Shifting priorities: A look at a course adopted text (CATs) e-book program and how its success realigned one library’s e-book collection priorities.

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ABSTRACT

Like many academic librarians, St. Norbert College collection librarians have been trying to find the right configuration of e-book acquisition strategies to meet our users' needs. Since 2017, St. Norbert’s strategy had been a combination of a subscription to a large vendor package, multiple evidence-based acquisition (EBA) programs, and one-time orders of e-books purchased as a part of faculty departmental requests. In Fall 2018, St. Norbert Library started a partnership with the campus bookstore, began receiving the list of course adopted texts (CATs), and launched a new and parallel e-book strategy of purchasing unlimited access e-books for CATs. This study provides data on the reach and growth of St. Norbert Library’s CATs e-books program, including the number of courses and types of courses affected by library supplied CATs e-books, and the types and publishers of library supplied CATs. As the CATs program grew so did the costs to support it and St. Norbert determined to investigate the usage of the CATs e-books compared to its concurrently licensed EBA content and evaluate the compatibility and sustainability of its CATs and EBA programs. Discussions detail why St. Norbert came to value CATs e-books over EBA e-books, how, despite the potential for symbiosis, St. Norbert’s determined its EBAs to be incompatible with its CATs program, and why the St. Norbert Library decided not to continue both the EBA and the CATs programs. Conclusions discuss CATs e-book successes and how
developing, sustaining, and continuing to evolve the CATs e-book program has been integral to St. Norbert Library’s collection moving in new strategic directions.

**Keywords:** e-books, e-book acquisition models, Course adopted texts (CATS), textbook affordability, evidence based acquisitions (EBA)

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INTRODUCTION

In Fall 2018, St. Norbert Library began a partnership with the campus bookstore and, when available, began purchasing books assigned in courses (course adopted texts (CATs)) as unlimited access e-books and to circulate them to students and faculty. Initially, St. Norbert Library’s main interest was to carve out a role as a partner in textbook affordability initiatives that were gaining traction on campus. Until this CATs e-book program, St. Norbert Library had largely not played a role in these initiatives. As interest and costs grew to support this new e-book strategy, and the library continued to pursue and invest in evidence-based acquisition models (EBAs) alongside it, the library became interested in the usage of the materials added for CATs e-books compared to other library supplied e-books. Of specific interest were the EBA initiatives since funding to support both could potentially be in competition, St. Norbert Library determined to investigate their usage and impact and compatibility with its CATs e-book program.

This study takes a deep dive into the CATs e-book program at St. Norbert Library and provides data and insight into exactly:

1. what percentage of required books the library made available via this program,
2. the number of courses and type of courses that benefited from library supplied CATs,
3. the publishers and types of publishers of the CATs e-books provided,
4. how the books were acquired or made accessible.

Discussions detail why St. Norbert came to value CATs e-books over EBA e-books, how, despite the potential for symbiosis, St. Nobert’s determined its EBAs to be incompatible with its CATs program, and why the St. Norbert Library decided not to continue both the EBA and the CATs programs. Conclusions discuss CATs e-book successes and how developing, sustaining, and continuing to evolve the CATs e-book program has been integral to St. Norbert Library’s collection moving in new strategic directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchasing e-books for CATs is nothing new within academic libraries. Despite having the same common denominator of reducing the costs of course assigned materials for the greatest number of students, these programs come in various shapes and sizes (Walsh 2020). One dividing line that can define these programs is where in the CATs process libraries have integrated themselves. Is it downstream of faculty selection of required materials or is it upstream of faculty selection or both (Dotson and Olivera 2020)? Downstream of faculty selection usually means a partnership has been established with the campus bookstore, faculty submit requests to the bookstore, and then the data or list of CATs is shared with the library. Bell (2017) pointed out the necessity of this partnership for Temple University’s textbook affordability program and for other libraries attempting the same. Another bookstore partnered model can be seen in Carr,
Cardin, and Shouse (2016) and Hoover, Shirkey, and Barricela (2020, 3) and their discussion of East Carolina’s CATs program, in which Hoover calls the bookstore the “key player.”

