

Libraries and the Book-Trade in Australia

*How to get the best prices and service
from your sources of supply*

A guide for librarians

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INTRODUCTION

Australian libraries buy their book and audiovisual acquisitions from all over the world, but mostly from sources of supply located in Australia, England or the USA. The book-trade in these locations has similar but not identical profiles, and although the library supply industry in Australia has closely followed overseas patterns of service, it still has its own, unique configuration.

The more that librarians in Australia know about the local book-trade industry, the better must be the level of service they can reasonably demand, and the more informed their choices when it comes to sources of supply. Armed with knowledge of the real basis for pricing structures and discounts, and the real reasons for delayed supplies, library acquisitions staff should find that they have extra bargaining power when dealing with their sources of book and audiovisual supply.

Suppliers want orders, profits and complaint-free procedures, while librarians want speedy supply, good discounts and no mistakes. The points where librarians and suppliers interact are where all of these wants are satisfied or not, and a thorough awareness of what is happening at these times will help to smooth the whole operation for all concerned.

This book describes what happens to an Australian library's orders for books, or audiovisual items, once they have left the library, and are in the hands of a library supplier, publisher, retailer or distributor. While the emphasis is on books, audiovisual supply is also described, but mostly only where the processes involved are similar to those for book publishing and supply. The supply of journals and periodicals is not discussed in the following pages, although the information

provided will be relevant for items such as annuals and monographs in series.

For the newcomer to library acquisitions, these descriptions of the behind-the-scenes machinations of the book-trade industry will illuminate the processes, and make them easier to comprehend. The standard forms of communication, the meaning of terms commonly used, and the reasons why book suppliers do what they do are all covered.

The processes and situations discussed refer specifically to the Australian library supply and book-trade industries. It is important to be aware of the national setting of any book on these subjects, since the legal frameworks in which they operate can impact very differently on the outcomes for book-buying librarians. For example, the differing laws regarding retail price maintenance in Australia and England have had a major effect on the direction of growth in the library supply industries in both countries.

1. THE RIGHT PRICE

Accurate estimation of the final invoiced price of an item is vital for financial management in acquisitions librarianship. Getting the figures wrong on a sizeable scale will result in the need for revised budgets that can cope with the actual costs.

How can these inaccuracies be overcome, so that estimation becomes more precise? An awareness of the way in which books are priced by those producing them, the publishers, is invaluable as a starting point.

Publications are priced and discounted in ways that are dependent on the type of book involved. The book-trade divides publications into two broad classifications, referred to as trade titles and academic titles. A trade title is one which is produced primarily for the mass market, and is commonly sold by newsagents and general bookshops. Trade titles include novels, general non-fiction and children's picture books. Academic titles, which usually include textbooks, are more often found in campus, or student-oriented bookshops. Some publishers have divisions to produce trade or academic titles, treating every aspect of production and sale differently. Other publishers may only be interested in publishing either trade or academic titles, but not both.

Small publishers, with their limited output, may produce titles that are either trade or academic in nature. However, these small publishers often have pricing arrangements which are unique, making this a group which needs to be considered separately.

Lastly, there are the many societies, organisations and government bodies that engage in publishing. They produce materials which are sometimes difficult to trace bibliographically, and whose pricing structures are varied.

After locating a source of supply for some of these items, it can often be a challenge to obtain a pricing quote which is stable and correct.

TRADE TITLES

A library wishing to purchase a standard trade title, from a mainstream Australian publisher, will usually find that a bibliographic search reveals an RRP, or Recommended Retail Price. While some publishers hold their prices fixed for many months, others do not. An increase over a year, from the date the RRP was first listed, can easily be around 10%. Contacting the publisher at the time of ordering will only ascertain the correct price at that time, and an increase in price can occur before your copy is purchased.

The RRP is not a mandatory selling price. It is a recommended price only, since manufacturers in Australia may not dictate to a seller what retail price must be charged. This situation does not exist globally, and some countries, notably in Europe, permit retail price maintenance by the producers of goods. Since Australian booksellers have a freer market in this regard, they may decide to charge more or less than the listed RRP. Marking-up, or increasing the selling price of a normal trade title, is rare but does occur, and can contribute to estimate inaccuracies for a library's book purchases.

The RRP is usually subjected to discounting when books are sold to a library. Differences in the final price to a library for an item can vary, as one supplier offers 10% off, while another may offer 20%. Suppliers themselves receive varying discounts from publishers, usually depending on their volume of business and their willingness to actively market publishers' books. Some suppliers will pass on these varying discounts to libraries. Others may, instead, offer a library a fixed discount rate on everything purchased. In the latter case, the suppliers pick up income on titles for which they have received a large discount, and may only break even, or lose money on books

where their own discount from the publisher has been very low.

Very small libraries may benefit financially from a fixed discount rate for their purchases, rather than a variable one, as long as they do not intend acquiring much specialist material. Suppliers offering single discount structures are usually loath to supply these unusual publications because of the high cost of obtaining them.

Fixed discount rates make budgeting easier for a library, since the discount is known in advance. The library which receives varying discounts from a supplier can make an estimate of its projected expenditure by finding out the average of the discounts that will be offered, and then applying this to the sum of the RRP's. It is important, however, to ascertain from the supplier whether any marking-up of the RRP's will occur.

For a normal trade title, a supplier should be able to tell a library what discount will be offered. However, where hundreds, or even thousands of different books are involved, a supplier will probably not want to use staff time compiling a list of the discount to be offered on every single item, especially if a firm purchase order has not yet been placed by the customer. Instead, the supplier should be able to present a probable average discount rate, or the library can work it out from batches of previous orders supplied, provided they were for the same classes of material, and from similar publishers. It is not useful to try to work out an average discount rate based on the supply of a small number of titles only, or of publications which were from sources that are different from the new ones to be contacted.

As well as the RRP and the discount, there are two more charges which have to be allowed for in estimating the cost to a library of a trade title. One is a small order surcharge, and the other is freight. If the library's accounting systems allow for these to be tallied separately from the actual book charges, then they need not be considered as part of the final book

price when making estimates. Nevertheless, their appearance on an invoice should always be justifiable and within prearranged limits.

Freight charges must be discussed with suppliers, probably annually. If it is acceptable for these to be added by a supplier, then the library will need to make allowance for freight when making its budget estimates.

Small order surcharges are rarely added by library suppliers, but frequently appear when a library has ordered its books directly from the publisher. When publishers regularly add this cost to a small order placed by a library, it is more cost effective not to order directly from them, but to place orders for their publications through a supplier. Since the supplier's larger volume of purchases will not attract this extra cost, a small order surcharge for trade titles should rarely, if ever, be encountered by a library.

ACADEMIC AND EDUCATIONAL TITLES

An academic or educational title, from a mainstream Australian publisher, can usually be costed in a similar way to the trade titles just discussed. However, discounts tend to be much lower, partly because publishers do not have the high volume of output to warrant giving large discounts.

Some academic publishers do not set a retail price at all. Instead, customers are charged differentially, depending on the type of end-usage the book will encounter. A public library, for instance, could pay either more or less than a school or university library for the same item. Librarians will therefore need to cost each of these types of books separately, if they want exact estimates. If the orders are placed with a supplier, then the library should be able to depend on them to quote an expected price for an order for these academic books.

SMALL PUBLISHERS

If a library intends ordering a substantial number of titles from small publishers, it is likely to find that estimating the exact final cost of its orders will be very time consuming.

Small publishers include the many individuals who only ever produce one or two books. These titles often do not appear in any bibliography or database until long after they are published, and sometimes not at all. In the absence of an advertising flyer, the only way to determine a cost for each of these books is to contact every publisher individually. This would be a costly exercise for a library ordering extensively from such sources. Even a library supplier cannot fairly be expected to cost hundreds of such titles for an estimate, as the staff time spent in trying to make contact with some of these publishers would be very expensive.

How, then, is a workable estimate of such costs to be obtained? If using a supplier, a library can specify a price above which it will not accept supply of the item. A library may also be able to work out with the supplier an average expected cost per item. Although an estimate of expenditure can then be made, this is one of the aspects of purchasing where exact figures are either difficult or very expensive to obtain.

SOCIETIES, GOVERNMENT BODIES, ETC.

As with the small publishers just discussed, finding prices before ordering is laborious for this class of publications. This is partly because of their low level of entry in databases and bibliographies. Consequently, enquiries need to go directly to the publisher when an exact price is required.

In practice, a major working difference between this group of publishers and commercial small publishers, is that some societies and government bodies are large enough for the people within them not to know what their fellow workers are doing. This can mean that a book may be published and have its distribution attended to by one person only, with other

people in the organisation not knowing anything about its availability.

In this situation, an impasse can be reached when a buyer knows, with reasonable certainty, that the publication wanted is available, but cannot locate anyone in the organisation who can explain how to obtain a copy. For instance, if the person in charge of distribution of a publication goes on extended leave, there may be no-one else in the organisation who is able to handle any query concerning it. Acquiring the publication, or only finding out its price, will both involve travelling down the same frustrating pathway, and considerable delays will be encountered.

Some publications in this grouping have no set charge, but a library cannot expect to receive them free of cost if supplied by a library supplier. The standard charging schedule for such publications should be known by the library, and clearly specified by a supplier, before any order is placed.

If a large number of these 'no-charge' items is to be ordered, libraries should consider whether the overall cost will be cheaper if they order directly, and perform all the searching themselves, or if they use a supplier and pay the supply fee per item. A very large order of 'free' items from a limited number of sources will probably be cheaper if ordered directly by a library. Single items from many different sources are usually more economically obtained by using a supplier, and paying a reasonable fee for the service. Large, multiple copy orders of any kind may also attract a lower fee than for single copy orders, so libraries should negotiate a fee reduction in these cases.

FOREIGN CURRENCY ESTIMATIONS

Estimating the costs of books, where a foreign currency price is known, depends on whether the items come directly to the library from the country of origin, or whether they are purchased from an Australian source.

Forecasting what the conversion rate will be at the time of invoicing involves calculations even financial experts can get wrong. It is a difficult, multi-faceted task, and most acquisitions librarians will have been surprised, at some time, by unexpected fluctuations in international currency exchange rates.

When overseas suppliers are to be paid by a means which involves buying foreign currency, changes in the conversion rate of the Australian dollar can have dramatic effects on the final cost of an order for the library. When checking conversion rates, libraries should ensure that they are looking at the buy, and not the sell rate, as they will be different.

Orders for overseas titles, placed through an Australian supplier, will be hard to estimate in price, unless the supplier has a standard pricing policy. Australian suppliers can acquire an overseas title from any one of a number of sources including the local distributor, the country of origin, or in a roundabout route through a third country. The choice is one of internal policy, and will take into account the price, stock availability and freight arrangements. The Australian dollar price charged may then depend on which source was chosen, rather than on a set conversion of the foreign retail price.

Librarians are accustomed to avoiding local distributors of overseas material who engage in high mark-ups of the retail price. However, high prices from local distributors are not across the board. There are some publishers whose books are more easily and economically purchased locally. A thorough knowledge of the book-trade in Australia is therefore necessary to determine where orders for overseas titles are to be placed, and the prices that will be charged.

OVERESTIMATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

While underestimation of final prices creates problems for a library, overestimation also has its pitfalls. Libraries left with unspent funds at the end of their financial cycle can appear inefficient in performance. Administrators may also assume that they did not need as much for resources as they originally claimed in their budgets.

