Books on Demand and Collection Building of University Library

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Abstract

Books on demand revolutionizes traditional publishing operations, opens a window to the whole new world, and has an important influence on collection development of the university library. It is an urgent real issue for present-day university libraries to grasp production, transmission, distribution law of prints under books-on-demand model, and build up scientific and reasonable collection development.

Key words: Books on demand; University library; Collection building

INTRODUCTION

Books on demand are an epoch-making revolution in the history of book publishing, exerts a profound impact on the book industry, and will have a growing influence on the university library with increasingly obvious significance. It will become one of the important strategies to enhance collection development of the university library and further improve quality of service.

1. OVERVIEW OF BOOKS ON DEMAND

1.1 Definition

Books on demand (BOD), also known as Print On Demand (POD), adopts advanced data processing technique, digital printing system and network system, breaks traditional publishing models' limitations of print run, and recombines links of publishing process, including compilation, printing, and issuance, providing speedy, efficient and personalized services to library acquisitions. A central part of BOD is printed on demand. Print on demand is a technology that uses computer to print digital books into printed texts on the basis of long-distance transmission and high-density storage of digital information. Due to amazing printing speed, American POD system only takes 30 seconds in average to print, trim and fold pages and gather, so print on demand is also known as "lightning print", "just-in-time print", etc. (Zhao, 2005).

1.2 Characteristics

BOD realizes printing in time and on demand. That is to say, relying on online platforms, BOD only needs to give orders to the system and get a confirmation, after which the printing task can be completed within a short time. Meanwhile, it can provide clients with service in accordance with place and date designated by clients, directly processing digital printing and bookbinding of documents and data in need. Currently, printing speed of BOD is hundreds of pages per minute, and it only takes 5-20 minutes to print, bind and trim a book, achieving instant printing and helping clients acquire the documents they need in time (Yang, 2016).

(a) BOD satisfies personalized and diversified needs of users: BOD realizes "one edition for one book", offers users a wide range of choices, from cover design, typeface, type size to cover pattern and color, and meets individual needs of users on all fronts.

(b) BOD achieves flexible print runs: The economy of BOD builds on "multiple types and small print run", print run has no significant influence on average cost of each book, thoroughly breaks the threshold of "minimum print run", and publishes small-print-run books that once cannot be published due to economic problems, especially

making those books of research value, reference value and collection value no longer out of print. For example, Lightning Source is the world's biggest POD organization, which prints 1 million books per month, but every order only involves 1.8 books on average. That company's business include old and new books, 63% of orders are placed by publishing houses, 37% directly by readers, this is a difference from traditional publishing (Wen, 2010).

(c) BOD owns an enormous number of books in print, which fully reflects the comprehensiveness and extensiveness of book varieties. For example, Espresso POD now can print 1 million books, among which 400,000 are out-of-print books. For another example, American Lightning Source Inc. cooperates with 4,500 publishing houses worldwide, and owns digital documents of hundreds of thousands of books, including new books, bestsellers, short-run books, out-of-print books and books in shortage (Yang, 2016).

1.3 Overview

BOD first appeared in America. In 1997, America's biggest book wholesaler Ingram Content Group established Lightning Print Inc. (later renamed as Lightning Source). In Europe, Germany's largest book distributer Books on Demand GmbH (BOD) began to apply POD techniques in the mid-1990s. British Cambridge University Press was the first to carry out BOD business in 1998, with a view to decreasing out-of-print books and maintaining and extending in-print time of academic books. While in Japan, Asia, Tohan Corporation Toppan Printing and other 29 publishing companies cofound BOOKING Company. Moreover, Fuji Xerox, Microsoft, and large publishers—Kodansha Ltd. and Shogakukan Inc. cofounded a POD company. General situation of development of BOD in China: On April 16, 2004, General Administration of Press and Publication convoked a press conference, formally initiating "BOD" project in China. The General Administration of Press and Publication plans to put BOD project on the list of national key publishing projects. Around 1993, Intellectual Property Publishing House bought China's first 5090 equipment and began to do short-run digital printing; In 1999, the whole publishing process of patented documents realized digitalization; in 2000, all instruction books of patented documents adopted digital printing. In 2004, "BOD project" was formally launched in China, and some domestic IT technology companies, equipment supplier, inker websites, traditional publishing houses, large publishing groups, and large printing enterprises also offer BOD services. For example, Founder Group's Easprint Company focuses on BOD printing business; Intellectual Property Publishing House launched its BOD project in 2004, and established Zhongxian Tuofang Co., Ltd. to conduct self-publishing, data processing and digital printing businesses; China Publishing Group

