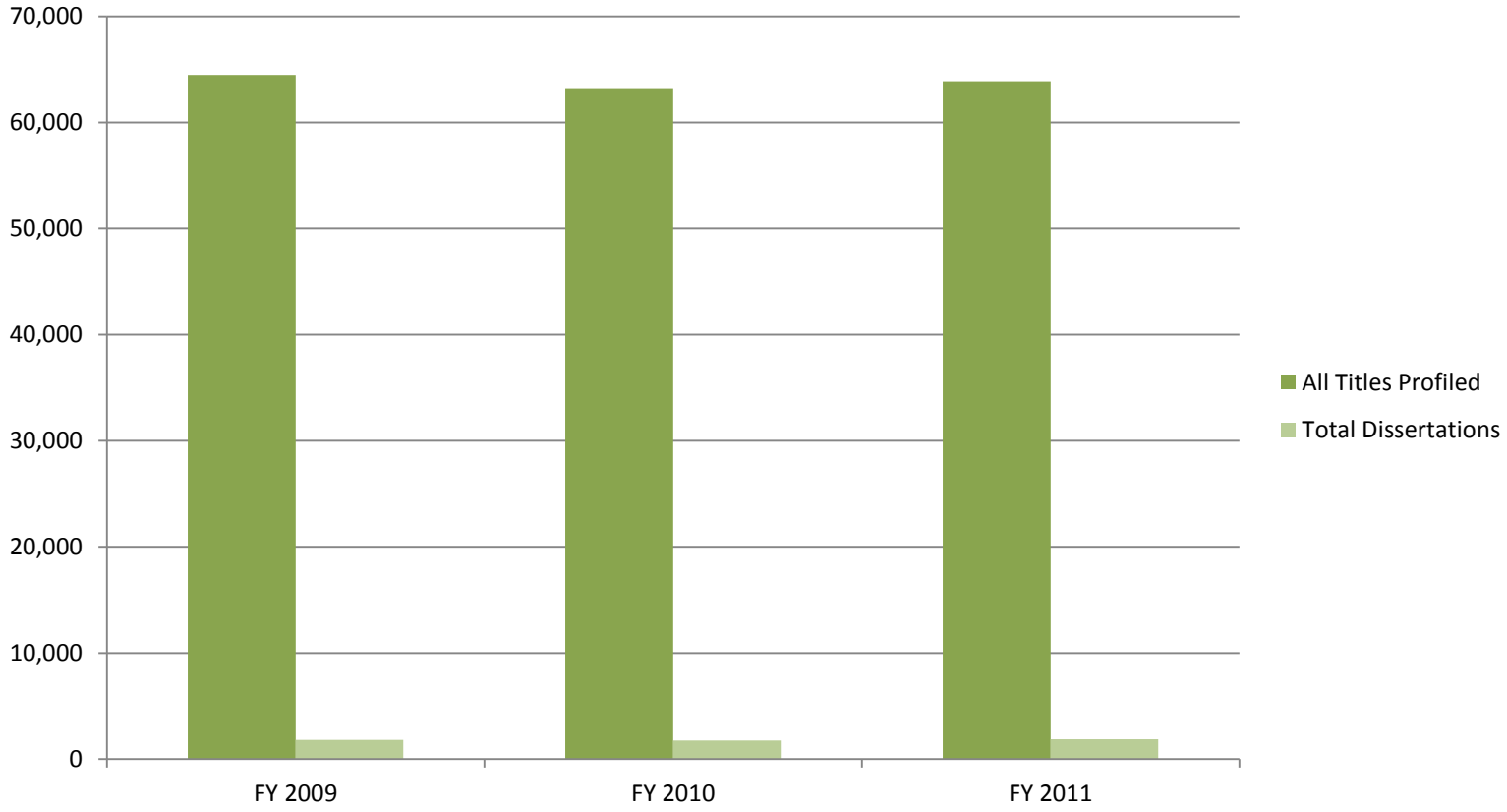
Sample Approval Plan -- Chemistry

- Books – Research-essential; Research-recommended; Specialized
- Slips – Basic-essential; Basic-recommended; Supplementary
- Slips – for specific historical works

YBP Data – Full Disclosure

- YBP Baylor Library's approval plan vendor
- Not the only approval plan vendor, but primary book vendor for:
  - 85% of the ARL libraries and
  - About 80% of academic libraries in the U.S.
- Longitudinal data from 3 FYs 2009, 2010, 2011
- Some data a "snapshot" of their current set of profiles