Wallace and Filion (2018) at the University of Arizona also rely on bookstore collaboration to make their CATs program run and provide great details on four years of the library supplying e-books for CATs. More recently, Sotak, Scott, and Griffin (2020) describe a bookstore partnership at the University of Portland that uses bookstore data received two-months prior to the start of the semester to identify CATs the library has access to or could purchase. Another version of a downstream program that took a slightly different approach was described by the University of Minnesota. The University of Minnesota’s ILL department partnered with the bookstore for a list of CATs and, instead of borrowing or declining CATs requests, purchased print and e-books when they were available. While this program proved successful, Eighmy-Brown, McCready, and Riva (2017) did comment that instead of waiting for ILL requests to trigger these purchases, they had plans to extend their partnership with the local bookstore and start purchasing these prior to the start of the semester.

While bookstore partnership and collaborations are requisite for some of these CATs programs, bookstore buy-in may not exist at every institution or necessarily be preferred for CATs acquisition programs. In discussing Ohio State’s affordability initiatives, Dotson calls the downstream purchasing of CATs a “passive” strategy and one that misses the potential to position the library collection and its liaison or subject librarians as more influential voices in curriculum selection and CATs adoption decisions (Dotson and Olivera 2020). Examples of “upstream” programs, like Ohio State’s, fill the literature, and they too take on various shapes and sizes. Louisiana State University’s program has been called “curriculum driven e-book acquisitions" (Levine-Clark 2019) and it provides a custom-built web page and database to make
the discovery of library supplied CATs easier for students and curriculum selection easier for
faculty (Comeaux, Kroes, and Pavy 2019). The University of South Florida offers a similar
program that solicits faculty and students requests to drive CATs e-book acquisitions and
provides a custom built web portal for easy discovery of already licensed e-books and records for
those that could be purchased (Bozcar and Pascual 2017).

Other upstream programs attempting to affect faculty curricular selections offer grants
and incentives to faculty members and have developed library services around assisting faculty
in curriculum considerations and CATs adoptions. Rutgers University and their Open and
Affordable Textbook (OAT) program incentivizes faculty to participate in a series of
consultations with subject liaison librarians to find available OERs or library supplied content
that could be assigned or used as course reserves (Todorinova and Wilkinson 2019). While its
CATs e-book program remains downstream of curriculum selection, Eastern Carolina attempted
to shape faculty selection by also providing mini-grants to incentivize faculty into working with
library partners to adopt OERs or library supplied content for their courses (Hoover, Shirkey, and
Barricella 2020). Eastern Michigan’s upstream program has librarians supply interested faculty a
list of available library content or content that could be purchased instead of traditional texts
(Pittsely-Sousa 2018). At Sinclair University, a similar program is in place that helps faculty
identify and select materials from already licensed library content (Walsh 2020). There are
countless other examples and these upstream programs have become more prevalent as libraries
attempt to play a more active role in assisting in curriculum selection and potentially making the
library collection the storefront for curriculum choice.

Whether purchasing from a bookstore list or attempting to shape curriculum selection,
one common criteria for e-books purchased under the umbrella of CATs is their availability as
multi-use, or preferably, unlimited access/simultaneous use e-books. Combine this preference with traditional textbook vendors’ unwillingness to pursue or allow for institutionally licensed simultaneous users models and the result is that these CATs programs lack the ability to affect the traditional textbook or “big fish” of textbook affordability. As this is the case, this raises the question as to what type of materials these CATs programs are commonly making available and in terms of courses, where their impact lies.

The University of Arizona found that over a three-year period they were able to provide access to 20% of CATs submitted to the bookstore (Wallace and Filion 2018). Wallace and Filion (2018) also provide data on what types of books their CATs program provided University of Arizona students, reporting that 38% were from university presses, 38% were from academic presses (Springer, Elsevier, Sage, T&F, etc.), 16% from trade, 3% from textbook publishers, and 3% from other publishers. They also found that humanities and social science courses were the highest beneficiaries of materials provided through their CATs program. By digging into textbook adoption lists for social science courses at Florida Gulf Coast University, Rokusek and Cooke found that 18% were available as unlimited access e-books, while 71% of assigned materials were traditional or “true” textbooks and not available to purchase via the preferred unlimited access user model. They also reported that upper-level courses were twice as likely to benefit from CATs e-books, which was a similar finding for Ohio State’s CATs e-book program (Dotson and Olivera 2020).

