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# Buy, Not Borrow: Building a Bridge to a Patron-Centric Collection – A Case Study at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga’s Lupton Library

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## Introduction

Woody Allen once said “A *relationship*, I think, is *like a shark*, you know? It has to constantly move forward or it dies.” That simile is apropos to the world of library resource sharing, where an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) department that is not always moving forward and embracing positive change is dead in the water. Patrons’ demand for convenience and ease of access to resources, based on their experiences with online vendors like Amazon and Netflix, drive their expectations for obtaining materials through libraries. “ILL has continued to be successful by embracing self-service and by adopting the same features users have been trained to expect in the e-commerce world” (Mak 2012, 29).

Economic reality requires libraries to keep costs low without degrading the quality of service. One of the ways libraries is trying to satisfy the demands of the readers is through ‘Buy, not Borrow’ (BNB) programs (often noted in library literature as ‘Purchase on Demand’) where books requested through ILL are bought when they are deemed to satisfy the customer quickly and at the same time add value to the collection. This is one of the ways libraries are trying to adapt to the patrons’ expectations by reducing the turnaround time, enhancing their own collections, and saving money. This demand driven acquisition (DDA) model - also referred to as patron-driven acquisitions (PDA) - is one of the top trends in libraries (ACRL, 2010; Howard, 2010).

Predicated on research demonstrating books requested through interlibrary loan that are purchased for the collection usually circulate more, cost less, and add value to the collection, Lupton Library’s Dean proposed this patron driven acquisition model. A Buy, not Borrow (BNB) pilot project was implemented at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga’s Lupton Library in January 2010.

## Literature Review

Library literature provides several case studies detailing the implementation of purchase on demand programs at individual institutions. Five representative program studies which profile either public or academic libraries and demonstrate that books purchased under these plans

circulate more, cost less, and satisfy user demand promptly are Perdue and Van Fleet (1999), Allen, Ward, Wray and Debus-Lopez (2003), Alder (2007), Foss (2007), and Herrera and Greenwood (2011).

Perdue and Van Fleet (1999) of Bertrand Library at Bucknell University, recognized as one of the first libraries to implement an ILL book purchase program, cite two primary reasons for starting the program: one, reducing the workload of the ILL department; and two, adding value to the permanent collection. Data assessment validated their expectation that ILL book purchases would circulate more and an added benefit of the program was increased collaboration between the Acquisitions and ILL departments.

Megan Allen, ILL librarian at the Thomas Crane Public Library, Suzanne Ward, Head of Access Services at the Purdue University Libraries, Tanner Wray and Karl Debus-Lopez, Head of Access and Chief Acquisitions Librarian respectively of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, detail the procedures for the BNB programs at their individual institutions. Even though the process and the criteria for selection differ slightly from library to library the results show increased user satisfaction during the two years of operation. Based on the reasonable cost and turnaround time of materials ordered through this program and the relevant titles added to the collection as a result, all three libraries have permanently implemented what were originally pilot projects.

Alder (2007) describes the Interlibrary Loan Direct Purchase program implemented at the Brigham Young University Library. Purchases through this program were limited to faculty and were only for books not available through interlibrary loan. Lower cost, equivalent or improved turnaround time, and value for the collection are noted as positive outcomes of the program.

Foss (2007) presents a “Books on Demand” pilot project implemented at the University of Florida Libraries for the purpose of allowing patrons to contribute in shaping the collection. Besides providing a quicker turnaround time for loans, one of the primary incentives for initiating the project was to save on cost. With decreasing budgets and increasing ILL requests, purchasing select items made fiscal sense for the administration. Preliminary assessment

of the pilot project reflected that the majority of the purchases were for social sciences and humanities, the average turnaround time was five business days, and the program received positive feedback from surveyed patrons.

At the University of Mississippi libraries, Herrera and Greenwood (2011) discuss the patron initiated purchasing program initiated in 2009. The program provided a generous maximum cost of \$200.00 and all loan requests within a five year publication date of the current year were considered. Seven percent of total purchases for the library were bought through the program's funding. The majority of the requests came from faculty and staff, followed by graduate students. Review of the data, especially of items which met the publication date criteria, but were not purchased, resulted in revisions of the criteria and re-design of the workflow.