introduced "one-book-one-print lightning print", which is a new digital POD equipment and can complete automatic printing, bookbinding, trimming, publication and other one-touch operations within a few minutes as required. It forms glue-binding books with colored or black-and-white content and colored cover, provides clients with enormous book resources and a multitude of choices, and supports long-distance transmission of network data, achieving simultaneous sharing and remote printing of book resources, meeting diversified, flexible, and individual requirements of clients for printing, and providing BOD print solutions to users. Intellectual Property Publishing House, China Standards Press, Petroleum Industry Press, Metallurgical Industry Press and China Meteorological Press all provide BOD services (Sun, 2014).

2. THE INFLUENCES OF BOD MODEL ON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection resource is a material basis for the library to survive and grow and is the cornerstone for the university library to provide quality services to teachers and students. Driven by network techniques, the emergence of various publishing model, such as BOD and open access publishing, brings a profound impact on the development of library collection resource.

(a) By far, the influences of BOD on library collection development are commendatory and positive and are of major significance to promote the future development of library. Concrete manifestations are: BOD allows library to print many short-run books and out-of-print books and many highly-specialized academic works with short publishing life and small print run in time and on demand, and help university teachers and students to gain access to sources they need at any time. Besides, BOD has an impact on traditional development philosophy, policy and practices regarding literature resources of library, and prompts university libraries to make necessary adaptations and adjustments. As some scholars point out, library will become the biggest beneficiary of BOD. BOD will also become an indispensable supplementary source of document resources for the library. For example, library is one of important clients of German Lihri's BoD. Once library's application for book order via database is approved, publishing process will be activated immediately (Wen, 2010). So, BOD helps libraries obtain tangible benefits.

(b) The Influences of BOD on University Library Acquisitions. The development of BOD makes library operate under a whole new model that library enables teachers and students not only to acquire particular collection resources, but also to obtain collective resources of other places through organized collection and transmission mechanism. Staff of the acquisitions

department can overcome the blindness of acquisition plan with BOD, which increases the flexibility and adaptability of the plan.

3. BOD PROMPTS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING COUNTERMEASURES

(a) The use of BOD can reasonably expand the library collection and avoid difficulties in procurement faced by library when purchasing out-of-print books and short-run books. In recent ten years, colleges and universities must face comprehensive assessment, so to reach some definable targets, university libraries will do a rush job of buying books to reach purchase objectives, which results in unreasonable book purchasing plan and low usage rate, failing to follow the idea of reflecting characteristic collection of library development and providing teachers and students with information service. Besides, according to statistics, rate of collection circulation of university library is normally lower than 40%, some libraries' collection use ratio is lower than 20% that 60%-80% of collected books are idle, even some libraries' zero lending rate reaches 56%. At present, university libraries purchase too much paper resources, whose expenditure often take up 80%-90% of total book purchasing funds, and this phenomenon is not rare in public libraries (Chen, 2014).