Rarely is either of these scenarios the case. Funds left over are more likely to be the result of an incorrect estimation of discounts, or because of poor supply rates.

If a library finds that it is wrongly estimating the discounts it receives, this means that more communication with its sources of supply is warranted. A business may start applying a higher discount to sales in the hope of getting more orders, or because the library's orders have already reached some quota, above which a higher discount applies. It is also possible that orders already supplied are ones on which a high discount would always have been offered, whereas the unsupplied orders are ones on which a low discount will apply.

When poor supply rates occur across a range of material ordered, a library needs to investigate the efficiency of the sources of supply being used, and perhaps start looking elsewhere. When the non-supply is confined to particular classes of items, perhaps government reports, conference proceedings and the like, then this could indicate that one of two situations is occurring. Firstly, the supplier may be inadequate in procuring these materials. Secondly, the source of supply could be experiencing genuine delays in acquisition, and consideration may need to be given to extending the time period over which monies committed to these goods are available.

CONTRACTS AND TENDERS

Libraries using contracts and tendering for the supply of books and audiovisual materials expect to be offered comparatively

high discounts. In return, the suppliers of these goods will generally expect, and need to receive a larger than usual percentage of the library's orders. A business which is tied by contract to supplying goods at a high discount, but only receives a trickle of orders, may have to either stop supplying, or risk incurring financial losses.

When considering the prices and discounts offered in a tender document, a library needs to look much further than just the figures being quoted. The viability of the business is also important. For example, an inexperienced operator might offer high discounts, but be unable to sustain these over time.

The tendering process, and the use of contracts for supply, both often exclude the very small library supply operators. Employing one or two staff, these businesses usually offer only a limited range of books and services, but they make their goods attractive to libraries because of high discounts and personal attention. They have been welcome at small country and school libraries for many years, but the trend towards library consortia, and the reliance on tenders and contracts, have reduced their numbers.

2. SOURCES OF SUPPLY

A library can acquire books from many different sources of supply. Selecting which ones to deal with requires an understanding of exactly what each business has to offer, as well as an evaluation of its capability of providing the goods and services promised.

Using only two or three efficient suppliers decreases the amount of library staff time that is needed for liaison. The larger order business that each supplier then receives should also make them more amenable to offering the best possible discounts, as well as various value-added services.

The disadvantage in having a minimum number of suppliers is that the library is dependent on those suppliers maintaining their standards over time. If even one of them suffers falling standards, the library risks the possibility of having a large proportion of orders unfilled, overpriced or otherwise incorrect.

Although a library may choose not to use certain suppliers' services, it is prudent to keep aware of what innovations they might be offering, or of how their overall standards appear to be improving or declining. In the event of a major problem with one of the library's established suppliers, orders would have to be transferred quickly to another source. It is therefore worthwhile for library acquisitions staff to keep well informed about the book-trade industry, in which they also play a part.

Supplier performance evaluations should be designed to ensure that like is compared against like. Some negative variations in measured performance might be acceptable if, for example, the source of supply can offer some other service which is unique. It is important to know just what can be reasonably expected from different sources of supply, since they vary considerably in the services they offer.

DESCRIPTION OF SOURCES

The following descriptions of the sources of supply, which a library might use for books and audiovisual materials, present a range of factors to consider when choosing where to place orders. Sources of supply include:

1. Library Suppliers
2. School Library Suppliers
3. Traditional Booksellers
4. Internet Booksellers
5. Bookshops
6. Publishers
7. Distributors and Wholesalers
8. Authors (Personal and Corporate)
9. Large Print Suppliers
10. Audiovisual Suppliers
11. Foreign Language Suppliers
12. Second-Hand and Out-of-Print Dealers
13. Remainder Dealers
14. Donations and Deposits
15. In-House Supply and Library Consortia

1. LIBRARY SUPPLIERS

Library suppliers are, as their descriptive name implies, specialists aiming their selling and supply services at library customers only. Their range of services includes compiling bibliographies, processing or 'shelf-ready' services, compiling statistics on a library customer's buying and spending patterns on request, and being able to tailor invoices or reports to a format that suits each library's own acquisition department's demands. Library suppliers might also offer incentives like flexible payment terms, storing a large order until the library is prepared to receive it, arranging visits to publishers' premises, or meeting some of the costs of travel when librarians need to make personal visits to view large stocks of books or other items before ordering.

A library supplier should be able to provide a library with most of its selections for book or audiovisual items. Any restrictions on supply should only be based on:

- The library supplier's own field of speciality, if it has one.
- The fact that some publishers will only supply directly to an end-user. The reasons why a publisher decides to supply directly include not wanting to lose sight of the nature of its market, not being prepared to allow any surcharges to be applied to the price of its goods, or a belief that it can provide better service this way. Some educational materials, such as teachers' notes and answer books are sometimes only supplied to end-users.

Library suppliers operate in the market, like any other business. Consequently, some occasionally go out of business. In these instances, an inability to supply orders is a simple matter of declining financial capability.

Arranging exchanges or refunds for faulty supplies is usually simple when dealing with a library supplier. All such items can then be returned to the one point, without having to track down numbers of individual sources, and then getting them to agree to take back the damaged or misprinted goods.

Library suppliers frequently offer assistance in selection by providing information, in a range of formats, on new publications. With some library suppliers, this review service is comprehensive, and will include details of items which may not be seen or reviewed elsewhere. They may also allow inspection of new material before purchase, either by bringing it to the library, sending copies or having a showroom which library selection staff can visit.

When using a library supplier, a library is depending on them to supply accurately and promptly, and to report fully on orders

not supplied, for whatever reason. If all of this is done efficiently, the library benefits by not using staff time and resources chasing individual orders itself. However, if the library supply service fails, the library is placed in the difficult position of having large numbers of orders delayed or unsupplied.

The prices paid for items from a library supplier are usually either retail or discounted. Because a large supplier orders much more from each publisher than most single libraries, the discounts it receives are also larger. This is the source of the discount that can then be offered to a library. As discussed in the chapter on pricing, some goods are supplied with a surcharge added, for a variety of reasons.

2. SCHOOL LIBRARY SUPPLIERS

Like general library suppliers, the school library supplier exists because it is able to offer a more economical supply service than the library can obtain by other means.

The school library supplier can offer a valuable service to school libraries, where there may be very limited time available for selecting resources or chasing orders, particularly since the school librarian is usually a teacher as well. School librarians want to be made aware of material which is often not collected in other types of libraries, making school library supply a specialist endeavour. When selecting a supplier, the school librarian will need to be assured that the business is well versed in the needs of schools, has had verifiable experience in this field, and has staff who are specifically dedicated to dealing with schools.

3. TRADITIONAL BOOKSELLERS

The difference between booksellers and library suppliers is in the range of services offered. Businesses which operate simply by offering books to libraries at discounted prices, without any backup services, possibly not even providing

backordering for out-of-stock orders, can be classified as booksellers.

Since booksellers do not perform the extra functions of library suppliers, they sometimes offer larger discounts on selected materials. When the range of items they are offering suits the library's needs, and the goods are cheap enough to be worthwhile buying, despite a lack of backup, then booksellers have an important role to play in supply to libraries. Problems arise when services are promised to secure an order, but the expertise to carry them through is not available back at the bookseller's premises.

Some libraries prefer not to have backorders for out-of-stock material, since they feel better able to keep track of their expenditure when no funds are committed to goods with often indefinite dates of arrival. In these cases, a bookseller offering no backordering facilities can be confidently chosen, as long as the library is assured that the reasons for non-supply are indeed that items are out-of-stock, and not that they are too difficult for the bookseller to trace or acquire.

4. INTERNET BOOKSELLERS

Most Internet booksellers require credit card payment or prepayment before supply, although the prices they can offer are often very heavily discounted. Some library administrations may be uncomfortable about prepaying for items when the business accepting the payment is not easily contactable in the event of a problem.

If a library intends placing a large order with an Internet bookseller, it is wise to first make personal contact, and ask for an account, rather than having to prepay. The terms and conditions of supply should also be clearly defined, just as with traditional sources of supply. For example, questions about the return of faulty goods, whether cancellations will be accepted and in what timeframe, the issue of credit or refunds, and so on, should all be answered satisfactorily. If in any

doubt, choose another source of supply. The extra discount offered should not be the main consideration in selecting any source of supply, since its value can be quickly eroded if an irreconcilable dispute arises concerning any aspect of the library's orders.

5. BOOKSHOPS

Most bookshop owners are glad to give a visiting librarian a discount, usually 10%, for buying a sizeable number of books from their shelves. Large department store book sections can be the exception, putting so many obstacles in the way of purchasing by libraries, that it can be easier not to bother. The attitude of the manager, and the paperwork required by the store's head office, will determine whether libraries find it easy or not to buy books from a department or chain store.

Backorders, or any other value-added service, are rare from bookshops, unless they have decided to cater for the needs of libraries, in which case they could be termed booksellers or library suppliers, rather than bookstores.

An advantage in buying from a bookshop is that a librarian can browse through the stock and perhaps pick up some older publications that were missed from other sources. There might also be some books which are 'out-of-print' from the publishers, and possibly available nowhere else.

Local public libraries may be encouraged to spend at least some of their funds with local businesses. As long as the prices paid are within acceptable limits, then all parties can be well served when a public library uses its local bookshop. Favouring local bookshops, without making a rational comparison of price and service with competitors, can result in a range of inefficient and costly outcomes.

6. PUBLISHERS

Libraries which decide to try placing their orders directly with publishers will be frustrated by the refusal of many of the larger ones to deal with them.

The two main reasons for this stance by publishers are:

1. The cost of servicing a relatively small account is not worth the income from the order. The slow payment methods characteristic of many authorities controlling libraries' funds are also not acceptable in the open marketplace, where thirty day terms are standard.
2. Booksellers and library suppliers who become aware that a publisher is supplying directly to libraries, and with a discount, will often complain to the publisher. Notice of intention to withdraw all their order business with that publisher is sometimes given, since they consider that the publisher is acting in direct business competition with its own customers. Libraries may find that those books they are able to order directly from publishers will attract added charges, sometimes listed on an invoice as a 'small order surcharge'.

To counteract the opposition that libraries have often found ordering directly, a few of the larger publishers have created sections whose aim is to supply libraries only. They ensure that the prices and services offered are similar to those the libraries would expect from booksellers or library suppliers. The standard of supply in such cases is usually high. The only drawback, from a library's viewpoint, is that this supplier can only provide the output of one publisher or distributor.

7. DISTRIBUTORS AND WHOLESALERS

Book distributors supply books to the library market using processes which are similar to wholesaling.

A distributor in Australia will represent local and overseas publishers by stocking, marketing and selling their books. A title may be on sale from both a distributor and the original publisher, at either the same or different prices, under completely different terms of sale. In general, when buying from the distributor, the customer will place a large order for a range of titles, and therefore possibly receive a higher discount, without an extra small-order handling charge. Dealing with one source of supply also reduces administration costs involved in the acquisition of books. When seeking books or audiovisual supplies from small publishers located overseas, a local distributor is nearly always a safer and easier alternative to direct contact.