Three other articles that provide a viewpoint on the growth of interlibrary loan and subsequent ramifications are Mak (2012), Reighart and Oberlander (2008) and Deardorff and Nance (2009). Mak contends that the growth in interlibrary loan can be attributed to basic principles of ecommerce: 24/7 online presence, product in demand, acceptable turnaround time and tracking capability. Primary e-commerce features that have proven successful are discussed in detail. Delivery expectations set by successful online businesses – Netflix and Amazon are noted – range from 1-8 days and create user demand for equivalent delivery speed for interlibrary loans.

Reighart and Oberlander (2008) observe that with the constant change in technology and philosophy of service, librarians are continually assessing the value of buying versus borrowing through Interlibrary Loan and examining ways to improve workflows to benefit patrons. They note that on-demand printing from digitized collections is becoming affordable and that commercial services set a standard that will require cooperation and collaboration between Acquisitions, ILL, document delivery providers and vendors to keep up. Only through sharing and testing new ideas can libraries forge ahead.

Deardorff and Nance (2009) address the rise of ILL requests from their patrons after the implementation of WorldCat Local at the University of Washington Libraries. WorldCat Local provides a local interface to over 300 million OCLC records seamlessly prioritizing content based on accessibility. Select databases are also searched providing access to a myriad of article citations. The year (2008-2009) following the implementation of WorldCat Local at their library, they experienced a 92% increase in ILL borrowing. Requests for returnable items were up 150% and article requests went up 41%. Also of interest was the upturn in undergraduate requests with an increase of 339%. Requests for media items (DVDs, VHS, CD, etc.) rose substantially to 21% of returnables in this category.

## **The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Lupton Library**

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga serves a population of approximately 11,400 students and offers degrees through the graduate level for a wide variety of majors. Lupton Library promotes the University's teaching and research mission as an engaged metropolitan university by providing the quality services and collections that facilitate UTC users' access to global information. The collection consists of more than 500,000 volumes, 166 databases, 13,000 plus online journals, and approximately 116 print journal subscriptions. To aid campus users in their research endeavors, Lupton Library is committed to employing innovative services to promote the use of their resources. U.S. News & World Report recently ranked The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) as a "Best Value Regional University" in its Best Colleges Guide for 2013.

### **BNB Taskforce**

In the Fall of 2009 UTC Lupton Library's Dean convened a task force to launch a pilot project to purchase books for the collection requested through interlibrary loan which met the established criteria. The task force included the Dean, the Head of Acquisitions, the Digital Librarian and ILS Manager, and the Interlibrary Loan Librarian. The purpose of the project was threefold:

- To add value to UTC's book collection through the addition of items requested by UTC patrons, guaranteeing that the item in question would circulate at least once;
- To provide quicker turnaround time for patrons requesting materials; and
- To improve patron satisfaction with the new model of service.
- After doing a literature review and tapping the ILL listserv, the taskforce discussed and decided on the following criteria for title selection from ILL monograph requests:
  - Publication date: Only items published in the current year plus two previous years would be considered.
  - Price: \$75.00 and under
  - Type: Both fiction and nonfiction would be considered, though the following would be excluded from selection: popular works of ephemeral or dubious quality, such as romances, light mysteries, home decorating, self-help, homemade crafts, etc., mass market paperbacks, textbooks, theses, dissertations, conference papers, proceedings, technical reports, and foreign language items.

- Availability: Items must be listed as “in stock” in Amazon, to allow for speed in processing for patrons.

The Dean initially allocated \$5,000.00 in funding for the project.

### **WorldShare Management Services**

In August 2012, UTC implemented WorldShare Management Services (WMS), OCLC's web scale management system. WMS extends the features of WorldCat Local - an interface that serves as a library's online catalog providing access to all of Worldcat in addition to the library's individual collection (including digital resources and articles) – to include functionality for circulation, acquisitions and license management. With subsequent changes to the acquisitions workflow with the implementation of WMS, modifications were also made to the original BNB workflow.

### **Workflow “Pre” OCLC WorldShare Management Services (WMS)**

Lupton Library uses ILLiad, an ILL management software system to track ILL requests. Using the software, a Buy, not Borrow queue was set up for review of those titles deemed appropriate for purchase according to the criteria. Titles were checked in the library's online catalog as well as through the book order lists made available by the Head of Acquisitions. If the title was not owned or not already ordered, it was checked in Amazon and publication date, cost + shipping charge, publisher, and ISBN were added to the appropriate transaction fields in ILLiad. IBNB, the new lender symbol created to identify books bought through this program, was added to the lender and lending string fields in ILLiad. The book was then ordered through Amazon. A separate ILL account was set up by the Head of Acquisitions in Amazon for BNB items to be sent directly to the Interlibrary Loan Unit at Lupton Library. A BNB gmail account was created, where all shipping notifications sent by Amazon could be accessed by both Acquisitions and ILL.