Titles Profiled



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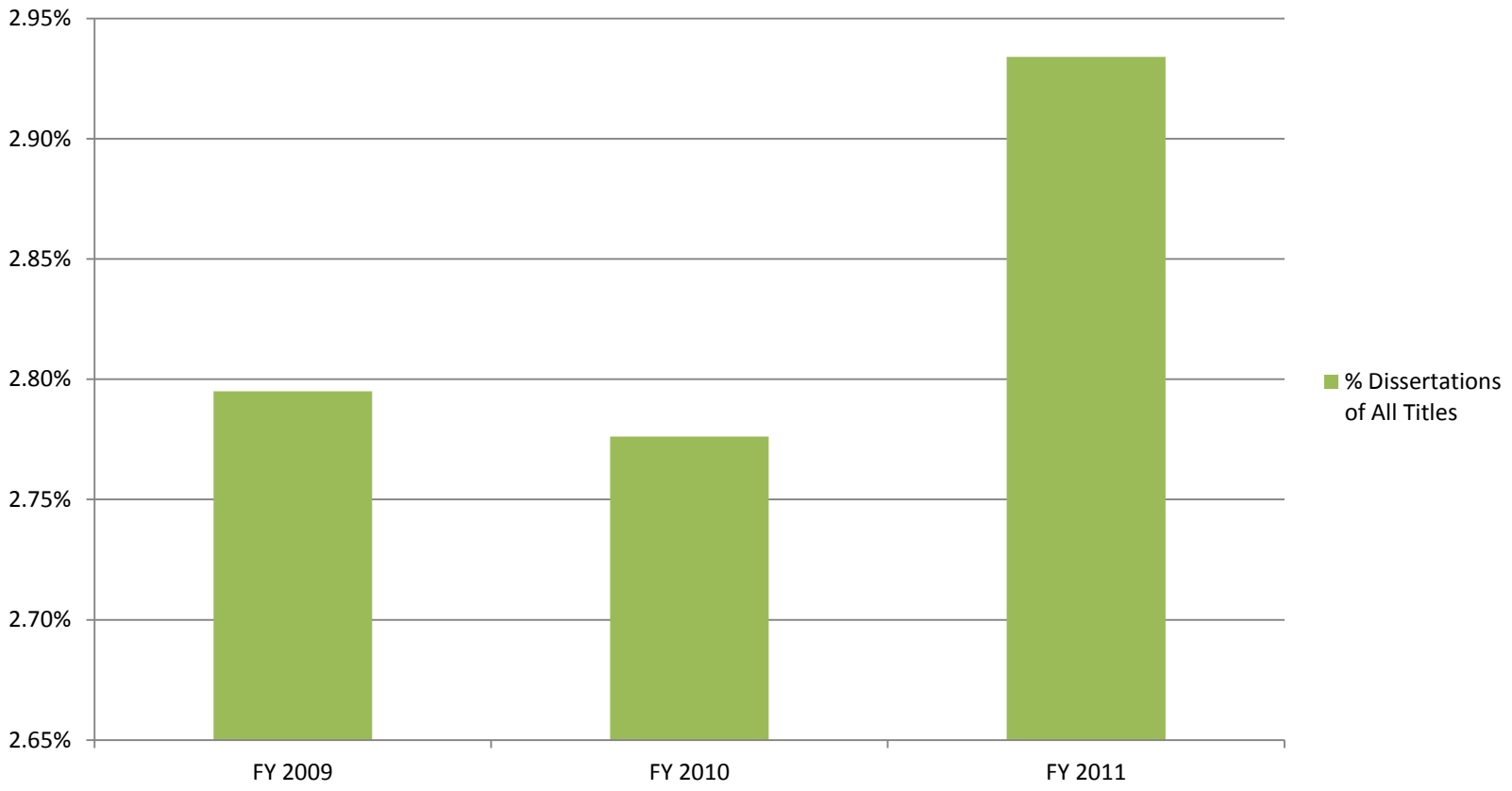
% Dissertations of All Titles