Despite the relatively small role a CATs program plays in terms of addressing the totality of textbook affordability, these programs do offer promising incentives for both libraries and students. As Dotson and Olivera put it, Ohio State’s program has “opened additional dialog with instructors regarding course material” (Dotson and Olivera 2020, 161). Soules (2019, 230)
suggests that developing programs like this allows libraries to “re-think the very fabric of what is a collection” and the combination of these two—faculty engagement and re-thinking collections—can create an immense amount of goodwill from students and faculty (Hoover, Shirkey, and Barricella 2020). While the library, library collection, and library staff and services built to support these programs benefit from supporting CATs e-books programs, the main beneficiaries are the students.

The main driver of these programs is the potential benefit for reducing costs for students and increasing student success. Recently, Wimberley, Cheney, and Ding (2020) investigated the material costs for select undergraduate courses at California University State-Northridge and compared the materials costs for each course to the pass rate for the course. While they include OER, library supplied e-books, and course reserves as options for reducing the costs of CATs, they found that simply “lowering the overall price of course materials is what meaningfully improves aggregate student success outcomes” (Wimberley, Cheney, and Ding 2020). Students in higher education want relief or alternatives to the cost of CATs and libraries have a role to play which, for some, means rethinking traditional collection development strategies. Soules (2019, 230) believes that students’ desire for CATs provisioning already surpasses all other resources offered by the library and simply states, “our students want those textbooks, more than any other material in the library collection”.

Despite the benefit to libraries and students, these programs do often represent relatively new initiatives within collections and academic libraries, which means a recent shift or addition in funding to support them. In the face of reduced or flat collection budgets, the cost and sustainability of CATs e-book programs is often a concern for libraries that have implemented them and many libraries have had to consider how to control costs within CATs programs while
also promoting their importance (Hoover, Shirkey, and Barricella 2020; Pittsley-Sousa 2018). This has also been the case at St. Norbert Library and a driver for this study as it grappled with which e-book acquisition strategies to prioritize for the greatest return on investment and, eventually, which to sustain in the face of a reduced collection budget. At St. Norbert Library, we set out to investigate the reach of the local CATs program, how St. Norbert Library’s program compares to data from other programs, and, most importantly when considering impact and sustainability, how CATs purchases compared to its EBA programs being employed at the same time and if or how these strategies offered any compatibility.

**INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW**

St. Norbert (SNC) is a private, Catholic, liberal arts college in De Pere, WI. Over the past three academic years, St. Norbert had an average enrollment of around 2,100 FTE. The top ten majors, in order of most declared, are Business Administration, Biology, Education, Psychology, Communication and Media Studies, Accounting, Political Science, Sociology, Chemistry and English. St. Norbert also has three graduate programs, with less than 100 total students, consisting of a MA in Liberal Studies, a MA of Theological Studies, and an MBA. The St. Norbert Library serves the faculty, students, and staff of St. Norbert.

Prior to a fiscal year 2020/2021 budget reduction, the St. Norbert Library had an annual collection and materials budget of $438,116. Fiscal year 2020/2021 saw a 22% reduction to the collection budget. Since fiscal year 2017/2018, the St. Norbert Library has expanded e-book offerings by adding the ProQuest Academic Complete e-book package, participating in three EBA programs, increasing the number of one-time firm orders for e-books as a part of departmental book expenditures, and investing in the CATs e-book program outlined in this
In fiscal year 2017/2018, e-books accounted for 2% of collection and materials expenditures, 9% in fiscal year 2018/2019, 5% in fiscal year 2019/2020, and 9% in fiscal year 2020/2021. This 9% dedication to e-books in fiscal year 2020/2021 was intentional and collection cuts and reductions were distributed in a way that allowed the St. Norbert Library to continue prioritizing its CATs e-book program.

**ST. NORBERT’S CATS E-BOOK PROGRAM**

The CATs e-book program at St. Norbert is a downstream program--faculty select materials, place requests with the bookstore, and then the library steps in downstream of material selection and determines what is available for purchase. This program is predicated on a partnership with the local Follett bookstore for shared CATs data. The partnership with the St. Norbert bookstore began in the summer of 2018 when representatives from the bookstore, academic technology, and the library first gathered to talk about textbook and required materials affordability. For the St. Norbert CATs program, the goal is to have the CATs data several months in advance of the semester. The Library then parses the list with a Python script that outputs which CATs the library currently subscribes to as unlimited access e-books, owns as unlimited access e-books, and then outputs the remaining ISBNs to a list that is used to investigate which titles can be purchased as unlimited access e-books.