Once the item was received, the book was checked in through ILLiad, IBNB noted as the lender and a one month due date was added. Additional processing included a “UTC Library” stamp on title page and back cover, as well as all three book edges and a barcode affixed to the inside of the back cover by ILL staff members. Amazon paperwork accompanying the item was passed to Acquisitions and a copy was kept in ILL. The book was then placed out on the ILL shelves at the Circulation desk for pickup and the patron was contacted by an ILLiad automatic email notification. Checkout and check-in of all ILL loans is tracked through ILLiad. When the book was returned to ILL by the user, it was checked back in through ILLiad, and passed on to Materials Processing for additional cataloging.

### **Workflow “Post” WMS**

Modifications to the original BNB workflow were made subsequent to the implementation of WMS in August 2012. Titles in the BNB queue considered appropriate for purchase are now checked in WMS using the acquisitions functionality to determine if they are in the collection or have already been ordered. Once the Amazon order notification has been received in the Buy, not Borrow gmail account, it is forwarded to the Administrative Assistant – who creates an order for the title in WMS – and also to the Head of Acquisitions. When the item is delivered, it is processed in the same manner as detailed above, but the original invoice included with the package is passed on to the Administrative Assistant and copies of invoices are kept in the ILL Unit as well as the Acquisitions Department.

WMS has improved the workflow process by enabling ILL staff to use the Acquisitions functionality to determine in a single step whether an item is already in the collection or on order. Previously this was a two part procedure, where the catalog had to be consulted first, and then, if the item was not in the collection, current order lists provided by the Head of Acquisitions had to be checked. [**Workflow Charts 1 & 2**]

### **Assessment**

After the pilot project had been underway for six months, the following types of data were tracked for the Access Department's annual report submitted in Fall 2010.

- Number of items purchased through BNB
- Number of items purchased through BNB which had circulated at least one time since having been added to the library's collection
- Amount spent on the BNB account up to date
- Average turnaround time for items ordered through this process

After evaluating the data, the Dean of the library made the following recommendations:

- In addition to title, author, publisher and date of publication, the ILL department should track on the requestor's status (faculty, staff, graduate, undergraduate) and reason why an item was not purchased if it met the criteria, but was not selected for BNB;
- The ILL unit should submit this list to the Head of Acquisitions at the end of every semester for review. Reasons given were that books not in stock in Amazon at the time of request might now be available and items costing more than \$75.00 deserved a second review. These recommendations were implemented in 2011.

For the purposes of this study, the following data is presented and analyzed.

- Workflow charts (Charts 1 & 2)
- Number of BNB books bought by Subject classification (Table 1)
- Number of books that were not bought under the BNB plan (Table 2)
- Turnaround time for BNB Books and regular ILL loans (Chart 3)
- Number of times BNB books circulated compared to other purchase types (Approval, Firm, Gift) (Chart 4)
- Total amount spent on BNB Purchases by year (Table 3)

### Books Bought Through the BNB Program

The total number of books bought under the BNB plan for 2010 and 2011 was 139 books for each of those years. The number purchased in 2012 dropped to 119. Call numbers were used to determine the subject areas of BNB purchases. As Table 1 reflects, the majority of books purchased through this program fell into the humanities and social sciences. Similar findings were reflected in the case studies by Foss (2007) and Allen, Megan, et.al (2003). However, all subject disciplines are represented by the titles purchased, as is also indicated by the table. The percentages of books bought, in descending order by select subject areas are: English (20.56%), History (12.44%), General (8.38%), Philosophy & religion (7.36%), Economics (6.85%), and Education (6.85%).