Since they are accustomed to selling in large quantities, most distributors will not be interested in handling very small orders from libraries. They will probably refer such orders back to the customer, suggesting that they try a bookseller or library supplier instead. Libraries will usually only deal directly with distributors when the order is coming from a library consortium and the quantities being sought are large enough for it to be considered on equal business terms with book retailers and suppliers.

Book distributors do not offer the range of extra services which libraries expect from library suppliers. Shelf-ready processing, extended payment terms or individual bibliographic listings will not normally be available. For example, some customer service departments will not do a subject search of their stockholdings. When there is a delay in supply, the distributor may not be able to explain the exact reason, or give an exact date for publication. However, discounts for quantity purchasing from a distributor may be much higher than a library has ever received from a library supplier.

8. AUTHORS (PERSONAL AND CORPORATE)

Some authors decide to do all their own publishing and marketing, and may either visit libraries personally, or send a

mailing. When a library decides to buy from the author, this will usually mean that the account paying section of the library will have to record a new creditor in its files. When the author is only ever likely to produce one title, and the library decides to deal with a number of such sources, accounting staff may find themselves burdened with extra work in the creation and management of new creditor files, which will only ever be used once.

A library should determine whether a book, marketed by the author, is available solely from him or her. Library suppliers can usually acquire these titles, and supply them either at the same price the author is offering, or with an added surcharge. In the latter case, the library needs to decide whether the extra charge is preferable to dealing with individual authors for single items.

9. LARGE PRINT SUPPLIERS

Suppliers of large print books in Australia fall into three categories:

1. Publishers who sell only their own titles, and prefer to deal directly with libraries, rather than through any intermediary
2. Specialist large print suppliers
3. General book suppliers who will also handle large print materials on request

The stock range is generally best from the specialist large print supplier. Prices for the same item can vary amongst the different sources, so a library may want to check what is being offered before choosing its source of supply.

10. AUDIOVISUAL SUPPLIERS

Most library suppliers, and certainly all of the larger ones in Australia, will take orders for audiovisual items for libraries. There are also some specialist audiovisual suppliers.

Audiovisual items can vary remarkably in price, depending on their source of manufacture. While librarians can safely make expenditure predictions for items such as children's books, based on an average price, this process is far less accurate with audiovisual items. Training kits, for example, can vary in price by hundreds of dollars between one producer and another. An unexpectedly high price for an audiovisual item is also possible when the producer does not offer discounts to intermediaries, a situation more common in the audiovisual industry than in the book-trade. The library supplier must then add a surcharge to cover its costs and make a profit.

Some audiovisual items are only sold after the buyer signs a Licence Agreement, or agrees to some other terms of use. Depending on the intricacies of the agreement involved, audiovisual library suppliers may arrange the exchange of documents, or the sale may be referred back to the library to handle itself.

Libraries wanting to purchase talking books will find that a few of the largest publishers of books also produce a regular output of talking books. These are described on their monthly new title advertising and are ordered in the same way as books, so that orders for these can easily be placed with the library's usual source for printed books from the same publishers.

If some parts of a multi-media kit are not available, a library can request that the order is held and not invoiced until it is complete. If the library accepts an incomplete order, the full invoice amount could still be charged, since it might not be possible for the parts to be priced separately.

11. FOREIGN LANGUAGE BOOK SUPPLIERS

Local suppliers of foreign language books, particularly for public libraries, will usually import a selection of titles and have a display range from which librarians can choose. Some of these books will have come from the country to which the

language is native, but many may also have been imported from England or the USA. Libraries seeking Spanish language books, for instance, will find that there is a large publishing output in Spanish in the USA. Many of these titles will be available from the library's usual suppliers of English language books, on the same terms and conditions.

Library acquisitions staff who are inexperienced in dealing directly with sources of supply in non-English speaking countries, may wish to avoid unexpected outcomes by using sources which are local and easily contacted. Some of the tasks that will be different when using a non-English speaking source of supply are:

- Being able to read and comprehend the invoice
- Payment in foreign currency, the fees for which can add a sizeable amount to the cost of the books or other goods
- Customs clearance procedures

12. SECOND-HAND AND OUT-OF-PRINT DEALERS

There is no central, bibliographic listing of the titles stocked by second-hand dealers, although some do produce their own listings, and may even combine these to produce large master listings. The failure to find a title listed on such a master listing does not mean that it is not available for sale somewhere, perhaps even at your own local second-hand bookshop.

A second-hand copy may not always be cheap, so be prepared to pay extra if it is rare or in demand. If a second-hand dealer offers to hunt for a title, be aware that this may involve a service charge, payable whether the book is found or not.

There are a few Internet booksellers offering second-hand books for sale. If placing an order with one of them, be sure to

check on the condition of the book and the terms of sale, such as your right of return and consequent refund of any payment made. Some second-hand dealers are very knowledgeable about the book-trade, and have excellent skills when it comes to tracking down a long 'out-of-print' title.

13. REMAINDER DEALERS

A remainder is a book which is usually part of the last few of the title that the publisher has left. For business reasons, the publisher decides to sell the lot to a remainder dealer for a much reduced price. The publisher may or may not then report the book 'out-of-print'. Books from remainder dealers can be old or recently published, but are most often in very good condition.

Librarians sometimes query the fact that a book can be charged at full price one week, and then appear the next week at a very reduced price on a remainder dealer's shelves. In some cases, a request for a refund or credit for the full-priced item can be legitimately made, such as when it must have been clear that the book was about to be remaindered.

Orders for specific titles cannot normally be placed with remainder dealers. As there is no complete, bibliographic listing of what is available from them, librarians select books from lists the dealers produce, from visits to their showrooms or from stock which travelling sales representatives bring around. Most library suppliers and booksellers have contact with a range of remainder dealers, and will act as intermediaries if requested.

Remainders are a good source from which to select stock for a new public library. Deals involving extra discount, or reduced freight, can often be arranged, if the total order for remaindered titles is large enough.

14. DONATIONS AND DEPOSITS

Some government bodies, and other organisations, have a policy of providing certain libraries with free copies of their publications. This generosity can sometimes depend on the nature of the library requesting the items, so that while a corporate library might be charged, a public one might not.

When these 'free' publications are ordered from a library supplier or bookseller, some of the original sources will levy a charge, regardless of the final destination of the publication. Added to this charge, will be a fee for the service of acquiring the publication for the library.

At first glance, this situation would seem to have just one rational method of approach for libraries, that of only ever ordering these items directly from the publisher. In practice, where to place the order should depend on how difficult the item is to obtain, and whether there are many from various sources required by the library. In the latter instance, a bulk order placed with one supplier may result in overall cost effectiveness, despite the extra charges.

Some publishers offering free material will only ever supply directly to the library or end-user. One rationale for this decision is that they do not want any charge to be made for their products. This can sometimes be frustrating for a library, which may have dozens of such items to acquire, but which does not want to have to contact numerous publishers itself to obtain them.

Those publishers which insist on only ever supplying directly tend not to be aware of the breadth of acquisition that a large library undertakes, and generally have no idea that they are causing them any extra workload. Their belief that money is being saved by only supplying directly is difficult to overturn.

Since even donated items may arrive with an unexpected invoice for freight, libraries choosing to place their orders for

donated items directly with the publishers should firstly enquire about the possibility of freight being charged.

Even small libraries can find themselves the recipients of deposit copies of publications from their own governing organisations. For instance, public libraries might receive, and even be expected to make widely available, certain reports produced by their own or other local government bodies. School libraries might be given reports from school council or parent meetings.

Donations from library users can be either welcome or unwanted. Having a clear policy about the range of items that will be accepted as donations will make it easier to refuse those that are not wanted, without unduly offending the offerer.

15. IN-HOUSE SUPPLY AND LIBRARY CONSORTIA

A single library can probably forget the notion of ever acting as its own supplier, since the size of its purchases from individual publishers would not warrant a high enough discount to make the extra work worthwhile. There are also many publishers who will refuse to supply a single library. However, a consortium of libraries can seriously consider combining resources to foster the setting up of its own library supply operation.

Ideally, a cost analysis needs to be the first step. This should determine whether the extra discounts the consortium would receive for bulk purchases would warrant the extra staff and facilities needed to operate the venture. In the course of finding out what discounts would be received from publishers, the consortium will also need to investigate whether there are any major publishers who will refuse to supply. Those who do not view the venture as a bona fide business operation may not wish to alienate their large bookselling customers by supplying directly to the same customer base.

Those extra services which a library demands from its library supplier, need to be offered by an in-house service as well. Reporting, chasing unsupplied items, bibliographic searching, publisher liaison etc. are services that have to be maintained at a high standard. The cost of such services would not be eliminated by providing a restricted in-house supply operation, but simply transferred to elsewhere within the organisation.

The new in-house supply operation will probably find itself in unfamiliar territory when it comes to dealing with the varied accounts departments of publishers. Payment terms are stricter than a librarian may have been accustomed to with library suppliers and booksellers. Non-payment by due dates may result in the cancellation of orders, refusal to supply further without prepayment, if at all, putting the customer right at the bottom of backorder lists, so that they are the last to receive new titles, a reduction in discount offered, and so on.

A business plan for any new in-house supply service should be compiled. Basic, sound business practices need to be followed at all times. Ideally, a manager with commercial experience should be appointed, with permanent staff who will not be called away to perform other library duties.

3. HOW TO PLACE AN ORDER SO YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT

HOW MUCH INFORMATION?

Full and accurate bibliographic details are the optimum when placing an order via whatever source of supply is chosen. Although there are times when the full details cannot be determined, this need not be a barrier to placing an order, and getting the supply process underway without delay. The important proviso is that the parameters of the publication must be specified clearly.

If, for instance, only an author and title are known, an order for the item can still be placed, as long as the library describes, in detail, the other requirements for supply, e.g. binding, edition, with or without accompanying software or other additions, number of volumes, maximum price acceptable, etc.

When an order is placed without specifying the binding wanted, an expensive hardback could be supplied, when a paperback might have been more suitable. The library wishing to return such an item may find that the source of supply refuses to accept the return, or charges a handling fee if it does take it back.

Although binding and maximum price should always be specified on an order, when these are not declared, the library is in a better position if it has a long-standing relationship with its supplier. A good source of supply will usually check first before supplying the most expensive option to a library. Such a supplier may also be more prepared to accept a return, based on incomplete bibliographic details having been received originally.

If a library is going to provide ISBNs with its orders, then it is vital to ensure that only the correct ISBNs are quoted. The

ISBN is a code which refers to the country of publication, the publisher, the individual publication and a final check digit. When this last number is equal to ten, an 'X' appears instead.

If a new edition is wanted, it is not acceptable to quote the ISBN of the old edition when ordering. Such an action suggests to some suppliers that it is only the old edition that is wanted, as is sometimes the case. A librarian searching a database, and only being able to find details of the old edition to download for an automated ordering system, will need to do some extra data entry to avoid confusion in the supply process. An annotation will be necessary to show that only a new edition is acceptable. Ideally, the old ISBN should not appear at all, just in case a data entry operator at the source of supply uses it to place the order, regardless of any instructions to the contrary.

The practice of specifically ordering the library-bound edition of a book is a procedure that needs careful attention because of the sometimes unexpected outcomes. Some publishers, particularly of children's books, will produce a more firmly bound, hardback version, called a library-binding, with a different ISBN. These are usually good value, because of their sturdiness, but stocks tend to deplete very quickly.