Any e-books included in the CATs program, whether already licensed or purchased, are available via unlimited access models and aside from single user OverDrive e-books, there are no limited access e-books made available via the library collection. The restriction to only include unlimited access e-books in the St. Norbert CATs program was instituted and maintained to ensure consistency in our messaging that library supplied CATs were accessible.
simultaneously by all students. While limiting our inclusion to unlimited access e-books does exclude materials that could be provided via one user or three user access models, we believe the consistency in access and messaging to be important to the adoption and success of the program. Due to the unknowns of cost and faculty and student interest, the St. Norbert Library’s CATs program began in a limited fashion in Fall 2018—purchasing only some unlimited access e-book content. However, by year two (Fall 2019) the CATs program had evolved to purchase all CATs that were available as unlimited access e-books for the upcoming semester.

After the acquisitions step, the library informs faculty members via email of the materials that are available as e-books, provides faculty with links to the available titles, and encourages faculty to share this information with students via the method they deem appropriate (email, embed in LMS, or other). St. Norbert Library also shares a CATs e-book list with the bookstore, and they work to build information about what books are available from the library into their online ordering system and to post placards on shelves that inform students of the availability of these books from the library. Our Follet-owned bookstore has been a willing and receptive partner in developing and promoting this program and access to the CATs data is what sets everything into motion.

METHODS

This study reviews the components and usage data of St. Norbert Library’s CATs e-book program and compares this data to the usage of EBA e-books and ProQuest licensed content also available during the period of study. The data used to calculate the percentage of CATs e-books provided by the library compared to total CATs assigned by semester was supplied by the local bookstore. The remaining program level data was collected and maintained by the library throughout the dates of this study from Fall 2018 to Fall 2020 (five semesters.)
same academic semesters, St. Norbert Library subscribed to the *ProQuest Academic Complete* e-book package, which provided leased access to 190,000+ e-books each year and participated in three evidence-based acquisition programs: Springer (Fall 2018 and Spring 2019), Oxford (Fall 2019 and Spring 2020), and Sage (Fall 2019 and Spring 2020).

When extracting the usage data for this study via vendor and publisher platforms the usage reports were based on the start and end month of each semester. Every attempt was made to standardize the usage data reported and make consistent comparisons between the usage data for the e-books provided via these different acquisition models. When COUNTER 5 TR B1 total_item_requests usage data was available across all three models that data was used. The total_item_request metric that is used is defined as being indicative of usage and counts clicks where the user downloads all or part of a book for viewing—this could be to view content as HTML, pdf, or as an epub ([Project Counter](#)). Otherwise, COUNTER 4 BR2 usage data was used to compare models and title usage. COUNTER 4 BR2 reports count the number of section or chapter requests for e-books ([Project COUNTER](#)) As with any study relying on vendor statistics, there can potentially be some discrepancy in what each publisher count, and this is especially true for COUNTER 4 BR2 data that defined “section or chapter” requests. Since the move to COUNTER 5 has been a relatively recent occurrence, COUNTER 4 BR2 data was used for usage collected for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 and COUNTER 5 TR B1 data was used for the Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020.

**RESULTS**

St. Norbert Library’s CATs e-book program has expanded each academic semester through Fall 2020, and saw its peak in terms of e-books made available during the Spring 2020 semester.
Shifting priorities

Spring 2020 being the peak of the CATs e-books offerings is significant in that during this semester the COVID 19 pandemic forced an unprecedented shift at St. Nobert to virtual learning. By Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020 St. Norbert Library purchased every CATs available as an unlimited access e-book and as a result were able to provide access to on average 15% of total assigned CATs. While these numbers may seem small when considering the total number of CATs required each academic semester, they are not insignificant, and as the library increased its funding and willingness to provide as many CATs as possible so did the reach of this program.