### Books Not Bought Through the BNB Program

Total number of books considered but not purchased ranged from 304 in 2010, 346 in 2011 and 299 in 2012. Only in 2011 did the ILL unit start tracking specific reasons as to why books were not purchased through BNB, even though they met the primary publishing date criteria of current year plus two previous years (Table 2). The two top reasons discovered for not buying were that either the cost was more than \$75.00, or they were designated as "Popular Literature" (PL). PL encompassed romances, light mysteries, mass market paperbacks as well as home decorating, self-help, homemade crafts, etc. A smaller group of titles were not found through Amazon or were not in stock at the time. Additional reasons for not purchasing were also in evidence: dissertations, textbooks, items already owned by UTC or ordered for the collection and foreign language publications. The majority of these exclusions for purchasing are mirrored in other library purchase on demand programs (Allen, et.al. 2003, 139-140; Herrera and Greenwood 2011, 13). In 2012, six books were not assigned reasons for not purchasing due to staff oversight and are categorized as "Not Classified" for the purpose of this table.

### Turnaround Time (TAT)

In its first year, the BNB program yielded a turnaround time of 7.69 days. (Chart 3) Using a single vendor

(Amazon) and requiring that the item be in stock at the time of purchase helped to expedite the process. In 2011, that number rose slightly to 8.48, but this also mirrored a rise in TAT for all ILL loans. 2012 heralded a trend of increased TAT for BNB books while the average TAT for all ILL loans dropped to its 2010 level. The overall increase might be attributed to a number of factors ranging from a 29% increase in the total number of ILL borrowing requests received from 2010 to 2012, as well as variables such as unavoidable staffing issues and unforeseen weather related closures. Three years may not be sufficiently long enough to provide a reliable statistical model for TAT in this program, so tracking on this matter continues.

### Circulation by Purchase Type

The data for average circulation by purchase type was extracted from Virtua (VTLS), Lupton Library's online catalog before UTC migrated to WMS in August 2012. The ILS and Assessment Librarian ran the report in October 2012 and broke down the data by purchase type – approval, firm, gift, BNB – to display the average circulations. (Chart 4) Items from previous years (2010, 2011) had more time to circulate, which accounts for the higher numbers. For 2010, BNB titles circulated 4.6 to 5.8 times more than other types of acquisitions. In 2011, BNB items circulated 3.9 to 5.6 times more and in the first half of 2012, the ratio changed to 2.6 to 14.36.

Because the library wanted to create a seamless expedited experience for the patron, items purchased through the BNB program were checked out to the user first through ILL, and when returned were sent to Acquisitions for additional processing. Since the patron often did not realize the "ILL" book they checked out was actually an item purchased for the library, patron satisfaction with the program was never evaluated through the library's annual survey. The catalog data, therefore, does not reflect that the majority of Buy, not Borrow items had already circulated once through Interlibrary Loan.

### Budget

While it may form a small percentage of the overall budget for books, the value of the program is clearly demonstrated by the higher circulation of these items once added to the collection. The Library Dean, based upon amounts spent per year since the program was initiated in January 2010, decided to reduce the yearly allocation for the program to \$3500 for fiscal year 2012 (Table 3).

### Conclusion

Based on data analysis, UTC's BNB program achieved all of the desired goals of increased circulation of items, quicker turnaround time, and a more pertinent collection for its users. There was a positive impact on the program with the implementation of WMS, resulting in a more streamlined process. Collaboration between Acquisitions and ILL through this program has resulted in improved interdepartmental communication, with the Head of Acquisitions suggesting workflow changes after the

implementation of WMS, apprising ILL of total amounts spent on BNB in the Amazon account, and occasionally consulting with the ILL librarian on potential BNB selections. Perdue and Van Fleet (1999) also noted improved interdepartmental communication as an unexpected boon resulting from their POD program. With the imminent move to a new building in 2014, a reorganization of staff is underway and the ILL unit will soon be under the aegis of Materials Processing. This will directly impact how materials are processed and may expedite how quickly patrons receive BNB items and for how long.

While turnaround time for BNB items is better than for traditional ILL, and falls on the upper borderline for commercial service delivery expectations (Mak, 2012, p. 28), improvement is always desired. Further analysis is needed to determine where in the process the delay is occurring; from submission to processing; from ordering to receipt, or from receipt to processing for checkout? Workflow may also need to be revised so requests for consideration in the BNB queue automatically route to ILL processing if not dealt with within 1 business day to prevent delays.

The higher circulation of BNB items when compared to other purchase types for the collection underscores the value of the program, both in terms of economy and relevance. Nationally, the average cost of an ILL loan is \$27.38 (Howard, 2010, p.2), while the average cost of a BNB book at UTC is \$28.68. Once added to the collection, the item does not incur any more expense and proves its value to the institution if it circulates more than once, as has been true of the majority of BNB purchases at Lupton Library.

