

# Finding a Sustainable Collection Development Model in Digital Information World: Strategizing Monograph Collections in Academic Libraries

## Purpose of the Study

Monographs are one of many changing aspects of library collections that have been undergoing significant changes. According to Library Journal's survey of academic library collections in 2018, print books, on average, constitute 60% and eBooks take the remaining 40% of monograph collections. While traditional acquisitions methods of approval and firm orders have been dominant for print monographs, eBooks are characterized with their higher prices, expanding supply streams, innovative acquisitions methods, and enabling more user-centric collection development models.

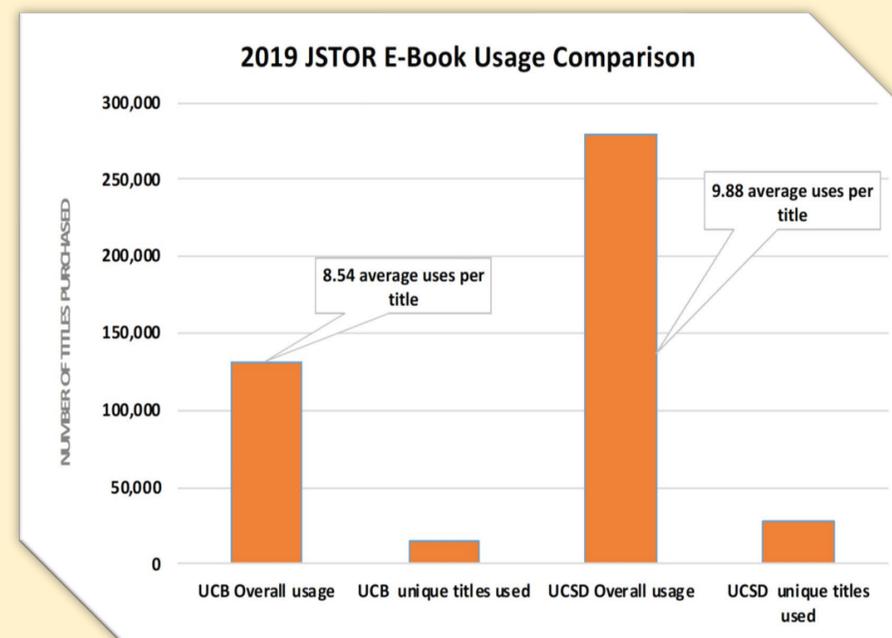
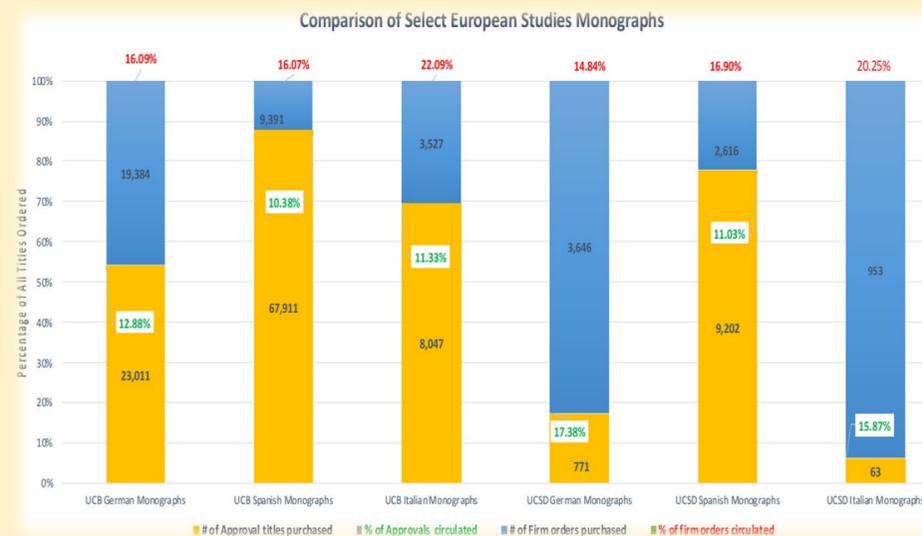
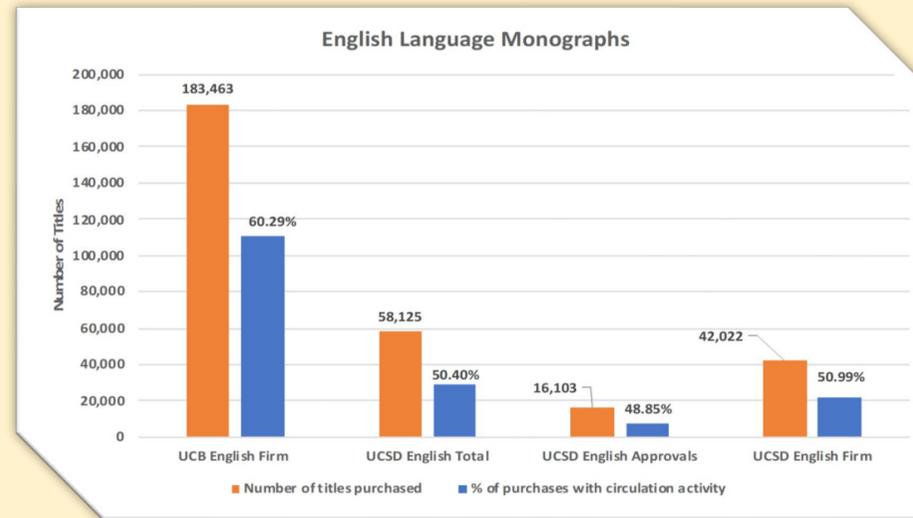
Approaching library collections as services along with changes in operational environment of academic libraries, it is essential to find a dynamic collection development model for monograph collections that are primarily based on users' research interests and format preferences. Based on the analysis of acquisitions methods, format preferences, and usage statistics in social sciences and humanities collections, the study aims at contributing to a collection strategy that can identify the critical balance between print and eBooks combination, which takes into account changing user preferences and is also sustainable in the long run.