Table 1 here:

St. Norbert’s CATs program restriction to unlimited access e-books effectively limits what types of books are provided via its program and what types of courses are affected. In order to offer comparative data to the publisher categorizations in previous studies, the 215 CATs titles provided from Fall 2018 to Fall 2021 were categorized as either from:

1. university press (e.g. Oxford University Press, NYU Press, Princeton, etc.), academic press (e.g. Wiley, Routledge, Elsevier, etc.),
2. society and institution press (e.g. American Mathematical Society, Hoover Institution Press, Wisconsin Historical Society, etc.),
3. trade publisher (e.g. Orbis Books, Liturgical Press, Tuttle Publishing, etc.),
4. other publishers, or
5. textbook publisher (Pearson, Cengage, Norton, etc.).

Of the 215 CATs e-books supplied, 68 (32%) were published by a university press, 63 (29%) by an academic press, 62 (29%) by a trade publisher, 14 (7%) by a society and institution press, 6 (3%) from a publisher defined as other, and 2 (1%) from a textbook publisher.
In terms of St. Norbert courses affected, a CATs or multiple CATs were made available for 161 courses from Fall 2018-Fall 2020. The following St. Norbert course headings accounted for 75% of total courses with supplied CATs:

- 50 CATs e-books in Theology & Religious Study Courses (23.26% of total),
- 43 in Sociology courses (20% of total),
- 25 in Education courses (11.63% of total),
- 10 in Social Science courses (4.65% of total),
- 10 in History courses (4.65% of total),
- 8 in Language courses (3.72% of total),
- 8 in English courses (3.72% of total), and
- 7 in business courses (3.26% of total).

Of the 161 total courses affected, 55.81% were upper division (300-499) and 44.19% were lower division (100-299). Only two disciplines had CATs e-books supplied to more lower division courses than upper division courses—Theology and Religious Studies and Languages. This can be attributed to St. Norbert’s lower level Theological Foundations (THRS 117) courses being a part of the core curriculum and required to be taken by the end of a student’s first semester. This core curriculum course is also a reason that St. Norbert CATs e-book program has a high percentage of CATs e-books published from a trade publisher—35 trade titles (16% of total CATs e-books) were assigned in the THRS 117 course and published via a trade publisher.

Starting a library e-books CATs program requires funding to support and sustain it, whether carved out of collection budgets, other library discretionary spending, or provided via campus partners, grants, or affordability initiatives. As the CATs program has sustained
expansion and growth, so have the reuse of the purchased and supplied CATs e-books across multiple academic semesters.

**Table 2 here:**

At St. Norbert Library, CATs e-books are made available in three ways—subscribed (a part of the Proquest Academic Complete Package, purchased (purchased prior to the start of the academic semester of use), or previously purchased—despite the potential, no EBA titles appeared on the CATs lists. These previously purchased titles represent titles that were purchased and have been reassigned in subsequent academic semesters and provide CATs e-book programs reuse without additional costs. The longer the sustained program, the greater the portfolio of previously purchased CATs e-books and the bigger role these items can potentially play in overall CATs e-book offerings (22% in Spring 2020 and 38% in Fall 2020). The reuse of CATs will, of course, fluctuate depending on faculty turnover and course redesigns, but so far, previously purchased materials have played a role (19% of total CATs were previously assigned) in St. Norbert Library’s CATs e-book program.

**Table 3 here:**

As St. Norbert Library moved money into supporting the expansion of its CATs e-book program, its sustainability always remained a lingering question. What exactly was its role in St. Norbert’s overall e-book acquisition strategy? As Table 2 showed, fiscal year 2020 (Fall 2019 & Spring 2020) required $10,406.71 to support the purchase of CATs e-books.

During this time frame, St. Norbert Library was subscribing to several evidence-based acquisition programs. In Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, the library offered 30,000+ Springer e-books through an EBA program, and in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 the library provided access to 5,200 e-books via an Oxford University Press EBA and 5,300 through a Sage EBA. While the
negotiated prices for these EBA packages cannot be shared, they do represent considerable costs. EBA was St. Norbert Library’s only patron-driven e-book initiative and considered to be a viable and important addition to St. Norbert Library’s e-book acquisition strategies. In considering the sustainability of both the library CATs e-book programs and the parallel EBA programs, St. Norbert wanted to look at just what each was offering in terms of impact as measured by usage.