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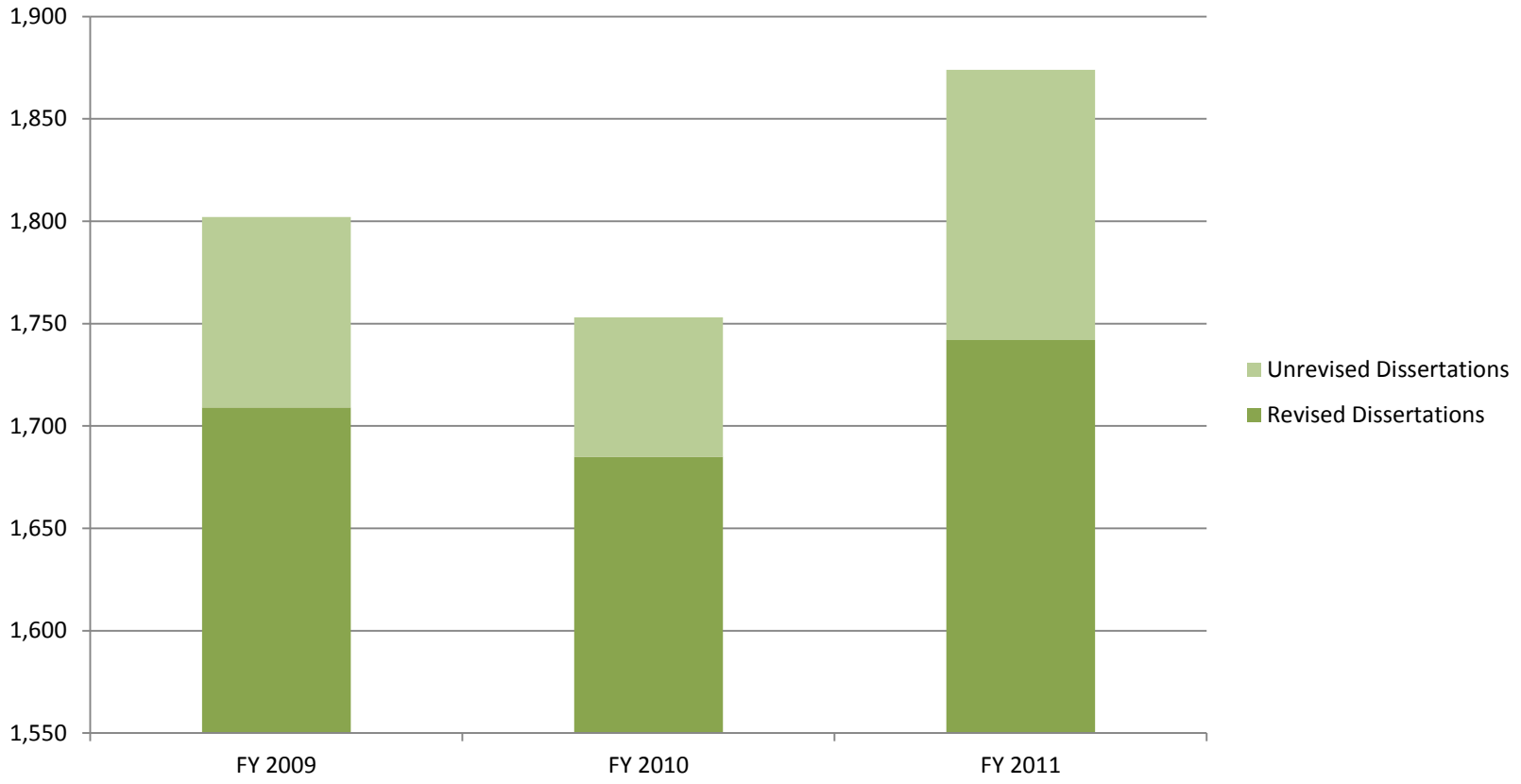
Approval Titles
Revised vs. Unrevised Dissertations