## Design and Methodology

The analysis compares print and eBook monograph collections in numerous social sciences and humanities subjects at UC Berkeley and UC San Diego libraries. The empirical evaluation presented in the study is built on comparative assessment of both English and area studies monograph collections (namely, in German, Italian, and Spanish) acquired by both libraries. A unique feature of the design is that while the UC San Diego Library has a traditional, print-based approval profile UC Berkeley library has also been a print-based but utilized firm-orders for their English monographs.

The study is designed to include cataloging/metadata, acquisitions, and access-related data at a research library scale. The data includes bibliographic metadata for print and eBooks, acquisitions methods, and circulation counts as usage statistics of monograph collections. This simple design allows us to assess various acquisitions methods (approvals, firms, demand-driven acquisitions-DDA) and overall user-centricity of print and eBooks collections at both libraries.

### The Acquisitions-User Spectrum



## Findings

- English print monographs have a higher usage in both libraries as expected.
- Firm ordered English monographs attract more users than those acquired through approval plans.
- As to some select area studies collections in German, Italian, and Spanish languages, monograph circulations at both libraries are naturally lower than their English counterparts.
- Such usage statistics are warranted given their smaller faculty and student size and distinct scholarly focus.
- Firm ordered foreign language materials receive more user attention than historical approval plans.
- Average uses per title in JSTOR's eBook platform is high in both libraries – an indication of continued trend of user preference for eBook content in social sciences and humanities subjects.
- User-centeredness of various acquisitions methods spectrum (blanket, approval, and firm order as used in this study) is confirmed by the study. It can correctly predict usage for library collections.

## Practical Implications

- A comprehensive and detailed approval plan might also attract similar, if not more usage, for already highly on demand English materials at both libraries – as opposed to labor intensive firm order process.
- Expanding firm ordering (or even DDA) of foreign language materials and narrower approval plans might have potentials to build more user-centered area studies collections and increase usage stats in the long run.
- E-preferred English approval plans would bring the best of both print and eBook worlds in user terms.
- Diverting more funds and expanding eBook collections in social sciences and humanities in English and foreign languages would attract more users and scholarly interests to academic library collections.
- Being cognizant of library acquisitions methods and their implications for collection usage.

## Limitations of the Study

- UC Berkeley Library's 2009-2019 collection and usage data was used, while only 2013-2019 collection data had to be used for UCSD Library due to missing earlier acquisition methods and usage data.
- Usage metric for print monographs is limited to total circulation count captured in Millennium ILS and doesn't encompass all possible usage categories for print materials.
- JSTOR eBooks was selected as more representative of social sciences and humanities subjects jointly. A more detailed and comprehensive eBook comparison was beyond the limits of the current project.
- eBook Counter 5 data was available for 2019 and 2020; usage data for 2020 was not included in the analysis so as not to skew our interpretation of the data due to Covid-19 impact on library community and users.
- DDA method was not included and hence not subject to comparative assessment since only UCSD Library has utilized the method in the past.

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