

# Growing an Electronic Journals Collection: The Experience of One Library

Over the past few years, electronic journals have quickly become one of the most popular resources provided by the UT Southwestern Medical Center Library. Beginning in 1998, the Library acquired its first individual ejournal, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, and its first ejournal collection, the Ovid Core Biomedical Collection. Today, the Library provides access to more than 3000 electronic journals. This overwhelming growth has stimulated necessary changes in staff activities to support the acquisition, delivery, and maintenance of electronic journals as well as changes in client use of information resources.

## Changes Experienced

### Acquisitions:

- Use multiple journal vendors, including publishers and aggregators
- Order electronic access directly from publisher for electronic-only subscriptions (e.g., Elsevier)
- Develop closer relationships with UT System libraries through consortial purchases
- Develop new relationships with the campus Office of Contracts Management to facilitate routine and enhanced licenses
- Respond to an increased number of client requests and recommendations for electronic access
- Expand client interactions, offering "how-to" and troubleshooting support

### Website Development:

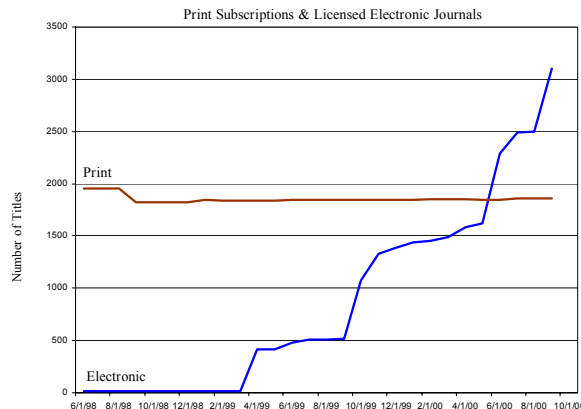
- Develop SQL database to improve access to a growing collection of electronic journals
- Move from static-page approach to dynamic-page approach to manage electronic journals more efficiently by using dynamic pages
- Add two staff members to support the electronic journals database

### Print Collection Use:

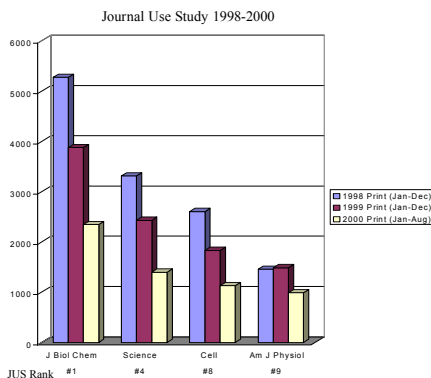
- Large, sustained decrease in usage noted in 1998
- Continued decrease or stable use of currently received journals for 1999-2000

### Security Issues:

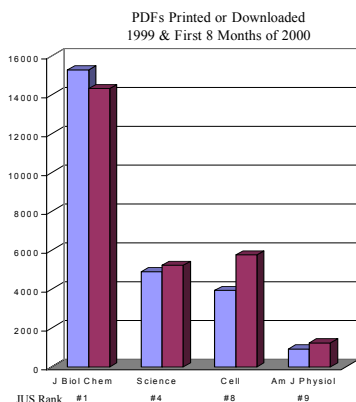
- Ongoing need to restrict single usernames and passwords to affiliated users
- Implementation of Virtual Private Networking as campus solution for remote access by affiliated users



While the number of print titles in the Library's collection remains stable, the number of electronic journals continues to rapidly increase.



Since 1985, the Library has tracked print usage based on the number of times a title is reshelved. Since 1998, print usage has decreased for *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, *Science*, *Cell*, and *American Journal of Physiology* more than 50%.



Statistics available from HighWire Press and Cell Press show electronic usage for the same four titles in 1999 and the first eight months of 2000. Except for *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, electronic usage for January through August 2000 already exceeds usage for the entire previous year. Although overall usage has decreased for currently received print journals, electronic usage has more than compensated for the decrease.

## Ongoing Concerns For The Future

- Growing demand
- Gathering, managing, and utilizing reliable usage data
- Need for heightened client awareness of the full range of electronic resources the Library provides
- Increased technology costs for Library and clients to support electronic collection
- Need for easier, seamless access to disparate, disjointed resources
- Staff "retooling" to support/rely on a primarily electronic collection
- Long-term impact of free repositories, web archives, and new distribution mediums (e.g., PubMed Central, Chemistry PrePrint Server)
- Electronic archival access may not provide complete coverage of the paper version
- Eliminating paper journals in favor of electronic only

*"I use the library more  
but am physically in it less."  
(Quote from focus group)*

## Individual Client Comments

- Saves time and effort
- Solves the frustrating problem of paper journals missing from shelves
- Remote access allows me to locate information when it's most convenient for me
- No longer need to keep reprint collection; can easily look up articles as needed
- No longer need to photocopy articles for students; simply supply the URLs
- Cancelled personal subscriptions and rely upon the electronic
- Library should give up the paper subscriptions; electronic version is fine

## Client Focus Group Themes (2000)

- Deliver as many services and resources online as possible
- Supply more full-text journals online with full remote access
- Ejournals recognized as one of the Library's most visible, desired services