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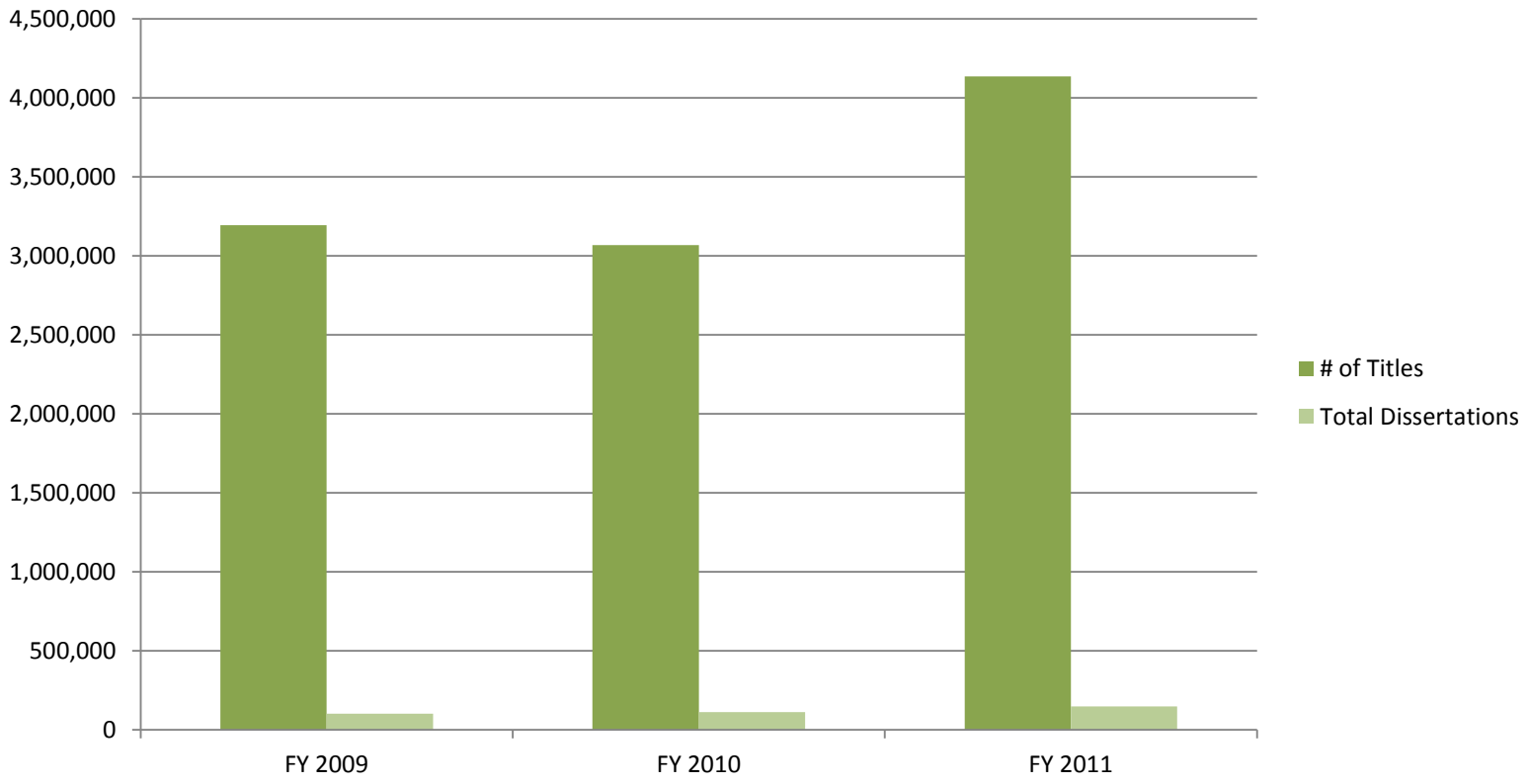
Approval Titles Sold



