



Assessment Annual Report

Service or Collection

Course Reserves

Fiscal Year

2020-2021

Overview

Previous to the pandemic, LEAD's course reserves was a highly-circulated collection, accounting for about 350 checkouts each week. Mid-finals week of Winter Term 2020, the library shut down to all but a few essential staff members for what was then an indeterminate period of time. Because transmission rates on physical items were then unknown, we could not confidently circulate print books without a lengthy quarantine period. Meanwhile, OSU students were either under levels of financial stress which would have made our reserves collection vital to them, or they were unable to purchase their own copies as mail services went down throughout the country. LEAD immediately decided to provide electronic copies of our reserves. We partnered with the HSRC to distribute a request form so all students in need could request access to their course texts.

As an emergency response to these extraordinary circumstances, we scanned our print reserves and distributed those scans to patrons upon request. These PDFs were shared using Box (an online dropbox program) with folders that expired at the end of each term. However, this was unsustainable on two fronts. Per copyright law, this was unacceptable sharing in non-emergency situations. It also required a higher level of mediation for both staff and patrons - we didn't have the staffing to respond to individual requests, and patrons had to self-select into the program by submitting a request, rather than finding the materials spontaneously in our collection. For this reason, we reiterated our processes multiple times, finally settling on our current procedure of cataloging and sharing scanned textbooks through Alma Digital.

Strategic Significance:

1. Emphasize High Quality Services and Expertise

2. Build and Strengthen Relationships
3. Reward Experimentation and Support Continuous Improvement

This service connects to all three goals and priorities in the OSULP Strategic Plan. We emphasize high quality services and expertise by continually reiterating and improving our course reserves service. We have built and strengthened relationships with both external groups such as the HSRC, and within the library when every department worked together to identify novel solutions. We reward experimentation, as both student-initiated requests and electronic reserves are new services we provide.

Takeaways:

- This year we shifted from using Box to shared course reserves to Alma Digital - a Controlled Digital Lending model. This was an improved method that more closely aligns with copyright law and OSU general counsel approved.
- Many big conceptual shifts occurred this year - that students were welcome to request the books they needed, that we could provide those books online, and that we could share labor interdepartmentally in order to make both these things happen. This is an expensive service both in time and money, but is heavily used and appreciated by our students and faculty. The most important takeaway from this year is that we need to provide patron(student)-requested course reserves.
- Whenever possible we bought ebooks - more people can access at once, and less time to get a physical book, scan it, and make it accessible in Alma Digital. This process involved many others outside of LEAD. Other library units stepped up and put other things aside in order to search, negotiate, purchase, catalog and make accessible ebooks for course reserves. This process has led us to rethink position duties - shifting a staff member to 50% course reserves work on top of others already doing this work - for post pandemic in order to continue.
- Working with other units and across campus to support OSU in extraordinary times has been key to surviving the year. We can do more when we don't try to do it alone and focus on community needs instead of departmental boundaries. Our ability to quickly pivot, scale up and mobilize based on existing relationships and trust and previous system/campus wide conversations provided credibility. Building on these high level connections around campus particularly with the Human Services Resource Center we were able to do more together. We plan to continue supporting each other and in turn our students through student requested and digital course reserves after the pandemic with our HSRC partner.

Next Steps:

It is clear that we must have student-initiated requests as a part of our course reserves system. Previous to the pandemic, we only accepted textbook requests directly from instructors. Unfortunately this meant that only instructors who knew about and used our reserves system would have their books added to our collection. By allowing students to

make requests, we ensure students will have access to their required texts regardless of their instructors' relationship with the library. The benefits of allowing student-initiated requests are demonstrated through comments from both instructors and students who indicate they would not have participated in their class without this resource, and from the increased usage we've seen.

