

# Culling the Herd in Hard Times: Implementing an Evidence-Based “Big Deal” Cancellation Support Tool at Vancouver Island University Library

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## Why a Rubric?

Consequent to inflation pressures and program changes, Vancouver Island University librarians recognized the need for an evidence-based tool to support decision-making regarding cancellation of major package deals and resources. Librarians must be able to decide with confidence and explain our renewal/cancellation decisions to ourselves and the wider institutional community.

To assist in this process, VIU librarians recently designed and implemented a collections rubric that examines factors beyond traditional usage metrics and price. **Prior to the implementation of the rubric, collections decisions were based on commonly-used, generic factors and were not formally situated in a broader information context.** This made it difficult for librarians to get a holistic picture of collection development and to make thoroughly-informed, well-documented decisions regarding specific resources and their relation to greater objectives.

## How?

Librarians responsible for collections, assessment, and electronic resources at this West Coast university **worked together to design a 27-point rubric** that uses traditional and non-traditional qualitative and quantitative measures to construct a thorough assessment of products for renewal or cancellation. A review of online collection rubrics from other libraries was conducted to explore existing models.

## Result

With the new rubric, all librarians are able to **quickly evaluate the relative performance of products and their contributions to a cohesive collections strategy.** This tool supports decisions about whether or not specific services and resources should be maintained as part of the VIU collection.

Product Name	Unicorn Database	Lemon Database
Product type	FT journals	FT journals
Projected cost in 2013/14	\$ 33,425.37	\$ 50,468.17
Cost in 2012/2013	\$ 33,425.37	\$ 26,874.23
FT articles accessed in 2012	10585	438
Average cost per FT article (from 2012 use figure)	\$ 3.16	\$ 61.36
Number of titles from latest available info or title list	5526	361
Average cost per FT journal	\$ 6.05	\$ 74.44
Subject coverage	Interdisciplinary. Strongest in social sciences and humanities.	Interdisciplinary. Strongest in social sciences.
Perpetual access terms	Core subs only	No
Content archived in CLOCKSS and/or Portico	Yes – both	No
Indexed in Summon?	Yes	Yes
Fit with platform diversification strategy?	Yes	Yes
Publisher relations	Good	Fair
Title list quality	Good	Fair
Usage statistics availability & quality	Excellent	Poor
COUNTER compliant?	Yes	No
Interface usability	Good	Fair
Platform stability	Excellent	Fair
Consortium friendly?	Yes	No
Resource sharing terms	ILL permitted	ILL permitted
Access terms	Unlimited SUs; walk-ins ok	Unlimited SUs; walk-ins prohibited
Backfile investment	Complete backfile	Backfile packages 1 and 2
Content availability	Good	Purchased archive content access turned off, had to request it be turned back on.
Sustainable pricing model	Fair	No
If aggregator: relationships with publishers	n/a	n/a
Company stability	Good	Poor
MARC records availability & quality	n/a	n/a
Renewal notes	Shaping up to be a straightforward renewal with small decrease in cost. Coverage has increased 4,323 to 5,526 titles.	Huge price increase. Recommendation to cancel.

