

## Print to Electronic Journal Conversion: Criteria for Maintaining Duplicate Print Journals

**Sandy Campbell**

In 2000, through the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP), the University of Alberta Library received access to more than 700 electronic journals. Recognizing that we would not be able to maintain both electronic and print subscriptions, cancellation of print equivalents of electronic journals became the Library's clear direction. Before undertaking this conversion, our selectors needed to know under what conditions, if any, print journals would still be required.

The Science and Technology Library Selectors Team developed a preliminary list of criteria by reviewing sample issues and consulting with faculty. Through consultation with the Library's Collection Development Committee, we broadened the list so that it could be applied to serials and publications outside the CNSLP licence.

### Criteria for maintaining print copies of electronic journals

These criteria are meant to be starting points for the consideration of the issues involved. Not all will apply to every title. Sometimes several will apply, but one will outweigh others.

Many of these criteria, such as the right to copy articles for inter-library loan and the issue of perpetual

access, are addressed by reviewing the vendor contract. Others, such as web site stability and the monographic nature of some journals, require selector and user knowledge of the title or site. Still others, such as the issue of "collections of excellence" and geographic specialization, require local policy decisions.

Making the decision to cancel print subscriptions takes libraries into a realm of collection building where there are uncertainties. We must recognize that we may make errors and that some print subscriptions may need to be reinstated. However, making the decision to duplicate electronic subscriptions in print involves a cost burden and often means that another title cannot be purchased, so the decision must be made thoughtfully.

### Criteria

#### **1. Substantial Content Missing from the E-Journal**

If an electronic journal is missing "substantial" content (articles, supplements or images), the print subscription must be maintained. Many journals received through aggregated services fall into this category.

Using a checklist (see sidebar on following page), our student workers

compared the most current print and electronic issues page by page. Our checklist was based, in part, on the 2001 work of Henebry and Safley. Our review of CNSLP titles did not reveal "substantial" omissions.

#### **2. Content Not Reproducible in Electronic Format**

Journals containing materials that are meant to be touched or smelled, or that have other qualities not reproducible in the electronic environment, must be maintained in print. In our tests of the CNSLP titles, we did not find irreproducible materials.

In testing the quality of colour images, we found that using a standard office colour printer we were able to reproduce images that faculty members found adequate for scientific purposes. For some users, however, only the print version will be adequate. For example, students studying painting techniques rely on the images of paintings in journals being as close to the original work as possible.

#### **3. Oversized Inserts**

Our review of current issues of CNSLP journals did not reveal any examples of oversized inserts. However, some journals routinely

**University of Alberta  
Science and Technology Library**

**Project to Compare Print and Electronic Journal Content  
(non-CNSLP titles)**

Title of Journal \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Compare the issues with the e-issues, looking for:

1. Completeness of the issue including:

- all articles present
- are the articles available in:  pdf  html  other (e.g. postscript)
- supplements present
- advertisements (print missing adverts for such things as invitations to review papers)
- calls for papers
- letters to editor
- are colour images, colour in the online version?
- any other differences?
- is there something in the e-copy not available in the paper copy?

2. Speed of publication: Is the most current issue on the shelf available electronically? It should be, but we need to ask the question.

3. Legibility: Can you see on the screen all of the things you can see on the printed page, paying particular attention to the graphics-like material listed above, and including colour to black-and-white conversion?

If there are colour images, print a colour page (preferably from the pdf version).  
If there are pdf and html versions of the colour images, compare both. Are there differences?

4. Printability: When you print the page, can you still read the content?

5. Completeness of the volume: Are all issues of the journal year-to-date available online?

contain large foldout maps or posters. These cannot be viewed at full size on a standard monitor and may not be comprehensible at smaller scales.

**4. Requires Special Equipment**

Some journals contain material that requires special equipment for reproduction (for example, large maps that would have to be plotted). Our review of CNSLP journals did not reveal any examples of this nature.