We must also have a form of electronic reserves, regardless of whether or not we have reopened our print collection. This is necessary as an accessibility measure. Scanned reserves are accessible with a screenreader, reducing the workload on DAS and ensuring that students can access materials in a variety of modalities. It also ensures that students can access materials regardless of their physical location, opening our reserves collection up to students in our Ecampus courses, as well as allowing students to quarantine and stay safe according to public health needs.

For both these reasons, our course reserves department needs more staff time allotted to it. Prior to the pandemic, we had a staff member who worked on course reserves for 40% of their workweek. During the pandemic, course reserves work has taken up 100% of that staff member's time, as well as increased the workload on our acquisitions team, catalogers, student workers, LEAD faculty, and staff from other departments who have pitched in as they are able.

We also need staff time to evaluate if Alma Digital is the best solution to our Controlled Digital Lending needs. Although it is working well for us right now, there are technical expansions that can be done within the software itself, such as changing the online viewer to improve digital accessibility and auditing the scans to ensure they are cataloged correctly. The pandemic has put developmental pressure on many software programs that weren't available a year ago - a thorough investigation into these new options may lead us to an even more sustainable and satisfactory product.

Assessment:

We used informal qualitative assessment for every step of our process. As we began the process to move from course reserves support that was mostly via physical access to one that would need to be completely digital we did all we could to pursue licenced ebooks from vendors first. This decision was driven both by our risk assessment analysis as well as a recognition that scanning books is extremely labor intensive. One method we used to preemptively purchase ebooks was to submit a list of items we currently had available for physical course reserves to vendors to see if an ebook was available to licence as a result we purchased 50 ebooks in early April. As the pandemic continued, we have kept with an ebook first approach to course support acquiring unlimited licences where available. Unfortunately, textbooks from most major publishers rarely have institutional ebook licenses available.

Switching from Box to Alma Digital: We switched to Alma Digital in response to copyright concerns with Box, after consultation with general counsel. In addition, Box used a great deal of staff time and required manual intervention at each step of the way. Alma Digital

allowed some parts of the process, particularly patron discovery, to happen without the need for staff involvement.

Alma Digital led to greatly increased use of our course reserves:

As of March 31, 2021:

- 623 books have been at least partially digitized and added to Alma Digital
- Digital representations have received a total of 34,763 views since the first one was created August 19, 2020.
- Alma Digital titles were viewed an average of 67 times since August 2020
 - Most heavily used book is *Our Changing Climate* with 1,327 views since it was cataloged September 30th.
- Our spreadsheet of completed materials has received 1,884 unique viewers

Comparison data:

Between August 19, 2019 and March 31, 2021, print course reserves were checked out 9,578 times. A total of 746 items are on print reserve, for an average of 12 uses per item.

Appreciation quotes from users:

- I just wanted to chime in and say that I'm thinking of you all as you support the university during these multiple crises we're facing. A truly unprecedented Fall 2020 for Beaver Nation, but we're in good hands!
- I am a new freshman at OSU. I am sending this email to commend one of the employees there at the Valley Library for their excellent service. Specifically, Umaima Afzal did a wonderful job providing textbooks...she was very professional and caring...very patient with my many questions, and answered them quickly and completely ... helped to make my transition into OSU a positive one.
- In the 21st century as a college student, not having a laptop is like not having gloves, masks or soap and still trying to navigate this covid19 pandemic. There is a very slight chance that I will succeed. By providing me with a laptop, especially during this era of taking classes remotely, you continue to pave the way for success. I can only be grateful.
- At least 10 people enrolled shared that they would have skipped assignments without the access that was provided. It's been very appreciated by students (and me!)
- **And I'm feeling grateful for that, so I wanted to say THANKS to everybody in the library for keeping the information flowing.** In the College of Ag, when we're being really sincere with our thanks, we write it in all caps like that. :)
- "I appreciate how quickly you are working to make these resources available—I know our switch to online must have you guys swamped! And these are some wonderful resources that I think our students will get a lot of use out of."

Respectfully submitted,

Signature of the person (or persons) who prepared this report

Date submitted

Attachments

Appendix A: Assessment Data