The problem for a library having ordered this library-binding, is that a publisher may report it 'out-of-print', without offering to supply the ordinary hardback instead. If such a report comes through to a library supplier which is processing thousands of reports a month, picking up the fact that the title is still readily available in hardback will not always occur. The order will probably be cancelled along with all the other material reported to them as 'out-of-print'. The exception to this is when the book has a high profile, perhaps because it is an award winner, or by a best-selling author. In these cases, any experienced staff handling the incoming reports from publishers will realise that the title is probably not 'out-of-print' altogether.

A strategy for avoiding the unwanted cancellation of such orders for out-of-stock library-bindings, is for the library to specify on its order that the ISBN is for a library-binding, but that another binding would, or would not, be acceptable. The source of supply then has a duty to follow these ordering instructions, and to keep a closer tab on the progress of such an order.

An added complication resulting from the ordering of a library-binding which is no longer in-print, is that a fresh order then has to be placed for an alternative binding, either by the library or by the library supplier, resulting in delays in delivery. When the title is some years old, it is better to dispense with ordering the library-binding altogether, specifying the ISBN of another binding from the start.

Some library suppliers do their own binding of titles which they want to sell to libraries. In these cases, the ISBN is the same as for the ordinary binding.

ORDER NUMBERS

An order number can refer to at least two quite different things in library supply. An official order number is the one which appears on the order for goods, which is usually signed by the person having authority to allocate funds on the organisation's behalf. This order number can be the one that is authorised for a batch, or even for all items to come from one source of supply.

Librarians also commonly use the term 'order number' to refer to one of their internally generated numbers, which may refer to a whole batch of books, or only to one individual item. This number is used mostly as an identifying or locating tool within the library, and generally has no administrative or statutory purpose for the governing administration. Such numbers are also referred to in some libraries as item numbers, book record numbers or similar terms.

Most suppliers will accept orders without any order number being quoted, as long as they are confident that the library placing the order will accept eventual supply of the goods. When a library does not quote any order number, some sources of supply create one for use in their own system.

An order signed by a person responsible for the dispersal of funds is proof of a request to supply, and may be used to refuse a return, if the supplier deems it is requested without a valid reason. This situation can be further complicated if the supplier's business fails and a receiver is appointed. The receiver may then present the official order from the library and demand acceptance of all goods listed on it.

Any source of supply, from the largest to the smallest, can be expected to quote the library's order number when supplying goods. This includes both official and library-tracking order numbers. Although commonly referred to only as 'order numbers', these codes can be made up of digits and letters, or even letters only.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ORDERING

A common practice in acquisitions departments of Australian libraries is to place orders with library suppliers according to the country of origin of the publication being sought. For example, all books published in England would be ordered from a supplier whose head office is in that country. One of the reasons for using this method of ordering is that it cuts out the time delay involved in asking an Australian supplier to go through the motions of placing the order. By the time this had happened, an English supplier would already have the book in transit to the library.

Country of origin ordering has been successful, and is a firmly entrenched practice in many libraries throughout Australia. However, there are two situations where ordering from a library supplier, in an overseas country of origin, will not necessarily result in speedier supply. The first is where an

item is ordered pre-publication. The publisher then has orders, from both its own country and overseas, waiting to be filled as soon as the book is available. If both types of orders are filled and despatched almost simultaneously, and assuming that both library suppliers have similar processing times and freight methods, the library should receive its goods at about the same time, regardless of whether they were ordered in Australia or not.

The second situation where overseas country of origin ordering is not faster for supply is when a book is the product of one of the multinational publishing houses, which has a policy of simultaneous publication in all its major markets. In this case, ordering in Australia results in faster and often cheaper supply.

One of the attractions of country of origin ordering has been that prices have been, on average, lower than if the same books were purchased through an Australian based source, which did not indent. Australian library suppliers who source their orders carefully will usually bypass the local stock if it is too expensive, so that prices paid by libraries should be on a par with books received from foreign suppliers. This overseas sourcing is an extremely important function, and libraries need to investigate an Australian supplier's expertise at doing this, before placing orders with them.

Because of various closed market agreements formed by publishers and distributors, some of those based overseas will refuse to supply any order which has an Australian address on it, preferring instead to make that customer order the book from the publisher's agent, situated in Australia. Publishers also sell book 'rights' to other publishers. This means that they undertake to allow another publisher to produce the title and give them full rights to sell and profit from it in a specified market, such as Australia. The original publisher then cannot sell the title itself in that market, which is one reason why they may refuse to supply an order from Australia. This is despite the fact that there may be a sizeable price difference

experienced by the library when obtaining the book as instructed. Consequently, an Australian supplier needs to have representation overseas to be able to offer competitive prices in these instances.

In practice, libraries have always circumvented closed market agreements by using suppliers in the country of origin, or by choosing local suppliers who place orders overseas for them.

Library suppliers in England and the USA have had many years' experience at fine-tuning their extra services to improve their attractiveness to libraries. In comparison, true library supply in Australia is a more recent development. A few Australian library suppliers can match the standards of the better overseas ones, particularly since computer technology fosters levels of competence in service which depend on the enthusiasm and skill of the providers, rather than their national base.

Since there is no longer a Net Book Agreement in force in England, the Australian market is likely to see more English library suppliers offering their services here. Some of these will be newcomers to the local scene, and may have previously concentrated on school library supply in the UK. Librarians will need to check their credentials before assuming that they can provide the levels of service required. The local standards of library supply are also changing, and it is vital to ensure that any developments are investigated, and made use of where appropriate.

STANDING ORDERS

Placing a standing order means that a library wants the source of supply to provide all publications as specified, without any further need for confirmation before supply is completed. Examples of standing orders are yearbooks that are to be supplied every year upon publication, or any new title from a list of authors.

If a library's administration system generates an order number after the goods are received, this can be forwarded to the supplier, who will then only need to refer to it if the supply is disputed in some way.

Before placing a standing order, a library needs to clarify a number of points:

1. The binding which will be acceptable.
2. The price range which will be acceptable. The retail prices of items like yearbooks and annuals can increase dramatically from one issue to the next, so a library needs to make it clear if there is an upper price limit beyond which it will not accept supply.
3. Whether an item received on a standing order can be returned for credit if it turns out to be unsuitable. When a library decides to cancel a standing order, it needs to clarify with the supplier what publications it will still be expected to accept, since some may already be in transit. Suppliers themselves may have placed standing orders with publishers, some of whom will not accept cancellation if an item is already in transit. A supplier may then decide to pass this requirement on to their library customer.
4. Does the source of supply report on delays in supply, or abandonment of a publication within the target range?
5. When choosing new sources of supply, discuss with them the way in which they will keep track of a standing order. Whether they use a computerised flagging system or a card file, failure to attend to upcoming standing order publications will result in the library either not receiving its standing orders on time, or perhaps missing out altogether.

6. Where an annual changes its format or title substantially, does the library need to be informed before automatic supply?

BLANKET ORDERS

Blanket orders mean that a library wishes to receive everything published in a specified subject area, format or whatever other parameters are chosen.

Very careful limits need to be placed upon the supply of such orders. Specifying the upper limit to price is a first consideration.

Right of return should be a condition for blanket orders. While this covers the library well, so that it does not have to accept unwanted material, the likely outcome is that it will find the range of material it receives is limited in one or more of a number of ways. If a blanket order is with a library supplier, it will have had to purchase the items before sending them to the library. If a library habitually returns large numbers of such items, a supplier would be economically unwise to purchase quantities of material which it could not return to a publisher for credit, and which it may not be able to resell to any other customer. The supplier will therefore tend to select only the titles that have a wider appeal, considering the nature of its own customer base.

When the blanket order is made directly with a publisher, the return of large numbers of items to it may result in a decrease in the discount it will offer for future purchases. Some publishers will also impose a handling surcharge for any returns.

A blanket order is unlikely to result in a library receiving absolutely everything published within its specification. The reasons for this are:

1. Publications are simply missed, either because of their obscurity, or through an error in checking.
2. The supplier makes a decision not to acquire a particular title because it is too obscure or unusual in some way. The supplier might contact the library first to check whether it wants such an item, but when large numbers of blanket orders are being processed, the staff time involved in constantly referring back to the library would be prohibitive.
3. There may be so much published on a topic, that supplying all of it on a blanket order would be unwelcome at the library.
4. Some countries are much simpler and cheaper sources of books than others, so that a blanket order will tend to include mostly items from those countries. To overcome this, a library may need to specify that it wants everything published in a selected country on a particular topic.

APPROVAL PLANS

'Approval Plan' refers to a method of ordering where the supplier sends a library items according to a profile, but with the full acceptance of the fact that any or all may be returned if not wanted. Approval plans allow selection staff to see the actual title before choosing it, rather than selecting from a blurb, jacket or advertising flyer.

Although a library may request that everything be sent within its specifications, the supplier will nearly always perform some preselection when choosing titles to be included in the approval plan shipments. Through experience, the supplier will be aware of the categories of titles that always seem to be returned, and will not wish to waste its time and resources sending out items which have a high return rate.

ADVANCE INFORMATION

Advance information on publications comes to library suppliers and libraries in electronic and paper waves. News about what is about to be available can appear as emails, computer discs, letters, flyers, catalogues, faxes, telephone calls, or from personal visits by authors and publishers' representatives. Wading through all this material is always time-consuming, but ordering early means that the library should be assured of getting the item wanted, as soon as it is published. Popular titles can go out-of-stock within a week or two of publication, making the supply of unfilled orders dependent upon a reprint appearing.

The disadvantage in ordering prior to publication is that the price may change, or not even be set, so that forward estimates of library expenditure can be based upon a prediction only. A small proportion of titles is abandoned before publication, so that library funds allocated for them will remain unspent if notification of the abandonment is not received.

If details of orders placed prior to publication are included in the library's public catalogue, library users will want to be made aware of the expected date of receipt, which may be months, or even years ahead. There are some library suppliers who will create MARC records for the advance information they send to libraries. This makes it easy for a library to include this record on their own database as a temporary cataloguing entry, and to make the details available to library users via their OPAC system.

A library which does not want to be inundated with advance information about publications, can request that its suppliers send only information about items within a certain subject, or other range. While this will not stop the flow from all other sources, it will mean that the library can attend in detail just to the packet of information from the selected suppliers, and either ignore, or give cursory attention to the rest.

LEASING

A few library suppliers offer libraries book stock on lease. New or nearly new books are supplied shelf-ready for a leasing fee. After a specified time, the books are returned, or exchanged for new ones.

Making use of leasing reduces the staff time involved in getting new books onto the library's shelves. However, leasing preselected batches of books can mean that the titles supplied may not always be perfect for the library's clientele, since they have not been selected with the local knowledge that the librarian would have used.

Leasing is useful when a library will experience a high, temporary demand for some title or subject. Rather than spend heavily on stock which will be of little interest after the demand has waned, a library can decide to lease suitable items for a short time only.

STOCKING A NEW LIBRARY

When stock for a new library is being sought, there are a number of measures which can be investigated for streamlining the process:

- Making use of warehouse visits, remainder dealers and leasing can help to speed up the process of acquiring large numbers of books.
- Suppliers who provide fully shelf-ready books can be used in preference.
- Since orders are likely to be much larger than normal, a library should be able to negotiate a larger discount for its purchases.
- Some library suppliers will keep in storage all the items ordered for a new library, and may even store them in

shelf order for their customer. A library would not need to accept delivery until shelving in the new premises is ready. Payment before delivery may be requested if the supplier is storing the library's stock. The library may wish to check that its stock is insured against loss or damage while on the supplier's premises.