Table 4 here:

Table 5 here:

As seen in Table 4 and Table 5, St. Norbert Library’s experience with EBA programs over this three-year period was underwhelming, especially alongside the newly established CATs e-book program. During academic year 2019/2020 (Fall 2019 & Spring 2020) while both e-books acquisition strategies were active, the 126 CATs e-books had 33,486 more uses than the 329 EBA e-books. In reviewing the usage of these CATs e-books, it becomes apparent just how frequently these books are used in comparison to the other e-books available to St. Norbert students and faculty. Despite their benefits, CATs e-books are not without risk and, just like any acquisition, hold the potential to go unused. As seen in Table 4 and Table 5, the initial semester (Fall 2018) of CATs, e-books only saw 42% of the titles made available used. The usage of CATs changed dramatically, however, after this initial semester, and on average 80% CATs e-books were used during the semester in which they were required.

Table 6 here:

Compared to the 1,854 e-book titles used via the ProQuest Academic Package over the same timeframe, CATs e-books saw higher levels of usage. While it was not surprising that CATs e-books outperformed EBA e-books, it was surprising that in terms of usage they outperformed St. Norbert Library’s 190,000+ ProQuest Complete Academic Package.
While this data does not examine the length of reading sessions for CATs e-books or provide the exact number of unique users accessing these CATs e-books, we do know that these e-books received much greater use. This could indicate either more unique users per book or longer and more sustained reading with CATs e-books (or the clicks that drive usage) or both (See Table 6). It is difficult to draw conclusions from this data, because unlike e-books accessed and used for research or general reference inquiries, sustained, long reading is often required with materials assigned in courses, and this could potentially be the case with CATs usage as compared to other e-books. This area is ripe for more research as title usage alone does not tell us the complete story of the reach of any of the e-book programs. Understanding how students interact with the CATs e-books, compared to other library supplied e-books, or the number of students in a course to choose or use a CATs e-book over a print version would provide greater insight into the exact reach of these programs and more accurately allow libraries to project cost savings for the students.

It should also be noted that from a collection strategy perspective, there is potential for EBA program titles to overlap with CATs titles. Despite EBAs making more titles available, and therefore having a higher chance for overlap with CATs titles, this potentiality never occurred at St. Norbert Library. While the potential for CATs title overlap was not the original impetus of implementing EBA programs, as the CATs program grew, faculty selection of materials made available via an EBA would certainly have increased the value proposition of the EBAs. During the four academic semesters that the three EBAs were active and made more than 40,000+ e-books available at St. Norbert, no EBA titles appeared on the CATs lists. In Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, when St. Norbert Library’s Oxford EBA was active, St. Norbert Library also spent an additional $1,093.39 on Oxford titles purchased for its CATs e-book program—the Oxford EBA
provided front listed Oxford content within predetermined subject areas, and the CATs purchases were for either backlisted content or e-books outside the selected subject areas. The Springer and Sage EBAs also provided no overlap with CATs titles between Fall 2018 and Fall 2020, even though 18 Sage publications and two Springer publications were assigned as CATs while these EBAs were active, as these publications were textbooks that were not a part of the e-books made available via the Springer and Sage EBAs.

**DISCUSSION**

Several discussion points stand out from the data provided in this study and the experience of St. Norbert Library in developing, sustaining, and expanding its CATs e-book program. While there is potential for EBA program titles to supply or have overlap with CATs titles, this potential is greater in CATs programs that are *upstream* of faculty selection. In these *upstream* programs, librarians have more opportunity to direct faculty toward currently licensed and available EBA titles. St. Nobert’s *downstream* CATs design only offered the passive hope that faculty select a title already offered via EBA and as a result, limited the successful pairing of the two e-book acquisition programs. As a purely *downstream* program, St. Norbert Library’s CATs e-book program also offers no incentives for St. Norbert faculty to change their course material selection behavior and seek out licensed library e-book content or work with library staff when selecting content for new or existing courses and therefore, limits the role our EBAs could ever have played in CATs selection.

Despite not offering incentives for faculty to select CATs content from already licensed e-books, St. Norbert Library’s current program has seen some *upstream* faculty partners. Multiple faculty, who’s CATs have previously been made available as e-books, now seek out
and are open to discussions about e-books already licensed by the library or the potential for the purchase of unlimited access e-books for titles they are considering for courses. These upstream faculty partners are the exception to the norm, however, and most faculty, despite being long term partners and advocates for the CATs e-book program, continue to select and submit to the St. Norbert bookstore without any engagement with the library. Ideally, St. Norbert Library’s CATs e-book program will expand to include upstream elements that attempt to direct faculty toward currently licensed e-books but EBAs will not be a part of these offerings. As seen in the data, the ProQuest Academic Complete seems to be meeting both the research and the CATs e-books needs at St. Norbert and going forward will be positioned as the primary source for developing upstream offerings around licensed e-book content.

