The Workflow DB: A Better Tool for Learning and Tracking Acquisitions and Licensing Workflow

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Journals/ Reference Librarian
Assistant Professor
• 12,400 Undergrads
• 1,400 Grads
• 7 Colleges
  o Arts & Humanities
  o Allied Health and Nursing
  o Business
  o Education
  o Graduate Studies and Research
  o Social and Behavioral Sciences
  o Science, Engineering, and Technology

• Aleph ILS
• Serials Solutions ERMS
  • OpenURL
  • License Term Manager
  • Contacts
  • Etc.
• 1.3 Million Volumes
• 68-72,000 Periodicals
• 350 Databases
• 19 Librarians + about 30 Technicians + Grad Assistants + Student Workers
The Context:
• Started AY2012-13, in a position carved out primarily from:
  o Serials Librarian (Acting Chair after 9 years as Chair)
  o Collection Development & Acquisitions & Budget Librarian (Also fairly new, with WAY too much responsibility)
• 2 Serials Techs – 1 new
• A newish organizational model and division ("Technical Services") which had never gelled
• Very flat, faculty-led organization

Problem:
• Despite newish organization model, there was confusion about workflow processes and policies and no clear model for how to resolve that confusion

Contributing Issues:
• Multiple committees requesting reports about acquisitions or licensing volume
• Large format conversion and new acq project paused since 2009
• New collection development initiatives (such as big deals – Springer, Taylor & Francis, Wiley, ...)

Bottom-line:
• Backlog of work
• Problematic workflow
• New Serials Tech in need of training
• And...
  • Several committees expecting reports of work undertaken
The Solution (year 1):

- Observe and document all aspects of acquisitions workflow, as well as related responsibilities
- Check documented workflow against individual Librarian expectations
- Develop standardized documentation
- Develop spreadsheets to track acquisitions workflow

Develop the Workflow DB (beginning as a what-if exercise at the reference desk):

- Takes the place of documentation
- Produces reports based on the data fields which describe the workflow

After a couple of hours of initial design, I completed programming the first draft of the Workflow DB over a day or two during the summer.
See live demo.
(from demo)
(from demo)
(from demo)
(from demo)
(from demo)
AY2013-14 (year 2):
• New Serials Tech trained using Workflow DB
• Over 800 Acquisitions Records tracked
• Nearly all mysteries were easily resolvable
• EBSCO EDI was 1 point away from perfect

Think of the Workflow DB as “Interactive Documentation” ...
... which also leads to easy workflow reporting and checking

But can the Workflow DB do more?
Summer 2014 Wishlist

1. Add License Clause Tables
2. Add License Clause forms and form fields
3. Add “Login”
   a. Add field highlight feature, so person knows which fields to populate
4. Main form:
   a. Change Department to College
   b. Change Access fields to combo fields (ezproxy notification, URL check, Orders Per Budget, Adds & Cancels)
      i. Orders Per Budget:
         1. Options
            a. N/A
            b. Send to Technician
            c. Complete
         2. Button 1
            a. Produces example report (query)
         3. Button 2
            a. Sends report as spreadsheet to email
            b. Updates status from Send to: to complete
5. Program more effective search feature
6. Reports (for specific fields):
   a. Link Resolver Status
   b. Holding Status
   c. Etc.
Add pop-ups to block attempted data entry. Instead, use buttons.

Add look up to prevent adding the same license clause more than once.
See live demo.
User: Rosamond, Jeff
Resource Type: Serial
Order Action Type: New Order
Recommender: JRC
College: A&H
Title: Journal of Arts and Humanities
Publisher: Cambridge
Estimated Price: $500.00
Format: Print + Online
Subscription Start: 1/1/2015
Subscription End: 
Collection Dev Status: Recommended
Coll Dev Status Date: 2/24/2015
Collection Dev Notes:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serials Technician</td>
<td>Jeff Rosamond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acq Technician Notes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bib Status</td>
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<td>Aleph Sys Number (Bib #)</td>
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<td>Holding Status</td>
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<td>Aleph Order Encumbrance</td>
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<td>Vendor Order Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Link Resolver Status</td>
<td>Needs to be activated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adds And Cancels</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
License: Example License
License Clause: Interlibrary Loan
License Clause Start: ...may supply a copy of an individual document being part of the Licensed Materials by post, fax, or secure electronic transmission for ... noncommercial use ... in compliance with Section 108
License Clause End: Customer agrees to ... compliance with Section 108 ... CONTU
License Clause Comment: Model ILL Language
This button is used to update the terms of the license already attached. If you want to change the license altogether, enter a new license name in the License field.
License: Example License
License Clause: Interlibrary Loan
License Clause Start: ...may supply a copy of an individual document being part of the Licensed Materials by post, fax, or secure electronic transmission for ... noncommercial use ... in compliance with Section 108
License Clause End: Customer agrees to ... compliance with Section 108 ... CONTU
License Clause Comment: Model ILL Language
Is there an ERMS for this?
• Flexible workflow tracking, reporting, and documentation
• Enables research into the success of contract negotiations

Leads to/ Combines with other ERMS needs:
• An automated spreadsheet which accurately predicts recurring costs
• A Journal Collection Analysis database to compare our collection to the universe of available journals by discipline

Does it matter if there’s an ERMS for this? (CORAL, Verde, Next Gen ILS)

The Workflow DB is easy to build, light-weight, and recyclable.

The learnings from one project can lead to another ...