CANCELLING AN ORDER

If a library needs to cancel an order, it is wise to keep some documentation to prove the date and method of cancellation. Some businesses will refuse any credit for an item they have supplied, unless there is hard proof that a cancellation took place.

METHODS OF PLACING ORDERS

Most suppliers will be pleased to receive orders from libraries by whatever method each library chooses. The means of sending the order is therefore a choice for the library to make, depending on its own internal systems. The supplier chosen should be able to comply, except in cases where a very small business may not have the technical or computerised ability to receive some transmissions.

Finding the address of the preferred source of supply often involves the sort of sleuthing that is more commonly the role of the reference librarian. Apart from using various directories and the Internet, the ISBN also allows access to the address of the publisher. The ISBN Agency in Australia can provide the address of a publisher, based on the ISBN of one of its publications.

Methods used for placing orders include:

- Mail and fax
- Courier
- Email

- Telephone
- Via a supplier's website
- Computer linking and EDI
- Sales representatives
- Trade fairs
- Warehouse visits
- Selection by the supplier

Mail and Fax

Despite the rapid advances in electronic forms of communication, many libraries still produce orders on paper, which then have to be sent by mail or fax. Ordinary mail is the least reliable of all forms of order transferal, due to its slowness and the possibility of loss in transit. Its use is justified if the source of supply requires a signed order to be in existence and sighted before the order is considered valid.

A library can ask the source of supply to confirm the receipt of all order batches sent by mail, but large publishers and distributors will not like the extra work that this involves for their staff. Smaller operations may comply so as to keep the library's business.

Faxing an order is a fast and reliable means of order placement, except when the library produces orders at one per page of paper. In these cases, a library should consider altering its order layout, so that many more than one can be printed on each page.

Mail or fax is also a choice when the order has attached to it advertising material which is necessary for the correct identification of the items being ordered. Some small publishers have no other means of being contacted, so that mail or fax is the only option for placing an order with them.

Courier

Regular use of a courier for sending orders is an expensive option, but the use of a courier for a very important order can be warranted.

Couriers do occasionally lose goods entrusted to them. Paying a premium for the delivery of an order is therefore not an absolute guarantee of delivery.

Email

Orders generated within a library's computerised acquisition system can usually be sent as an attachment to an email. Check with the source of supply to make sure its system can open the file you are sending, and that it is willing to accept orders in this way. Some sources of supply will automatically send back a confirmation of receipt.

Telephone

Some simple orders can be easily and quickly placed by telephone, although this is not a suitable method for a large quantity of orders. The person taking the order may ask for an order number and an account number to be quoted, so have these ready if they exist.

With telephone ordering, there is no proof of placing the order, so that querying a non-supply can sometimes present a problem. For example, if customers are being supplied according to the sequence in which orders were received, and stock is low, or about to be exhausted, your order may not be filled because you have no proof of the date it was placed.

Via a Supplier's Website

Sources of supply, of all types, often maintain websites, which can be used for placing orders. Publishers and distributors will have lists of their own titles on these websites, and orders can

then be placed by selecting the ones required and adding quantities. These websites rarely provide any spaces to add an order number per item, and sometimes not even a batch order number. Purchasing will depend upon quoting an account number, or prepaying by credit card.

Websites provided by library suppliers usually offer a large database from which selections and orders can be made. As most of these databases are the result of commercial enterprise, libraries will find that they probably need a password and an account with the library supplier before they can access them. These databases will not be available for downloading, for later checking, but the supplier's own, specially compiled listings and bibliographies can often be downloaded, and are best checked off-line.

Library suppliers are usually aware of the need for a library to quote an order number, so spaces for these are likely to be found on the order form. If a facility is available for ordering items which are not found on the databases offered on the website, then a library could use such a website for all its book ordering.

Computer Linking and EDI

Some libraries want to place orders by sending a file directly from their own computer to the source of supply. This will require communication software, and the receiver will need to be able to open and read the file being sent.

EDI, Electronic Data Interchange, will only usually be an option with a library supplier, since publishers and distributors will have little interest in engaging in the extra expense of acquiring software to enable them to read a library order.

Communicating about orders in MARC format is also only an option with a library supplier.

Sales Representatives

Most sources of supply employ salespeople who will visit libraries to take orders. They may bring with them samples of new stock, book jackets for new titles or perhaps printed listings with the month's new releases.

Be aware that a salesperson's definition of a 'new' title is not always the same as a librarian's. Reprints can be listed amongst the new titles, so be careful to specify whether you want to see these or not.

A salesperson will not normally provide a customer with the books, but will take the order back to the office. If you need to see something about the books you are ordering, but do not want to use on-approval schemes, then having a regular appointment with a visiting sales representative may suit you.

Trade Fairs

Visiting trade fairs is a good way to see the new and upcoming output from a wide range of publishers. While librarians are always welcome visitors, they may find that some publishers will not accept any orders from them at trade fairs, and will ask them to direct their order business to a bookseller.

For this reason, some booksellers and library suppliers arrange visits to trade fairs for librarians, escorting them around and taking orders as required.

Warehouse Visits

The warehouses of publishers, distributors, booksellers and remainder dealers are often available for inspection by librarians. Most publishers will only allow librarians to browse their shelves, and select items for purchase, if the visit is arranged by a bookseller or library supplier.

A librarian can ask the chosen source of supply to arrange warehouse visits for the purpose of selecting particular kinds of books, such as children's or academic titles. A higher discount than normal can usually be negotiated, since the staff time involved in placing the order is substantially reduced.

Some warehouse managers will allow librarians to take books off their shelves, while others request that a list be made, and that their own staff pick and pack the order later. This is because the stock on the shelves may already be allocated for other customers. In this instance, the librarian will need to specify whether backorders are to be taken, or whether the order should be cancelled if the stock is not available immediately.

Selection by the Supplier

'Selection by the supplier' has been used by some libraries for many years to acquire books such as paperback genre fiction. In using this method of acquisition, the librarian transfers the selection process to the source of supply. The supplier then automatically sends the library new titles in the target range, as they are published. As well as specifying the genre, subjects or authors that will be accepted, the library may also want to set limits on the upper acceptable price per item, and on the total quantity of items that will be accepted within a set time period.

This method is similar to placing a Standing Order, except that the onus of deciding whether a title is suitable to be added to a library's collection is left to the supplier completely. Because of this, libraries usually only place such orders with sources of supply which have staff who are very familiar with library requirements, either through experience in the book-trade, or in libraries.

In recent times, transferring the selection process to the source of supply has grown in popularity. The two, intertwined reasons for this have been the need for libraries to economise

on staff, and the improved level of service and staff quality offered by those who sell books to libraries. Suppliers are now asked to select and supply a range of books, including children's titles, new fiction, and even general non-fiction for public libraries.

Selection by suppliers depends on their ability to determine whether a title fits into a specified category. For example, a library and a supplier may differ widely on what each considers to be a reference book, or a young adult title. Even the meaning of the term 'new book' can be in dispute. Are reprints, new editions with minor alterations, or rejacketed books with the same basic text to be considered new and therefore supplied? Obviously, these points need to be clarified before a library commits itself to accepting supplier-selected acquisitions.

Suppliers to libraries have always exercised a form of preselection when making up their stockholdings, and advertising them to libraries. The full range of books published is never presented, since only those which are considered to be of interest to libraries are ever chosen for sale. The next step, where the source of supply actually does all the selection, is one which is practically possible, but still not widely accepted.

4. REPORTS

WHAT DO THEY REALLY MEAN?

When a library orders a book, and it is not immediately available, the source of supply usually sends back a report, which describes the reason for non-supply.

These reports use phrases such as 'out-of-stock', 'out-of-print' or 'reprinting', which imply a straightforward reason for a delay or failure in supply of a book to a library. In reality, these terms cover many different reasons why a book has not turned up at a library's acquisitions department.

The Standards Association of Australia publishes AS/NZS 2807-2000, 'Reporting Outstanding Orders (In the Book Trade)', which specifies the information to be provided by library suppliers, Australian publishers, and agents of overseas publishers when preparing reports on outstanding orders. The information that a library would glean from these reports is minimal, and conveys little about the actual events that are causing delays in supply. This chapter looks at the processes that result in the generation of reports to libraries, filling in the information gaps and clarifying the terminology.

'Out-of-Print'

In the book-trade, the three word phrase, 'out-of-print', can have a number of meanings. It certainly does not always mean that a book is no longer available for purchase.

A publisher which reports a book as 'out-of-print' usually means that no more copies are left on its warehouse shelves, and a reprint is not planned. A distributor may report a book as 'out-of-print' when it is not going to import any more copies from the overseas publisher. The book in question may be readily available if purchased directly from overseas sources.

Conversely, a book reported as 'out-of-print' from an overseas source may still be for sale in Australia, where the local distributor could have plenty of copies left.

Books 'out-of-print' in Australia may still be 'in-print' in another edition overseas, with a different publisher and ISBN. The prices of these different editions will vary, so a librarian will need to check that a price is not too expensive, before asking a supplier to obtain a copy.

Some publishers may also report a title as 'out-of-print' and then, some weeks later, announce that copies are now available. This can be a result of the fact that bookstores are usually allowed to return any unsold copies, after public interest in them has waned. The title then suddenly becomes 'in-print' again, confusing and annoying librarians, who suspect that they were given inaccurate information in the beginning. Unfortunately, there is no precise way of knowing whether an 'out-of-print' title will suddenly reemerge for sale from the publisher, as this can depend on whether bookstores exercise their right to return unwanted stock.

Publishers may also report a title 'out-of-print' when it is remaindered. A remaindered title is one which the publisher sells at a vastly reduced price to a remainder dealer or bookseller, who then either sells it to the public through a shop, or offers discounted, cheap books to libraries. Books may be remaindered because they were unpopular, or of poor quality, but this is not always the case. Libraries can find excellent titles being sold by remainder dealers at very low prices. Naturally, since their margins are small, such dealers generally cannot offer much in the way of extra services.

Libraries cannot always expect reporting, individual attention, or special arrangements regarding payment of accounts from remainder dealers. There is also little bibliographic control of books once they are remaindered and reported 'out-of-print' by their publishers. Tracing a copy of such a book can necessitate asking the publisher to tell you to whom it

remaindered the stock, and then getting the remainder dealer to tell you to which shop it sold the last copies.

Books which are reported 'out-of-print' are often still readily available from bookshops. 'Out-of-print' does not mean that every single copy is only in the hands of an end-user. The term is really only an indication that the publisher itself will no longer sell the book.

Remaindering is one reason why books appear in shops at a very low price, while a library supplier is still quoting full retail price to libraries. The supplier may have purchased its copy from the publisher, without being told that the title was about to be remaindered. When a library discovers that it has been charged full price for a recently remaindered book, it is important to draw this to your supplier's attention immediately, and negotiate a possible credit. In daily practice, a good source of supply will be aware of remaindering occurring, and will reduce the price before the book is invoiced to the library. In Australia, there is no requirement that a retail price is maintained at the same level wherever a book is sold. However, pressure from customers can be enough to encourage publishers to be considerate in the timing of their remainder deals.