CONCLUSION

As seen in the data, St. Norbert Library’s CATs program has steadily increased in its ability to provide alternative, no-cost options for faculty and students. Although St. Norbert Library has not collected formal faculty or student feedback for the purpose of this study, the usage data alone points to the receptive nature of faculty to this program. Success can also be seen in the small number of faculty that now make the library’s existing e-book collection and its acquisition arm their first consideration when adopting course materials. Our downstream program has generated upstream interest. Like faculty reception, student reception can also be seen in the usage data--CATs titles are St. Norbert Library’s most used e-book content semester to semester. To further develop the faculty and student interest in the CATS program, the St. Norbert Library has and will continue to promote the program at freshman orientation sessions,
new faculty orientations, local faculty development workshops, and faculty development conferences.

From the experience outlined in this study, St. Norbert Library has placed a higher budgetary and strategic value on expanding its CATs e-book initiative than continuing to support e-book strategies like EBAs. The implication of this realignment has required the reallocation of funds to maintain and grow it and cemented the CATs program as a permanent fixture in the budget. Of even more importance is the alignment the CATs program offers with institution wide strategic priorities that less contemporary strategies, like EBAs, fail to connect with. It is St. Norbert Library’s view that the CATs program represents a new collection initiatives that completely aligns with the institutional strategic priorities of improving access and affordability and supporting student success. Aligning this initiative to these institutional strategic priorities and gaining visibility of the library’s role in providing required material content could position the library to make the case for more operational dollars to support this role and potentially develop new avenues for its growth.

REFERENCES


## TABLES

### Table 1: Total CATs and library supplied CATs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Semester</th>
<th>SNC total CATs (approximate)</th>
<th>CATs library e-Books provided</th>
<th>% of CATs offered as eBooks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14%</td>
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### Table 2: Cost to Purchase CATs e-books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Semester</th>
<th>Count of Titles Purchased</th>
<th>Cost to Purchase</th>
<th>Avg. Purchase Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$1,321.12</td>
<td>$120.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2019</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,331.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2019</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,715.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2020</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,690.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2020</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,978.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
<td>$15,037.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Acquisition methods of CATs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Semester</th>
<th>Previously Purchased</th>
<th>Purchased</th>
<th>Subscribed</th>
<th>All Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11 (58%)</td>
<td>8 (42%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>38 (70%)</td>
<td>14 (26%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>16 (22%)</td>
<td>39 (54%)</td>
<td>17 (24%)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>17 (38%)</td>
<td>21 (46%)</td>
<td>7 (16%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>40 (17%)</td>
<td>117 (54%)</td>
<td>58 (27%)</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: 2018/2019 Academic Year CATs and EBA usage (COUNTER 4 BR2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Acquisition Model</th>
<th>Academic Semester</th>
<th>Titles Available</th>
<th>Titles Used</th>
<th>Total Uses</th>
<th>Use per title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Springer</td>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>87 (1%)</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8 (42%)</td>
<td>3,830</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springer</td>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>109 (1%)</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19 (76%)</td>
<td>4,852</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: 2019/2020 Academic Year & Fall 2020 CATs and EBA usage (COUNTER 5 TR_B1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Acquisition Model</th>
<th>Academic Semester</th>
<th>Titles Available</th>
<th>Titles Used</th>
<th>Total Uses</th>
<th>Use per title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>5200</td>
<td>39 (1%)</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>5300</td>
<td>50 (1%)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44 (81%)</td>
<td>6,814</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>5200</td>
<td>13 (1%)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>5300</td>
<td>31 (1%)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>61 (85%)</td>
<td>2,005</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>CATs e-Books</td>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35 (78%)</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Fall 2018- Fall 2020 e-book usage (COUNTER 4 BR2 & COUNTER 5 TR_B1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquisition Method</th>
<th>Titles Used</th>
<th>Total Uses</th>
<th>Use per title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EBAs</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>2,062</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATs e-books</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>46,453</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proquest package</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>41,304</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>