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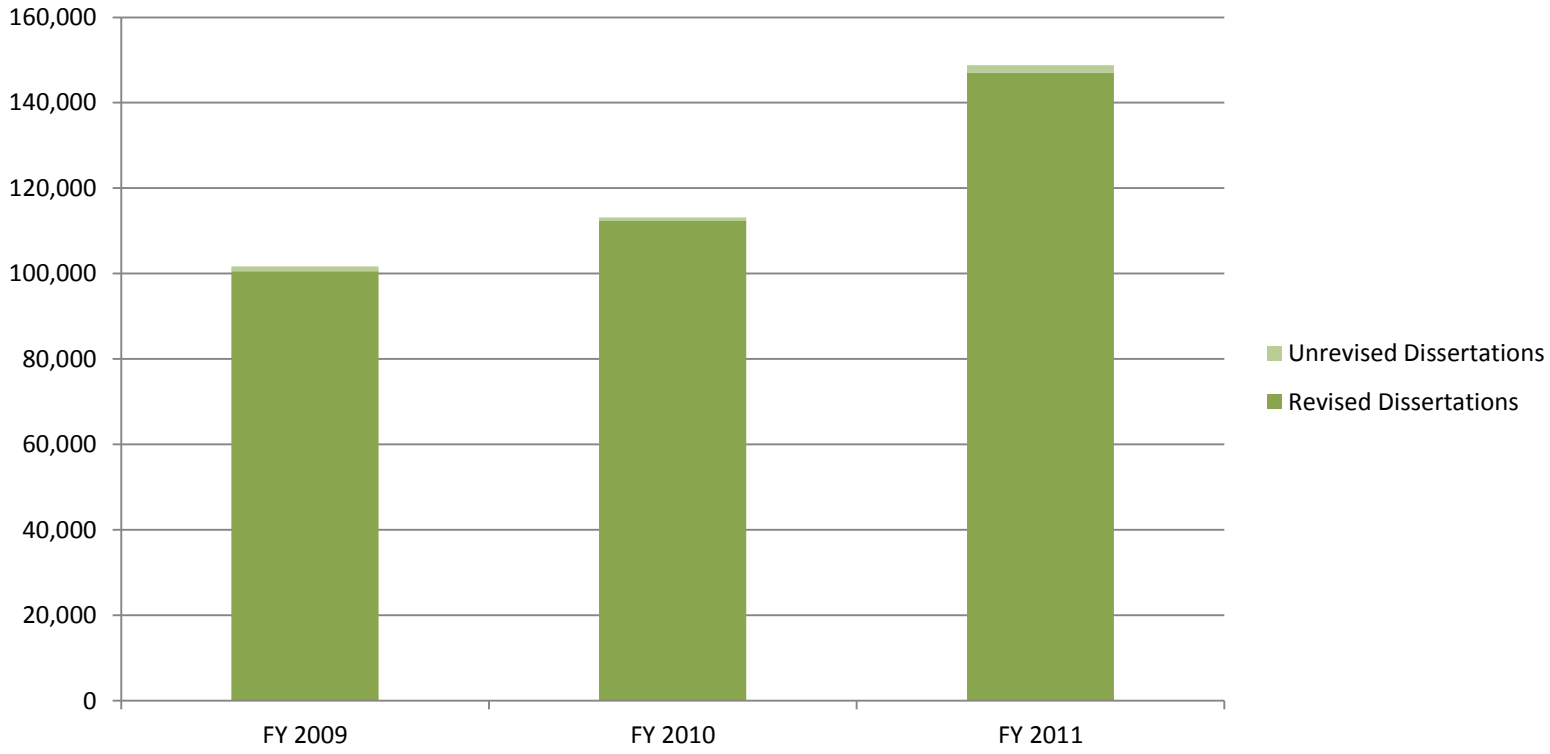
Approval Dissertation Titles Sold



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Overview of Current Plans

- 3,497 Total Approval Plans
- 61% (2,124) with Global Dissertation Rules
- 39% (1,360) with Non-global Dissertation rules

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Analysis of Plans With Global Rules

Revised	Unrevised	Number of Plans
X	X	572
S	X	199
null	X	951
Total		1722
S	S	128
X	S	5
null	S	246
Total		379

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Analysis of Plans with Global Rules

- 45% exclude unrevised and no global rule for revised
- 12% slip unrevised and no global rule for revised
- 9% slip revised and exclude unrevised
- 6% slip both revised and unrevised
- 27% exclude both revised and unrevised
- < 1% Exclude revised and slip unrevised

What Does Baylor Do?

- YBP plan slips revised dissertations and excludes unrevised dissertations
- 1,635 revised dissertations (deduped) met our YBP profile in 2011
- 158 (9.7%) of those titles purchased (thus far)
  - 103 print
  - 51 e-books
  - 4 e-books "shipped" on approval

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What Does the Data Say?

- Libraries unlikely to purchase unrevised dissertations
- YBP data shows a 3-year trend of an increasing number of dissertations sold
- 39% of the plans don't use global rules –the decision point is something other than revised dissertation
- 27% of the plans exclude both revised and unrevised dissertations
  - Small colleges??
  - Community colleges??

Other Factors?