**5. Monographic Journals and "Read Much" Journals**

Work by Summerfield, Mandel and Kantor on e-books at Columbia University identified "read much" books as being more usable in print than in electronic format. "Read much" materials are those that are studied closely, such as literary works. The user might read them cover to cover or might use them intensively, flipping from part to part. The length of the publication, by itself, does not define a "read much" work. *Lecture Notes in Mathematics*, a CNSLP title, is an example of a "read much" title, which we will maintain in print.

**6. Restricted Access**

If a journal is restricted to individual workstations or buildings, or requires each user to have a password, then a print copy may be more accessible. None of the CNSLP titles have access restrictions.

### **7. Interlibrary Loan Not Permitted**

If the library has a mandate to supply interlibrary loan services and the contract forbids the printing and mailing of copies of articles, then the library will have to decide whether maintenance of the print subscription to continue the inter-library loan service is a priority. The CNSLP contract permits inter-library loans.

### **8. Web Site Unstable**

While the CNSLP publishers are all fairly large and stable organizations, other e-journal publishers, particularly small associations and some government departments, may have difficulty maintaining a stable web site. If libraries cannot be confident that they will have access to the journal when their users need it, then the print version will have to be maintained.

### **9. No Alternative Site**

Most large publishers, such as those whose journals are licensed through CNSLP, have mirror sites and will be able to reroute traffic from one to another if a server fails. However, many small publishers do not have this backup. If the publisher has no alternative site, libraries may need to maintain a print copy.

### **10. No Permanent, Safe Archive**

If the library has a mandate to maintain an archive of the material it collects, then continued access to the content is an important consideration. Some e-journal publishers make no attempt to archive their publications. Some simply have a "rolling wall" and

maintain only the most recent issues. This information can be determined only through discussion with the publisher – usually in the context of licensing. The CNSLP licence includes a "perpetual access" clause.

### **11. Collections of Excellence**

If the library has "collections of excellence," this may be a consideration for maintaining the print copies of journals. There is no reason to believe that a collection of excellence could not be entirely in electronic format, so the library may choose not to buy the current duplicate subscription. However, the library might choose to keep the "comes with print" issues and might accept donations of journal backruns.

### **12. Geographic Specialization**

When searching for regional or local publications, there is an expectation that large libraries in the specific region will hold them. For this reason, the maintenance of print copies of locally or regionally produced e-publications may be desirable. There are no publications specific to Alberta in the CNSLP journals.

### **13. Paper Retained by Agreement or Contract**

While this is not a part of CNSLP agreements, other contracts or agreements – for example, depository agreements – do require the library to keep paper copies. This situation should be distinguished from that in which the agreement requires the library to buy the print

and electronic versions together. In the latter case, if the electronic copy is adequate, the print copy can be discarded.

### **14. Judicial Requirement for Paper Copies**

In many jurisdictions, legislative materials and law reports, which are presented in a courts of law, must be copies from "official sources." Databases are not considered official sources. In this case, the library must maintain the print copy. This criterion does not apply to any titles under the CNSLP agreement.

### **15. Faculty Need**

Faculty may present a requirement for print that we cannot predict. 🌟

*Sandy Campbell works at the Science and Technology Library, University of Alberta, Edmonton.*

### **Bibliography**

- Frazer, Stuart L. and Pamela Morgan. "Electronic-for-Print Journal Substitutions: A Case Study." *Serials Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1999), pp. 1-7.
- Henebry, Carolyn and Ellen Safley. "Before You Cancel the Paper, Beware – All Electronic Journals in 2002 Are Not Created Equal." North American Serials Interest Group, 16th Annual Conference, May 23-26, 2002 (unpublished presentation).
- Summerfield, Mary, Carol Mandel and Paul Kantor. *The Potential of Online Books in the Scholarly World – From the Columbia University Online Books Evaluation Project*. December 1999, p. 17 ([www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/olbdocs/potentia.doc](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/olbdocs/potentia.doc)).

Copyright of Feliciter is the property of Canadian Library Association and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.