Librarians sometimes ask why, if a book can be sold so cheaply as a remainder, they have to pay a higher price at any time. The answer is that the book-trade is an industry much like any other. Whether the item bought cheaply on sale is a piece of clothing or a book, similar market forces have led to both the setting of the original price, and the timing and pricing of the discounted offer for sale.

Since 'out-of-print' does not always mean unavailable, the library which needs to acquire a book which has been reported 'out-of-print' has a number of options to exercise before finally giving up the search. There are even a few specialist booksellers who will track down 'out-of-print' material for a fee.

'Reprinting'

The report 'reprinting' suggests that a first print run has sold out, and another is underway, due to unexpected initial demand. However, some books reported as 'reprinting' are never seen again. This is because the publisher has not yet instructed its printers to produce more copies, and is first testing the market and gathering orders to determine the viability of reprinting. While this makes good economic sense, the problem for librarians is that they have no assurance that the book they are awaiting will ever be received. In some cases, the book can remain in this reprinting limbo for months, with the publisher insisting that it is definitely not 'out-of-print'.

During this waiting period, a decision will sometimes be made by the publisher to sell the rights to reprint to another publisher, who may then reset and repackage the book, so that it looks like a new title.

'Reprinting' can also mean that a publisher has not yet decided whether a paperback version of an original in hardback is worthwhile, or even if a whole new edition is warranted.

The lack of definite time frames regarding some 'reprinting' titles can mean that a library may have to carry over a commitment for purchase into the next financial year. To assist in avoiding this situation, a library supplier may be able to distinguish between those titles that are really reprinting, and will be due shortly, and those which are only being tested on the market. This information will then give the librarian the opportunity to cancel any orders that seem unlikely to arrive within a reasonable time.

'Out-of-stock'

This report has so many meanings that it has, by itself, limited usefulness.

Since not all sources will automatically backorder a title which is 'out-of-stock' at the time of ordering, librarians need to check on the policies of the businesses they are dealing with. Some are not prepared to bear the cost of holding backorders for customers, and expect them to continue to check for themselves whether a title has come back into stock, and then to place their order again at that time.

For an item ordered in Australia, 'out-of-stock' can mean:

- That the printer is still finishing the book.
- That a local distributor is waiting for stock to arrive from overseas.
- That a local distributor has placed your order overseas but has not yet received definite confirmation of stock availability.
- That a publisher is waiting for returns from bookshops before it can fill the order.
- That a publisher is moving stock from interstate.

'Out-of-stock' can refer to the situation at the premises of the library supplier, the distributor, or the publisher. A library usually does not know, on receipt of the report, which organisation is actually the one with no stock.

With very popular titles, where the demand has far exceeded the initial print-run, publishers will sometimes only partially fill all their orders for the title. This results in library suppliers and other sellers of books all getting only some of their order, and then having to wait until more are printed before receiving their full complement. In this case, library staff may see that a bestseller is on sale at the local bookshop, and know that it has already been supplied to a neighbouring library, while their own order is being reported as 'out-of-stock'.

For titles which have to come from overseas, 'out-of-stock' can mean that there really are no more copies left anywhere, or that the local distributor is just waiting for a shipment to arrive. The difference between these two situations can result in a

large variance in the expected date of supply. A more meaningful report than 'out-of-stock', in these cases, is one which clarifies whether a book is in transit, or really not in physical existence.

An 'out-of-stock' report should ideally always be accompanied by a note showing an expected date of supply, if this can be determined. As there are occasions when this date is not known, it is important for a library to be made aware of this, so that decisions, such as the need for cancellation, can be made.

'Publication Abandoned'

This report means that your order has been cancelled because the publisher has decided not to proceed with the book at this time. This can be because the author has failed to write the manuscript promised, or because the title is considered no longer viable. Sometimes the title will appear later, either from the same publisher, or from elsewhere.

It is not usual for the customer to be told if an abandoned publication is produced at some later date. If the title is important for a library's collection, acquisitions staff will need to keep on checking their bibliographic sources to find out if it has been published.

'Apply Direct'

There are many reasons why a library is advised to 'apply direct' for one of its orders:

- Some publishers will only ever sell directly to their end-users, and prefer not to deal with distributors or library suppliers. Orders for course notes, teachers' guides or material with sensitive content will often receive this response. Some publishers also like to have personal contact with the users of their books, so will only sell

when they know who is buying. This can result in follow-up information being supplied to the customer, but it can also be a way of compiling a mailing list for direct advertising campaigns.

- A library supplier or distributor may report 'apply direct' when it will not, or cannot obtain the book from the publisher. If the reason for this lack of supply is that the two businesses have had poor relations in the past, so will not deal with each other, the library may find that the title wanted is easily available from another supplier.
- When a publisher requires prepayment of all its orders, some suppliers feel very wary about committing funds when a refund may not be easily obtained in the event of a problem with supply. This insecurity is most apparent when the order is for a title from a small publisher outside Australia. In these cases, the library may be asked to 'apply direct'.

'No Response From Publisher'

An experienced library supplier should have exhausted all avenues of communication before cancelling a library's order because the publisher has not replied.

Despite this, a library will occasionally find that it has no trouble in contacting the publisher. This can be because the publisher, usually a one-person operation, prefers not to have any dealings at all with other businesses, but is prepared to talk to a librarian.

This report can also mean that the publisher is no longer in business, but the supplier is unable to determine this with certainty.

‘Cannot Trace’

A source of supply may report that it cannot trace the title wanted because:

- The title is not on its in-house database, and that is the only source usually checked.
- The details given by the library are incorrect, or staff at the source of supply have misread them.
- The library is using advance publication details, but the publisher does not yet have the title listed on its database.
- The library has sent the order to the wrong publisher.
- The Australian agent for an overseas publisher may sometimes report that it cannot trace a title, even though the book is available from the parent company overseas. This can be because there are no local rights, or because it is a title that will not be imported into Australia.

Some sources outside Australia use this report when a title is ‘out-of-print’. The library will have to check its bibliographic databases to determine the actual publishing status of the title if it wishes to proceed further with another source of supply.

A library supplier should only generate this report when it has checked that the details supplied by the library are incorrect or untraceable. A publisher, however, is unlikely to have checked any source other than its own database of publications.

‘No Rights’

Books published outside Australia do not always appear here for sale with the same bibliographic details that a library has been able to trace. Rights can be sold to another publisher,

and the new ISBN and cover will then be available locally, although it may take a while for the new version to appear on databases.

Traditionally, large publishers in the USA sold their rights to British publishers, who would then be responsible for supplying the book to the Australian and New Zealand markets. With the advent of globalisation in the publishing industry, this practice has been dispensed with in some instances, so that the same ISBN is for sale worldwide.

Although the Australian standard AS/NZS 2807-2000 stipulates that a publisher using the 'No Rights' report should quote the name of the company which does supply the title, this rarely seems to occur. If a library has placed its order directly with the publisher, then library staff will need to do more bibliographic searching, but if the order is with a library supplier, then it should be the supplier's task to track down the title.

5. DELIVERIES AND RETURNS

DELIVERIES

The physical delivery of books to the library's premises is an aspect of the acquisitions process which needs to be as organised and carefully documented as any other stage of the book-buying process.

Parcels delivered by a courier, and requiring a signature as proof of acceptance, will have with them a consignment or delivery note, usually referred to as the con-note. These notes should be kept until the consignment is checked for any missing parcels. If a delivery is for three parcels, but only two arrive, this should be marked clearly on the con-note, signed by the deliverer and the acceptor, and the note kept. If a parcel is later found to be missing, and there is no con-note as proof of delivery, the onus will often be on the accepting library to prove that it did not receive all the parcels and to show why it should not pay for the whole consignment.

Con-notes are also the library's proof of the date of a delivery. This is important to verify when the supplier has stipulated a time limit within which credit will be extended to the customer, and beyond which further supplies will be held back until an account is paid. A late delivery, proven by the date on the con-note, can be the library's proof that payment is not yet due to the supplier, regardless of any date on an invoice.

Staff accepting a delivery should therefore be aware of the importance of keeping the con-notes that the deliverer gives them, despite the extra labour involved.

Books received by mail, or where the deliverer has requested no signature, should be checked as soon as possible for damage. Damaged packing should be kept as proof of the condition of the parcel on receipt. It is not unknown for a

sender to suggest that opening the parcel too roughly has caused the damage, and that no credit will therefore be issued for a ruined book.

When many parcels of differing sizes are likely to remain unopened for some time, due perhaps to staff shortages or holidays, they should be stacked in order of receipt, with multiple box deliveries kept together. Little parcels need to be kept separately, so as not to become lost amongst the larger ones. The reason for taking care in the orderly stacking of deliveries, is that suppliers will still be expecting payment for some of the unopened parcels, and the library will need to be able to find them easily, to check whether they have been received or not.

When a supplier will not extend credit arrangements to give a library a longer time to pay for an unopened shipment, the library may decide to remove only the invoices from a delivery, and to pay them. The books can then be accessioned later, when staff are available. This should only ever be an emergency procedure, as the possibilities for problems created are extensive. For instance, wrong supplies and damaged items become more time consuming to deal with, the older the delivery.

Always try to check that the goods in a delivery actually match the con-note details. A common mistake is for a parcel for one destination to be packed with a wrong con-note and address attached to the outside. Ensure that the invoice has your library's name on it, particularly before starting to stamp any of the books received with it. Only those library suppliers with whom the library has a strong business relationship will sometimes agree to take back these useless, stamped books, and give a credit for them. Publishers will never accept such books back for credit.

RETURNS

Just as a library expects deliveries to be in good order, so too does a source of supply expect any return from a library to be in perfect condition. Books cannot be despatched in simple envelopes, as damage will definitely occur. Even padded bags are not enough protection by themselves. A book should be wrapped in something like firm cardboard, or bubble plastic, making sure that the edges are all protected. The book also needs to be held firmly in the packing, so that it cannot slip. If your parcel could not withstand being dropped from a height of two metres onto a hard surface, and falling on its corner, then it is not packed well enough.

Most courier services do not provide automatic insurance cover for goods in transit. This means that if they lose your parcel, there will be no compensation paid for its missing contents. Other insurance is available to cover such loss, but it is expensive and not normally worth taking out.

If a library is going to return an item which is very expensive, it is worthwhile contacting the supplier to find out if there will be a sales representative in your area, who will take the returned item back to their offices for no charge. Once the item is handed over to the representative in good condition, the library is no longer responsible for any damage which it may suffer on its way back to the source of supply.

Books that are to be returned for credit are disliked by everyone at every stage of the library supply process, including staff of libraries, suppliers and publishers. Disputes over returned materials can ruin a working relationship which is otherwise harmonious. The most common reasons for return of items to the source of supply are:

- Damaged
- Wrongly supplied
- Not suitable as part of a blanket order
- Too expensive

- Library funds have been exhausted, even though the item is wanted
- Content of the item is found to be inferior, unsuitable or aged
- The item has been recalled by the publisher, sometimes for reasons of copyright infringement or scandalous content
- The blurb or jacket used as an ordering guide by the library was misleading so that the content is not what was expected
- Previously cancelled

The best way for libraries to avoid problems with returns is to be precise about the way in which returns will be handled. Having details in writing of the accepted procedure for all parties will save time and aggravation later, if you think returns could become a problem.