- Monograph budgets shrinking for 15+ years because of cut budgets & the cost of electronic content
- High cost – limited audience
  - 1,635 titles; average cost $85, with a range of $10-$405
  - Brill: 126 titles; average cost $146, with range of $60-279
- Purchase based on clear need, not blanket approval plan
- Tradeoffs – for each revised dissertation purchased, one or more other deserving books not purchased

What About Demand Driven Acquisitions

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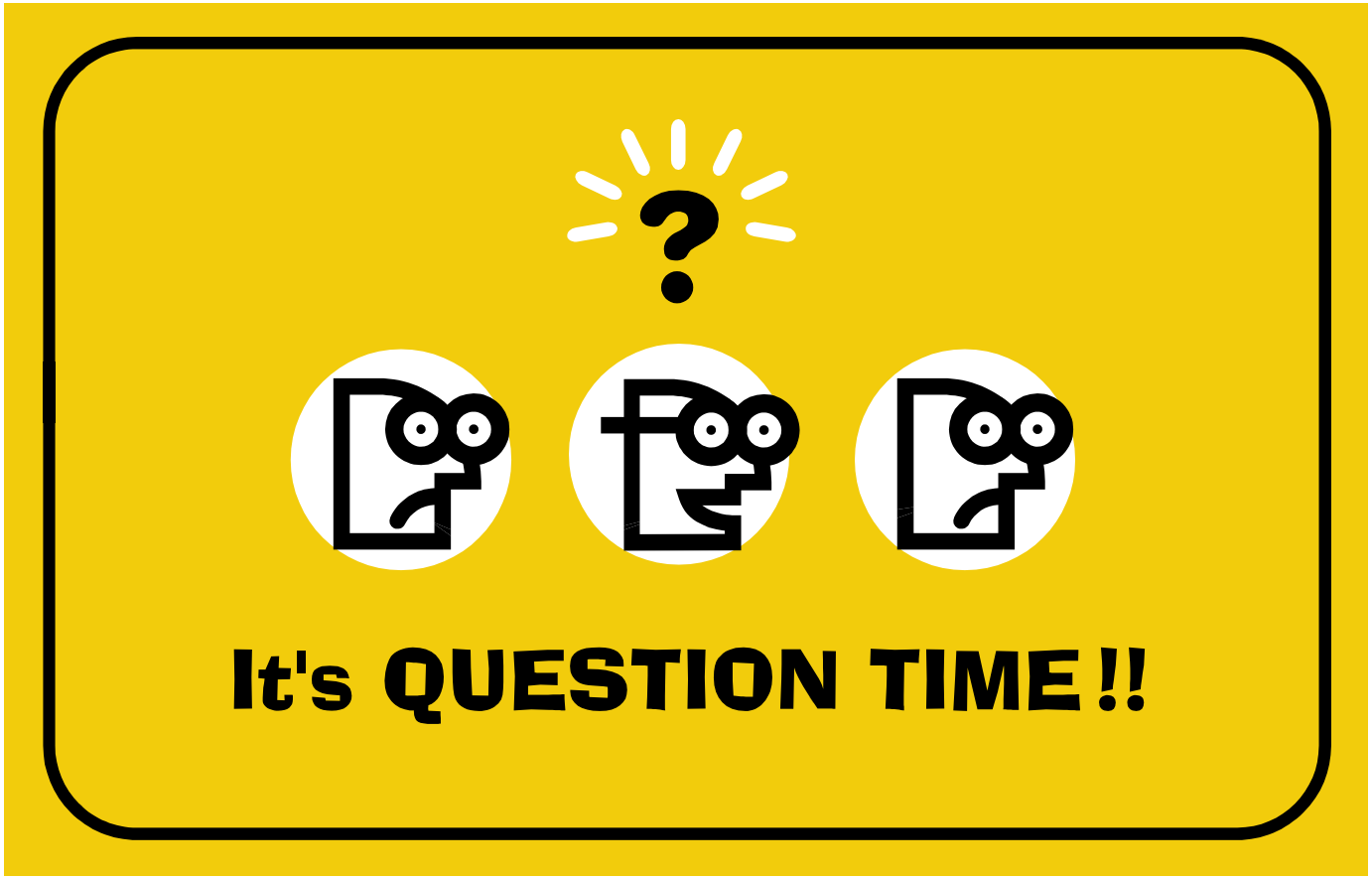
What About Demand Driven Acquisitions

- For e-books only;
- Library works with vendor/publisher to create a profile based on collection development policies;
- Library provides a sum of money in a deposit account and other financial parameters
- Vendor provides (MARC)records for the online catalog;
- Users initiate the e-book purchase

For Grad Students. . .

- Open access can be double-edged sword
  - Some publishers "concerned" about open access and choose not to publish OA dissertations
  - Other publishers look at high use of OA dissertations as bell weather for sales of revised dissertations
- Consider broadening narrowly-focused thesis in the dissertation when moving to publishing
- Make a case on how the proposed book is different from the dissertation



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