

Executive Summary of EAR Recommendation to Replace Lexis Nexis with Westlaw

Prologue:

This executive summary was written by Amy Wallace, Vice Chair of EAR. I acknowledge and thank her greatly for taking on this task as requested by the COLD Executive Committee.

The recommendation by EAR to replace Lexis Nexis with Westlaw can be more easily understood when one briefly examines the history and function of the Electronic Core Collection (ECC).

Background:

The ECC was envisioned in a budget growth environment. The Chancellor's Office (CO) formed an e-resource acquisition unit for library resources that had a budget, could request increases, guide EAR's review of potential new resources, liaise with vendors, provide information and support to EAR, and negotiate contracts, and assist libraries with problems. Over the unit's lifetime resources were added to the ECC based on EAR reviews and recommendations, and the unit rarely (if ever) had the occasion to ask EAR to reconsider or remove a resource. Support for the unit began to wane in the late 2000's due to severe state budget cuts. The unit's leadership was slowly dismantled. Eddie Choy was assigned to negotiate contracts for library resources as part of his responsibilities as a CO contract manager in 2010, and it was announced only the administrative and technical support staff would remain. These budget cuts resulted in the immediate loss of the CSU's much envied library e-resource acquisition knowledge and long-time vendor relationships as well as budget and planning guidance and research assistance needed to make concrete recommendations to COLD. It is difficult to ascertain which individuals or entity have filled the gap in long term planning and budgeting for the ECC, journal packages, emerging resources, and one-time centralized content since 2010. Little permanent money has been allocated to central content acquisition in years despite significant vendor increases. Some non-permanent money has been allocated for back files and the eBook pilots, but even all that was learned during the eBook pilots has had to be tucked away with no long-term plan in place for consortial acquisition. As a result, the ECC is not much different than it was in the mid-late 2000s (Note: NBC Learn was not an EAR recommendation). Here is the ECC today:

Licensed and available to all campuses via ECC at no cost to the campus:

ABI-INFORM Complete
Academic Search Premier
America History & Life/Historical Abstracts

Biological Abstracts
CINAHL Plus Full-Text
Communication & Mass Media
CQ Research Online
Digital Dissertations, Subset A
Grove's Music
LA Times – Current
LexisNexis Academic
MathSciNet
Mergent Online
MLA
NBC (Universal) Learn
Proquest Newsstand
Oxford English Dictionary
Project MUSE Standard Collection
PsycArticles
PsycINFO
Safari Tech Books
Sociol & Social Service Abs

Perpetuity and available to all campuses via ECC at no cost to the campus:

Academic Complete eBooks
ACS Journal Archives
JSTOR Arts & Sciences I – XII
Life Sciences Collection
Net Library
Springerlink Online Backfiles
Wiley-Blackwell Backfiles
100s eBook via recent pilots

Despite the planning and knowledge crisis, the budget cuts meant action needed to be taken. Eddie was instrumental in renegotiating current contracts to reduce costs, and EAR transitioned from a committee that reviewed products to an information gathering (surveys, studies), coordinating, and consensus building committee. Their reports consistently communicated the need for COLD to ponder values, priorities, processes, and timelines in order to provide direction. The overall message being that item by item review would not allow EAR to effectively address the complexities of emerging and diminishing electronic resources with no CO support in the current budget climate. Their reports also communicated a variety of recommendations and actions taken to preserve the ECC and make arguments for one-time purchases. Over the

years COLD has given EAR a few discrete tasks, such as how much would it cost to add alumni access, but the vast majority have come from EAR's own attempts to identify issues and opportunities across CSU Libraries. Recent EAR Chairs Sarah Blakeslee, Anna Gold, Gale Etschmaier, and Steve Stratton have provided tremendous leadership:

- No one was sure who was buying what and how, so EAR conducted surveys to examine ways to increase buying power and provide options.
- The CSU did not have all the opt-ins the CSU desired, so EAR went to SCELG and the CSU were made affiliates.
- Collections librarians wanted lower prices and improvements in contract language, so EAR members have assisted Eddie with negotiations.
- Librarians were interested in PDA, so EAR members set up multiple eBook pilots.
- The 10 CO/90 Campus funding formula was not working, so EAR investigated, built consensus, and provided options.

Ironically the task that EAR was originally created to support has placed them between a rock and a hard place. The situation can be basically described as follows. Librarians and Deans alike want new universal resources and complain constantly about the antiquated ECC. EAR has been left with the remove a resource to add a resource option, which means EAR researching and building consensus amongst the librarians, a recommendation to COLD, and then the very real possibility a few Deans convince the rest to not vote on the recommendation and then they are back at square one.

Lexis Nexis:

The question on the value of Lexis Nexis in the ECC was raised most recently after surveys in 2011, but has been a reoccurring question for EAR. Lexis Nexis use had been steadily declining and its use was down 55% in the 2011/12 academic year. The congressional and statistics parts had been spun off. The ECC had other newspaper and business sources. SFX difficulties and curriculum match concerns in light of new resources had been raised. It had always been a challenge to gauge overlap with other ECC resources. There have been at least two full-scale reviews of Westlaw, which found it much more user friendly to retrieve legal content. Westlaw offered attractive terms of use and cost. Therefore, the EAR ECC Working Group was charged by EAR to again consider value and the age old conundrum of overlap. The ECC Working Group found that Lexis/Nexis continues to score middle to low on EAR's annual ECC value survey. This year its value rank was 12 of 24 in the ECC. To consider the apples to oranges content issue the working group took two different approaches. Ultimately the working group found what it already knew; gauging overlap between Lexis/Nexis and its ECC counterparts may be impossible due to outdated content lists and problems with linked content. Both overlap reports are attached. All Lexis Nexis research was brought to EAR, which voted to recommend replacing Lexis/Nexis with Westlaw to COLD and hoping that COLD could provide some guidance on how to best reallocate funds to augment the ECC.

EAR Recommendations COLD:

1. Remove Lexis Nexis from the ECC.
- 2.a Replace Option A (EAR Recommendation): Not apples to apples.
Replace with Westlaw, and use recovered funds to acquire highly desired new universal content. EAR could explore and recommend resources, such as PDA eBooks, streamed video content, expand a resource such as Safari Tech Books, or acquire a specific database such as Mergent Intellect.
- 2.b Replace Option B (Alternate): Replace apples to apples.
Replace with Westlaw and consider ways to mediate perceived gaps in coverage.

As an extra recommendation it would be of tremendous long term value to have COLD create a five year plan to guide budget requests and guide EAR's centralized e-resource efforts in line with other priorities, goals, and projects. For example, add \$200,000 annually to the ECC budget starting in 2017 to increase buying power and make use of our new ULMS, or add funds annually to the ECC to acquire streamed content or other products on the EAR wish list based on curricular expansions.

Respectfully submitted by: Ron Rodriguez, Chair of EAR

September 28, 2015