A checklist of points to consider in a policy for dealing with returns would address the following matters:

- If freight or a handling charge is levied on the original supply of the book, will this be credited?
- If an item is returned because it is damaged or wrongly supplied, who will pay the return freight charge? Usually it is accepted that the library will pay for return freight if a book is returned for reasons beyond the supplier's control, e.g. the library finds it already has a copy.
- Will a reduced discount apply to all other items ordered in a particular batch because some of them have been returned for credit?
- What is the time limit on the acceptance of returns, even those that are damaged or wrongly supplied?

- If an item is lost or damaged in transit back to the source of supply, who accepts liability? Will the library still be expected to pay for the item as though it had never been returned?
- If a replacement is wanted, will this be sent without charge, so that the original invoice has to be held back until the replacement arrives, or will the supplier issue a credit? In the latter case, does the library have to reorder the item, or will the supplier always automatically resupply whenever a damaged book is returned?
- When there is a dispute about whether damage to an item occurred after receipt at the library, who will be the arbiter?
- When an item is found to be missing from a consignment, and the source of supply insists it was packed, who will be the arbiter?
- Can a credit be in the form of a refund cheque? Occasionally, a source of supply will refuse this request, and say that a credit can only be used against the purchase of new items. On acceptance of a returned item, a supplier should immediately credit the amount charged for it. This may involve a credit note being sent to the library, or the credit may only appear as a line on the library's next statement. When the library will not be placing any further orders, it will then need to request that the credit be in the form of a refund cheque. It is best to seek this refund as soon as possible, since the library's funds will be lost altogether if the source of supply closes down.

A dispute over a returned item can escalate to the point where a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached. The two usual results of this are, firstly, that a library will cancel all outstanding orders and no longer deal with that supplier, and

secondly, that the supplier will refuse to supply any more goods to the library. This is a problem when the supplier is a publisher or sole distributor, and the items it handles cannot be obtained elsewhere.

If there is some damage to an item received by a library, and it can be rectified by a simple repair, a cost-effective alternative to return is to ask the supplier to allow a partial credit because of the damage. The item can then be kept, and time is not lost waiting for resupply and handling all the attendant record-keeping.

6. WHAT IS AN INVOICE? A SURVEY OF THE DOCUMENTS

Acquisitions staff who are responsible for communicating with a library's sources of supply, need to be aware of the function of the various written records involved. The following descriptions of the forms and documents commonly used show how each fits into the process of official communication between sources of supply and libraries. The meaning of the jargon is covered, and suggestions are given for handling these documents in an office, so that they are afforded the level of attention relevant to their importance.

Despite the computerisation of the whole ordering and supply process, much of the communication is still done by paper. Those aspects of the process that are electronic will still use the terminology from the paper days, and accounting information is still sorted into headings based on what used to be separate bits of paper.

THE INVOICE

An invoice is the notification from the supplier of how much a customer owes for its purchases. The date of the invoice is the date the charge was calculated, an important piece of information to know if the supplier has based this charge on a foreign currency conversion.

Your original order number should appear somewhere on the invoice, although this is, unfortunately, not always the case. If an order number must be quoted for your own searching or financial purposes, then it up to the librarian to make this clearly known to a supplier. Be prepared to take appropriate steps if your order number is still consistently missing from invoices.

Always check promptly that the goods shown on the invoice have really been received, and are in good order. Most suppliers stipulate a time limit, after which they will not accept any returns if there is something wrong with the goods. The question of which party is going to pay for the cost of the return is one which should have been settled even before the order was placed.

There is no standard layout for invoices, and it is common to have to hunt all over the document for the various pieces of information it provides. These usually include quantity ordered, quantity supplied, gross price, discount, nett price and extension.

Gross Price

This is the price before a discount has been taken off. Some sources do not show this at all, and will only show a final price to pay. In Australia, the gross price for a normal trade title is usually the same as the RRP.

Nett Price

This is the price after discount, but may not be the final price charged. Look elsewhere on the invoice for additions such as freight, handling charges or small order surcharges.

Extension

This means the nett price multiplied by the number of items supplied.

GST

In Australia, GST (Goods and Services Tax) will be shown on your invoice, unless the source of supply is small enough not to have to be registered for GST purposes. The GST may appear as an addition per item, or it may be added only to the total.

Cost Plus

If a supplier has had to spend an unusual amount of time or expense to acquire an item for you, there may be a surcharge added, either as a percentage amount, or as a flat fee. This can be called a cost plus charge or a service charge.

Small Order Surcharge

Some sources of supply specify that a small order surcharge will apply unless a specified dollar amount, or quantity of books is ordered. If the original order from the library met this requirement, but the source can only supply some of the order, then a library needs to clarify whether the surcharge will still apply.

STATEMENT

Statements are usually compiled monthly, and show a list of all the sales, payments and credits which a library has entered into with a supplier. A statement only shows the current financial status, and is not normally used as a basis for payment.

If you dispute any of the amounts shown on a statement, then request a copy of the relevant invoice or credit note issued, quoting its reference number. Statements need to be checked thoroughly, even if you think your payments are completely up-to-date. For example, a whole delivery can go astray, resulting in a charge being made for which goods have never been received. Any data entry mistakes also have to be found and corrected.

A statement will have a section showing amounts owed over various periods of time, usually ninety, sixty and thirty days. The addition of these three amounts is the total the library owes at the date of the statement. Credits should already have been deducted from these total amounts shown.

Whether libraries pay the grand total, or only the amount shown in one of the ninety, sixty or thirty day totals, depends on the payment terms that have been negotiated with the supplier.

CREDIT NOTE

When an item is returned by a library, or an overcharge is corrected, or something has been charged for that never arrived, then a credit note is usually required.

A credit note is created by the supplier, and is a notification of an invoice amount which the customer is not expected to pay. It should show the invoice number which was incorrect, the amount in error, and, ideally, a description of the goods in question. Accounts clerks commonly use such terms as 'posting' or 'raising' a credit note.

Smaller businesses sometimes choose to avoid all this data entry and paperwork by speedily supplying their customers with the correct or undamaged goods. A library can then pay the original invoice, with no need for a credit note.

If the invoice to which the credit note applies has not yet been paid, then it is a simple matter to subtract the credit amount from the total of the invoice, and pay only the reduced amount.

When the whole invoice has already been paid in full, and a mistake is discerned some time later, then the credited amount has to be taken off some other, later payment. It is prudent to make it clear when paying that the credit being taken applies to a previous invoice and not to the ones being paid. If this is not done, accounting staff at the supplier's end might easily assume that the library has 'short-paid', or reduced the amount being paid for an intact and perfect delivery. Remember that, although your library may only have a few invoices from a supplier at any one time, the supplier may be dealing with hundreds of invoices each month. Making

the exact nature of your payment clear will save everyone's time.

PAYMENTS

A library rarely has the authority to pay directly for its book purchases, so that methods of payment are most often left to the accounts department of its parent organisation.

Payment methods can include cheque, electronic funds transfer or credit card. It is very rare for a library to pay a supplier in cash. If such a request is made, it will be from a small business whose output is minimal.

Some administrations may keep foreign currency bank accounts, so that overseas suppliers of books can be paid in their own currency. The accounting experts in the organisation can then pick the best time, as far as exchange rates are concerned, to add funds to the account, rather than being tied to the vagaries of the money markets at the time an invoice is due to be paid. Where large amounts are involved, the savings can be substantial.

In the general market in Australia, it is usual for a customer to be supplied goods on 'thirty day terms'. This means that the invoice is due for payment thirty days after the month of the invoice, not after its actual date. For example, an invoice dated 1st June is due for payment at the same time as one dated 30th June. Both of these invoices are due for payment on 30th July. There are exceptions to this convention, and the library needs to be very clear about what is expected as far as payment is concerned.

Even though the library itself may not handle payments, acquisitions staff are in a position to negotiate payment terms which are favourable from the accounting department's point of view. When first selecting suppliers, it is the librarian who has the negotiating power to obtain an extension of the payment terms, so that invoices are due for payment over

perhaps sixty instead of thirty days. Librarians will probably be accustomed to making business deals with their suppliers regarding value-added services which lighten the load of library staff, e.g. processing, compiling statistical reports on categories of books supplied. However, it is not common for a librarian to be involved in ensuring that the best possible payment terms are achieved.

Resort to legal action for non-payment is a very rare outcome. However, some suppliers use debt collection services in an attempt to recover payments from libraries, whether for returns not credited, or for outstanding accounts in general.

7. SHELF-READY SERVICES

Library suppliers in Great Britain and the USA have been supplying fully shelf-ready books to libraries for decades. In comparison, up until ten years ago, only a minority of Australian library supply businesses offered the same level of service.

This situation has now changed, and libraries can find numerous businesses promising shelf-ready services, offered mostly as part of the normal book supply operation, or sometimes as a completely separate undertaking. The improvement in the local quality and range of shelf-ready services, and the customer demand for them, have enabled some Australian libraries to dispense with the majority of their processing staff. In these cases, the libraries require shelf-ready services to be supplied, or they cannot place large orders with a supplier.

Depending on the library's accounting requirements, the provider of shelf-ready services can be asked to invoice its processes by including the cost in the final charge for each book or item. Alternatively, the charge for work done can be shown on a separate line, in a completely separate invoice, or by simply providing a charge per batch, with no individual descriptions of work done.

Shelf-ready services involve both cataloguing and making the item physically ready for use.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

The librarian is entitled to ask for a sample of processing to be made available, so that it can be inspected before the library's processing is offered to any outside business.

Preparing an item so that it is physically ready to place on the public shelving of a library involves:

- Plastic covering
- Attachment of pockets, stickers, barcodes and labels
- Ownership identification, such as stamping and security tagging
- Binding
- Laminating
- Making containers for audiovisual items with multi-media inclusions
- Mending

The following points need to be considered when assessing the standard of service offered for physical processing of library materials:

Quality control – what proportion of books covered has bubbles in the plastic covering, or stickers aligned wrongly. Materials used should be of suitable quality, e.g. plastic for covering that is not too thin, and adhesive tape that does not 'weep'.

Staff experience – a high staff turnover will often result in books not being processed to the exact specifications, e.g. stickers placed in the wrong position, or stamps made on the wrong pages.

Qualified supervision – the person in charge of the processing should have qualifications or lengthy experience in processing suitable for libraries.

Security of stock – if a library is sending items out to be processed, then it should first investigate what redress or compensation might be available if its property is damaged or lost.

CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION

The range of cataloguing and classification services that is offered for sale to libraries includes:

- Original cataloguing
- Copy cataloguing
- Creating and altering database records, such as those for Kinetica, or the library's own computer system
- Producing catalogue cards
- MARC record creation for foreign language holdings, including transliteration

The various steps involved in cataloguing and adding records to databases can be charged for in a variety of ways, so that making cost comparisons is not always straightforward. When selecting a cataloguing service, and comparing costings, there is more to the final cost to the library than just the amounts quoted on a price list.

Some businesses will charge separately for each Kinetica search, for adding holdings or for altering records. Alternatively, a single charge might be levied, which includes all searching and addition of holdings. The library should also check on what basis a charge is levied when there are multiple copies involved.

Original cataloguing will be the most expensive service offered, but the numbers of items requiring this treatment will be small in most libraries, because of the many databases from which a cataloguing record can be obtained. Where a business charges a high original cataloguing charge, but a low rate for copy cataloguing, or vice versa, the final cost to the library will depend on the proportion of books that will fall into each category, not just the charge per item.