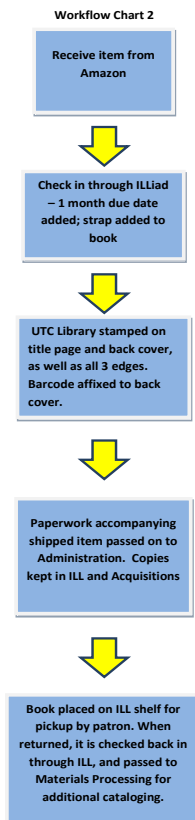
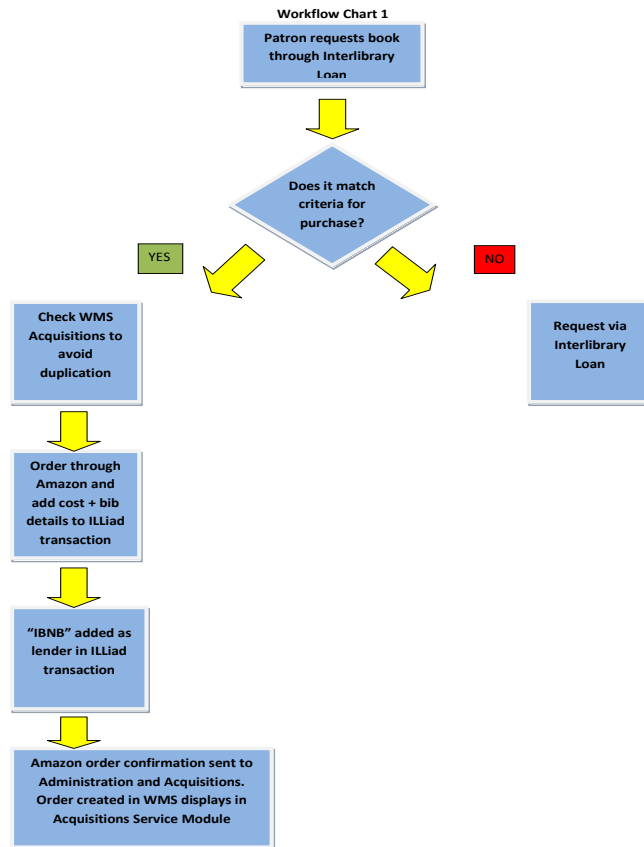
The most subjective part of the process for determining relevance for the collection, outside the stated criteria, is eliminating those titles considered of fleeting value: light fiction, self-help, romances, home decorating, etc. When freshman seminars are tied to young adult book series, the lines start to blur. Some libraries have circumvented this issue by limiting BNB purchases only to faculty (Alder, 2007, p.12) or only purchasing non-fiction (Allen, Ward, Wray and Debus-Lopez, 2003, p. 139). After ILL is incorporated into the Materials Processing department, the expectation is that the BNB criteria will be reviewed to determine if they are still valid for the program's purpose.

While other libraries – The University of Washington, Ohio State University Libraries, The University of Delaware - experienced an exponential growth in Interlibrary Loan requests (returnables) with the implementation of Worldcat Local ( Deardorff and Nance, 2009), that has not been the case at UTC. Overall, ILL loan requests (returnables) have dropped since the implementation of WMS. For fiscal year 2011-2012 (before the implementation of WMS in August 2012) there were a total of 4655 loan requests submitted by patrons; 2012-2013 FY reflected a drop to 4494 – a 3.45% decrease. Currently total ILL requests received are being tracked on a week to week basis in order to adapt – either with workflow or staff/student hours (or both) – if any changes are discovered.