As for the abovementioned problems, with BOD, you only need to reach an agreement with a publisher to out-of-print books and short-run books needed by the library in time. Under former traditional models, school teachers or students often need to wait until library purchases books next time when recommending books; generally the cycle takes two to three months, so by the time the books are catalogued and put on the shelf, it is hard to meet the informational needs of teachers and students. While BOD breaks the limitation of minimum print run and meet individual needs of teachers and students of the university library as well as their special needs in "long tail theory". Now, professional literatures of newly-added disciplines are in great demand by universities and colleges nationwide. However, it is hard for the library to purchase these books within a short time from normal acquisition channel, but they can utilize BOD to supplement books and document resources in need. For example, a university library can reprint out-of-print books it needs through Intellectual Property Publishing House in a BOD way. BOD breaks the limitation of the minimum print run, and is applicable to highly-specialized periodicals, newspapers with a particular readership and collection of special literatures, which helps the library to construct a characteristic collection resource system. For example, China Standards Press has built up a national standard database, which can provide users with 28,000 national (industrial) standards and carry out digital printing immediately as long as there is a demand; Intellectual Property Publishing House owns an OCR production line, automatic typesetting of patented literatures and digital printing technique. A library can purchase the national (industrial) standards it lacks through China Standards Press in the form of BOD, and acquire patented literatures through Intellectual Property Publishing House in the form of BOD (Sun, 2014). Moreover, when POD projects are offering, university libraries need to overcome some obstacles, streamline procedures and control cost. Also, they need to establish a POD digital asset alliance, build up a powerful, sophisticated management platform of digital resource, and transform digitized storing of content into a key project concerning co-construction and sharing of resources. Also, research and solution of copyright issue should be paid attention to. It is necessary to maximize the dissemination of high-quality digital resource while ensuring the copyrights of authors and publishers, making sure that books can be made to order quickly but will not be duplicated and spread at liberty after entering print database to safeguard legitimate rights and interests of authors and publishing houses. Now, "cloud publishing" platform has been able to provide number of prints and content protection of digital resource in transmission with technical support, for example, Hewlett-Packard (HP) has developed a core technology—"cloud production", where data transmission takes place in "cloud" and only those who have permissions can see these data; once number and service life of POD are set, encrypted files will be destroyed automatically if overdue, thus protecting data in transmission. This approach can be drawn on (Shi, 2015).

(b) BOD is incorporated into collection development. University library can achieve the digitization of its special collections in accordance with requirements of BOD, maintain important resources, and demonstrate its advantages in disciplines. Besides, conduct vigorous propaganda and encourage teachers and students to get involved in collection development of the library. As for printing fees, teachers and students can print their favorite books themselves and pay relevant fees, or print their favorite books and return them to the library as a part of collection, then the library covers the expenses. Let users participate in the development of the library collection resource and only pay for the demand, relatively relieving financial strain of library.

(c) BOD can optimize structure of collection. BOD provides university library with collection of out-of-print books. For instance, books of some famous authors and experts have authorized Knowledge Publishing House to print them on demand, including Mao Dun, Lao She, Guo Moruo, and Xu Chengbei. Such books, if out of print in the market, can be acquired through BOD when any one of them is needed. In addition, be it teachers or

students, if they only need a periodical or one article of a collection of papers, the library does not need to buy the whole book like it did before, but can buy one article or several articles of a book as needed. The development of the library collection resource not only includes purchasing newly-published literatures but also includes supplementing previous important documents. BOD fully mobilizes superior resources in other places to supplement short-run and out-of-print books. For example, a library can authorize its valuable books or unique copies to BOD and then include them in the library, which realizes the sustainable circulation of valuable resources. Only in this way can we optimize the collection structure of the university library as well as enhance the academic integrality of the library collection.

(d) BOD helps the acquisitions department of university library to perform collection supplement. Collection supplement is always an important part of acquisitions. Acquisition librarians make great efforts in their actual work, but they are restricted by traditional publishing models, for it is not easy for libraries to supplement literature resources. For example, owing to all kinds of reasons, external literature resources are in shortage to a varying degree. But BOD is all digital, features just-in-time printing and is accessible anytime. This offers great convenience to the acquisitions department in supplementing collection.

(e) Let teachers and students participate in the model and energetically get involved in collection development. Currently, library should conduct deeper readership researches, realize comprehensive communication and interaction between teachers and students and librarians, and understand real opinions and individual needs of teachers and students. This is one of the most important tasks for making the best of BOD. Meanwhile, the limited amount of funds should be used wisely by virtue of open access.

CONCLUSION

Library collection development is a matter of primary importance to librarianship. Under present diversified publishing models, BOD opens a new window to a new world, and enables printing library's out-of-print books on demand, and meanwhile creates new business opportunities and the room for new value added services for the traditional publishing industry, as BOD is a brand new theme. Library should make use of the advantages of POD models, formulate plans conducive to library's own development, and construct diversified library resources systems. It is necessary to look into actual needs of teachers and students, enable real-time communication between teachers, students and libraries, gradually, and help collection development of the library not only demonstrate the characteristics of the library but also meet reading needs of all teachers and students.

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