A library should also check whether a quote for cataloguing includes a factor for the various on-line charges which will be incurred, or if the cataloguing service will require the library's

own password to be used. In the latter case, the library would be responsible for paying the on-line fees, and an allowance for this extra cost will need to be made when looking at the prices quoted for cataloguing.

8. THOSE ‘LITTLE EXTRAS’

DISPLAYS AND PROMOTIONS

Library displays and promotions can be greatly enhanced by a range of free material which is available from the publishing and bookselling industries.

Library suppliers and publishers can often provide book jackets, posters, banners and promotional gadgetry. Booksellers and library supply specialists may offer to gather together these materials for a particular subject request, at no charge. However, since this takes up valuable staff time, the requester will be expected to be a customer.

Publishers produce large quantities of promotional material, which is of no use to them once the promotion is finished. Libraries will rarely be given current promotional material, but can request that some of the older items be donated to them, although this may mean personal collection, or paying for freight.

Talks by authors can be arranged by either publishers, booksellers or library suppliers. A library can request a visit from a particular author, or could ask which authors are interested in coming to the library to give a talk. When making these arrangements, be very clear about whether any payment will be involved, and about exactly what the library is expected to provide. Although there may be no fee for the author, the library might be asked to arrange local publicity, security for the meeting, refreshments and general supervision of the whole affair.

Some of the library's sources of supply will be pleased to offer free books to be used as prizes for library competitions. In return, they will want their business name mentioned in any publicity which the library produces, and perhaps noted as the

donor somewhere inside the book being given as a prize. When requesting donations for this purpose, it is best to enquire what titles will be offered, to avoid having to send them back if they are unsuitable.

COMPILING STATISTICS

Some of the statistical information which sources of supply may provide at no extra charge includes:

- International and local statistics on publishing quantities and prices, divided into categories, such as academic, junior, fiction, paperbacks, etc.
- Figures on the library's individual purchasing patterns, such as quantities and expenditure in specified categories.
- Expenditure to date, with the aim of avoiding overcommitment by the library.

These statistics are useful when compiling budget estimates, when deciding whether a move towards more paperback ordering is warranted, and for keeping track of the general acquisitions workflow.

Not all sources of supply will be capable of compiling all of the statistical data mentioned. Some may have the raw figures, but not be prepared to put staff time into assembling and disseminating them. Libraries wanting statistics about their own ordering and purchasing should make this known as early as possible. The production of such a statistical report might involve coding input data, so that any information without such a code could get left out of the report.

URGENT ORDERS

Library suppliers usually have a standard procedure for handling requests from libraries for an order to be treated with urgency. The steps they take will probably include some, or all, of the following:

- Placing the order individually with the publisher, rather than waiting to send it with their next batch of orders.
- Contacting the publisher immediately to find out the stock availability, rather than waiting for a batch report to be returned to them.
- If the item is out-of-stock, making frequent contact with the publisher to ensure it is sent as soon as it is available.
- Arranging for air freighting the item from overseas if necessary.
- Picking the urgently ordered item out of deliveries, and speeding its progress through invoicing.
- Packing and sending the item singly, rather than waiting to include it in the next standard delivery to the library.
- Clearly marking any urgent delivery, so that it is not left unpacked at its destination.
- Arranging air freighting to the library if requested.

All of these procedures are labour intensive, and an urgent order charge will probably be levied for them. The expected discount for the item may also be reduced, and any unusual freight costs will be charged as well.

If a library asks a publisher to supply an item urgently, some will consider this an automatic request for air freighting. The library should check whether this is the case before placing such an urgent order.

If the library's order is for multiple copies of the same item, then the urgent order charge should not be multiplied by the number of copies, since this would not be a true reflection of the extra labour undertaken. The exception to this would be when copies had to be obtained from different distribution points, because there were not enough in stock at any one warehouse to fill the order.

Some sources of supply will go to great lengths to obtain an urgent order for their customer, even involving personally collecting the item from a publisher, and then hand-delivering it to the library immediately. The invoicing is then left to a later date, so as not to delay the supply.

GLOSSARY

The following meanings refer to the usage of the word or phrase in the context of the supply to libraries of books and other resources. Where a term has been explained at length elsewhere in this book, it is not included in the glossary, and a search of the index is recommended.

***Academic
Titles***

Books which will be used for courses at educational institutions. Also refers to books produced for scholarly purposes, or for use in business or trade operations.

***Account
Number***

A library has an account with a source of supply when its details have been recorded, and it has been established as a customer. An account number is always produced by the larger sources of supply. This number should be quoted in all dealings.

Backorder

A word used as both a noun and a verb. When an item is not immediately available, the process of making a record of the order, so that it can be supplied later, is called backordering. The items in question are called backorders.

***Bibliographic
Search***

A search made for the publishing details of an item, e.g. publisher, date, price, etc. In the book-trade, this term can also refer to a

search for the address of a publisher or distributor, and for the best source from which to order an item, with regard to price or some other relevant factor.

Blurb

A short description of the contents of a publication, often appearing on the jacket, the back page or in an advertising flyer. Non-critical and positive, the blurb is designed to encourage sales.

Booksellers

In the general market, this term simply refers to any person or entity selling books. However, for the library market, a bookseller means a person or entity offering a variety of books, or other library resources, at discounted prices. Library booksellers will not usually require cash payments.

Book-Trade

The industry concerned with the sale of new and old books. Includes wholesalers, distributors, retailers, library suppliers and publishers who engage in marketing.

Closed Market Agreement

It has been traditional for many publishers in the USA to dispense with selling their books in the Australian arena. Instead, they offer the right to do this to another publisher, based usually in England. This produces a closed market, since Australian consumers can only buy the book

from the English source. Conversely, the English publisher will not be permitted to sell its book in any market claimed by the American publisher of the same title.

Con-Note

An abbreviation of 'consignment note'. A con-note is a document produced by the freight or courier business making a delivery. A copy is usually left with the parcel being delivered. It shows details about the method, size, etc. of the delivery.

Conversion Rates

Figures showing the value of the Australian dollar against other countries' currencies. These figures are subject to frequent change, and are available from a number of financial institutions. The changing conversion rates mean that a book purchased from a source outside Australia can cost varying amounts in Australian dollars, depending on the conversion rate at the time of purchase.

Creditor

A library's creditors are those bodies to whom it owes money for the supply of its resources.

Debtor

A library's debtors are those bodies which owe it money for the supply of services or goods. A library which owes a publisher money becomes that publisher's

debtor. It is important to know whether the library is a debtor or creditor, as large organisations frequently ask which you are, before transferring a telephone call about an accounts query.

Discount

A percentage, or dollar amount which is deducted from the retail price. Discounts are usually offered for bulk purchases, but they can also be used for small purchases when the source of supply is seeking to encourage new business.

Distributor

A distributor stocks books from one or a number of publishers. They do not offer a retail facility, but they may have a showroom from which selections for orders can be made.

EDI

Electronic Data Interchange. Refers to the exchange of data between computers.

Flyer

A single sheet of paper, or a pamphlet, used to help sell a publication. A flyer can also be sent as an electronic message.

GST

Goods and Services Tax. For book sales within Australia, a GST applies. This will be shown on the invoice, except where the business selling goods is very small, and not required to be registered for GST purposes. GST

is also applied to any surcharges and freight.

Indenting

The practice of importing books into Australia, for supply to a library, is what librarians refer to as indenting. Buying the same book from a locally based supplier is not indenting.

ISBN

The ISBN is currently a ten-digit book code which refers to the country of publication, the publisher and the individual publication. At the end of the code is a check digit. When this last number equals ten, an 'X' appears instead. A book's ISBN is usually located on the verso of the title page, and on the back cover. A book without an ISBN printed in it may still have one listed by the ISBN agency of the country in which it was published. In January 2005, the ISBN will become a thirteen-digit number.

ISSN

The ISSN is an eight-digit code for serial publications. Some serial publications which appear annually, or irregularly, and which have an ISSN, can be ordered through a library's normal sources of supply for books.

Jacket

When referring to bookbindings, this term means only the loose, wrap-around cover used for hardback books. However, people

selling books also use this word to refer to the printed cardboard cover of a paperback book, and to photocopies of book covers, both of which are used as selling tools.

Library-Binding

Some publishers produce a small number of titles in a library-bound edition. This means that the binding has extra reinforcing to ensure longer shelf life. Used mainly for children's books, library-bindings cost extra and are quickly sold out. Library-bound books coming directly from a publisher have a different ISBN from any other edition of the same title.

Library Consortium

A group of libraries which decides to place orders for resources from a central ordering point, with the aim of achieving higher discounts for its purchases. A library consortium also aims to reduce costs to each of its members, by economising on office procedures connected with acquisitions.

Library Supplier

A business selling books and other resources to libraries. Library suppliers offer their customers various services, which other end-users would not normally require.

Marking-up, Marking-down

Increasing or decreasing the RRP when offering an item for sale. This is not the same as applying a

discount, or adding a surcharge.

Net Book Agreement

In England, the Net Book Agreement meant that publishers set a retail price for their books, and insisted that this price was maintained at all points of sale. Since discounting was not encouraged, sellers of books to libraries competed by offering extra services, rather than higher discounts. The Net Book Agreement is no longer in force in England.

Order Number

An order number may contain both numbers and letters. It is a reference code which accompanies an order placed by a library. It is used to trace what is happening to that particular order. A source of supply may sometimes generate its own order numbers for incoming orders.

Print-Run

The number of books produced at any one printing is called the print-run. If there is a reprint, the print-run will not necessarily be for the same quantity.

Publisher

The person or business entity which causes a book, or other similar resource, to be made available in quantity to the public, either by sale or otherwise. An author or printer is not the publisher, unless they also perform these other functions.

<i>Remainder</i>	A word used as both a noun and a verb. Remainders are books which have been sold by their publishers at vastly reduced prices. They are usually either the last few copies left, or are old stock which is no longer in high demand. In the book-trade, staff who have been made redundant are often sarcastically referred to as having been remaindered.
<i>Retailer</i>	A retailer sells to the public from a shop, market stall or similar public premises.
<i>Rights</i>	If a publisher sells a book's rights to another publisher, it is selling the right to produce, sell and profit from that book, in a specified market area. This does not mean that it is selling the original copyright.
<i>RRP</i>	Recommended Retail Price. In Australia, this price is set by the publisher, but is a guide only, and not a mandatory price for sale.
<i>Small Order Surcharge</i>	An extra charge appearing on an invoice. Some sources of supply will levy this charge unless the original order met a specified quantity or dollar amount.
<i>Surcharge</i>	An amount appearing on an invoice for some service, or as a penalty, e.g. small order surcharge.

Tender Document

A document in which a source of supply is required to detail the services, discounts and pricing structures it will offer to a library for the supply of goods. The library, or its administrative body, then selects the businesses it deems most appropriate, based on the offers they have made in the tender document.

Terms (30, 60 and 90 days)

The length of time between the date an invoice is issued and the date by which payment is expected.

Trade Titles

Non-academic books produced for the general consumer.

Wholesaler

A wholesaler sells books in sizeable quantities only, and offers discounts. They do not sell from a retail space, but may have a showroom where selections are made and then supplied from the warehouse.

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