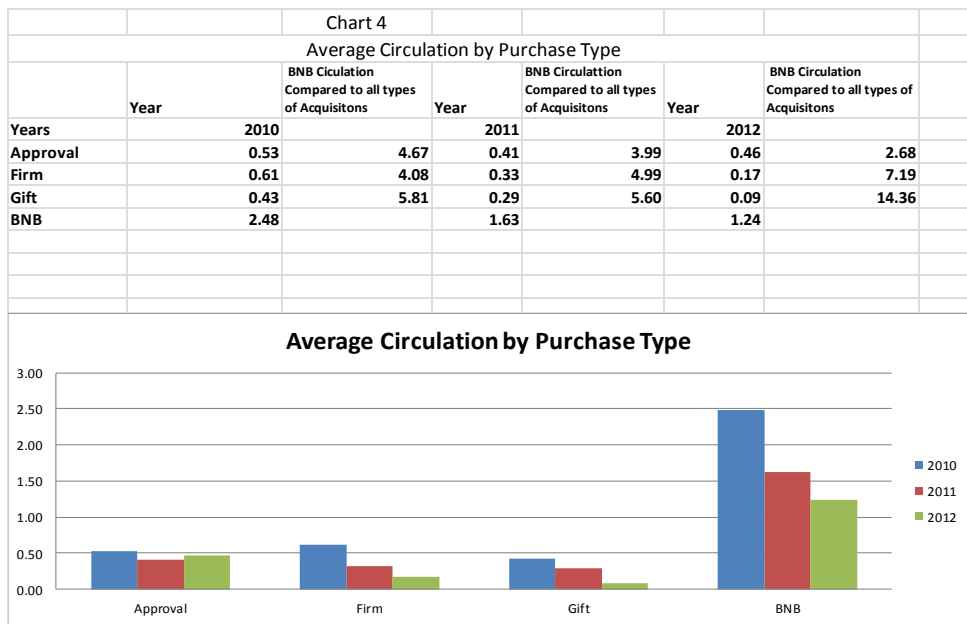
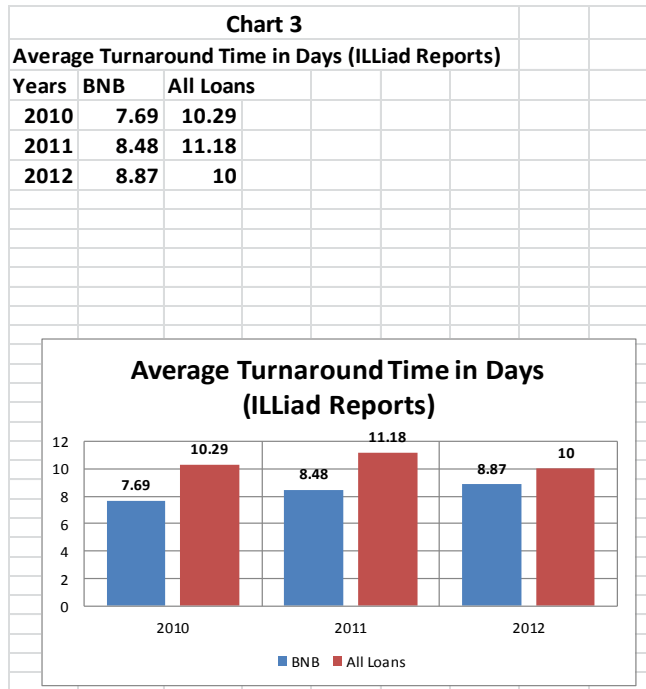
Based on the total cost of the program for 2010 and 2011 the Library Dean decided to reduce the funding for this service. As degree programs continue to be added to the university's academic offerings, and as the BNB program reflects the library's commitment to creating a patron-centric collection, supporting the needs of its campus users, the Dean may decide to revise the funding if the library budget situation improves.

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**Table 3**

Amount Spent on BNB Purchases by year	
January 2010 - June 2010	\$1,732.00
July 2010 - June 2011	\$4,850.00
July 2011 - June 2012	\$2,686.00
July 2012 - June 2013	\$3,276.25

<b>Number &amp; Percentage of BNB Books Bought 2010-2012 by Subject</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
General	33	8.3
Phil/Rel	29	7.3
Psychology	17	4.3
History	49	12.3
Soc/Anth/Geog	18	4.5
Health Human performance	1	0.3
Economics	27	6.8
Management	8	2.0
Accounting	7	1.8
Interdisciplinary	9	2.3
Criminal Justice	6	1.5
Social work	1	2.5
Political Science	9	2.3
Education	27	6.8
Music	8	2.0
Art	13	3.3
English	81	20.4
Foreign languages	8	2.0
Theatre and speech	2	0.5
Communication	1	0.3
Math	2	0.5
Computer Science	7	1.8
Chemistry	1	0.3
Biology & Environ Science	5	1.3
Physical therapy	9	2.3
Nursing	11	2.8
Engineering	5	1.3
Lost Titles	3	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	