

**EDI Pilot Project Steering Committee
Final Report and Recommendations
Memorial University Libraries
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The Context

Before 2006 the University Library received about 180,000 paper slips annually from six different approval vendors: Coutts, Blackwell, YBP/Lindsay & Croft, Harrassowitz, Touzot, and Casalini Libri. Collections staff manually sorted about 15,000 slips each month. Born-digital data was printed out by vendors and shuffled around through snail mail, slowing down the process of receiving slips and sharing them with faculty. One of the worst inefficiencies was the need for Acquisitions staff to re-key data about nine different times during processing.

A Brief Overview

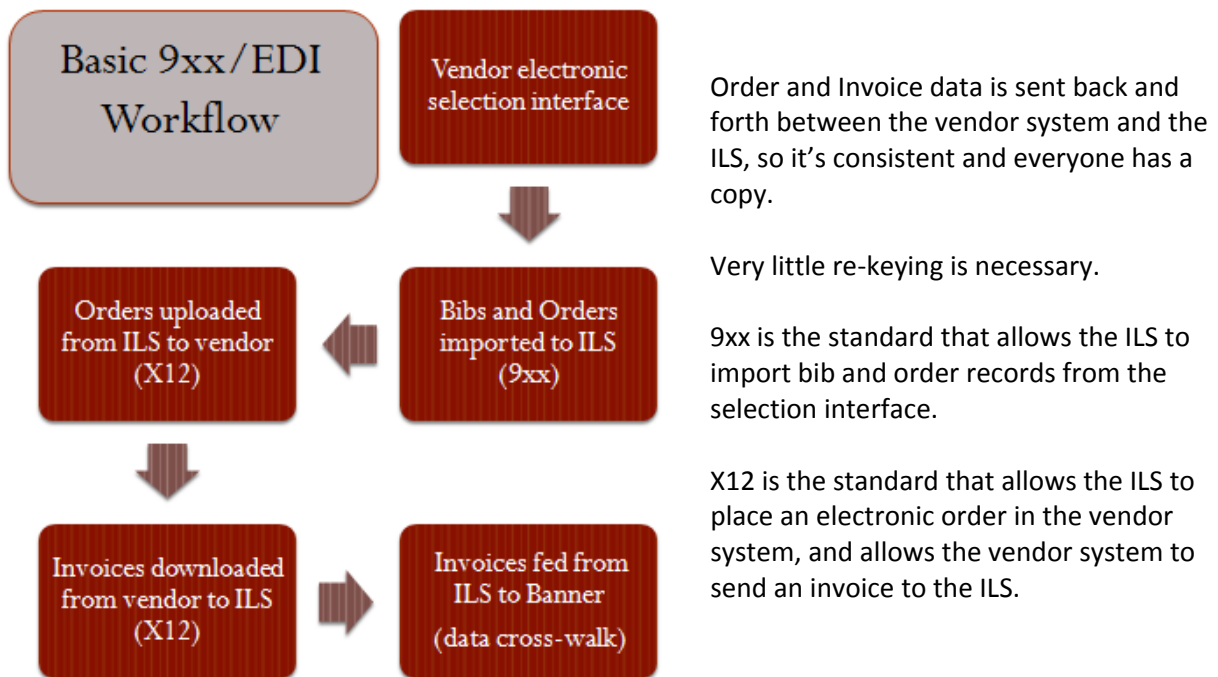
In May 2006 a steering committee was struck to determine how to move Selection & Acquisitions processes into an electronic environment. Desired goals were increased efficiencies in Acquisitions, and the ability to feed invoices directly into Banner bypassing Library Administration. We were additionally motivated by vendor warnings that paper slips would eventually be discontinued.

By mid-2007 we had successfully implemented electronic slips and 9xx/EDI ordering with our three major vendors, two of whom had never worked with a SirsiDynix customer before. By the beginning of fiscal year 2008 the Collections and Acquisitions units had restructured all of the QEII monograph funds to improve our ability to parse information into Banner. In late 2007 the EDI committee began to explore WorldCat Selection, which was implemented in 2008. This system includes slips from our three major vendors, as well as our smaller specialty vendors. It took almost a year to get all of the vendors properly configured and working to our satisfaction. Memorial was the first Canadian university to adopt WorldCat Selection, which provided us an opportunity to help OCLC shape and refine the system.

EDI Steering Committee members have mastered four different selection and acquisition interfaces, and have trained Collections Librarians and Acquisitions staff in their use. The committee has automated and refined the paper workflow for maximum efficiency in the electronic environment, and in doing so we have developed a series of recommendations for new practices that can be found at the end of this report. Committee members have researched every aspect of electronic collections and acquisitions, worked closely with eight different vendors, followed developments in the professional literature, and conferred with colleagues from across North America on the matters of electronic selection and acquisitions.

Our Acquisitions staff, Theresa Antle and Christine Doody, have become the listserv “go-to” people for other SirsiDynix libraries struggling to implement EDI. They had an opportunity to share their expertise in a presentation at the 2009 SirsiDynix Superconference. This was the first time that Memorial Library staffers have ever presented at a major library conference. Dianne Keeping has mastered almost every detail of WorldCat Selection, and was an invited speaker at the OCLC panel session for the 2008 Charleston Conference. Dianne Keeping and Lisa Goddard co-presented on EDI and WorldCat Selection at Charleston 2008, and at the 2009 Atlantic Provinces Library Association conference. Lisa also presented on Unicorn EDI implementation at the 2007 SirsiDynix Superconference.

What is Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)?



Advantages of Electronic Selection and Acquisition

We discovered that electronic slips have several advantages for Collections Librarians:

- Prompt arrival of new title notifications
- Easier to manage interdisciplinary subject areas
- More information to aid with selection
- Identifies titles that have already been selected for purchase with that vendor
- Provides an electronic record of purchases
- Allows 24/7 accessibility on and off campus
- Access to the full vendor database allows for retrospective selection projects & collection development in new areas that are not covered by the slip profile
- Saved searches and notification settings can easily be adjusted to meet changing needs and interests

We also concluded that 9xx/EDI processing helps to eliminate repetitive manual tasks and redundant keying in the acquisitions workflow. See **Appendix A & Appendix B** to compare the workflows for paper and electronic acquisitions.

Acquisitions Paper Workflow	Acquisitions EDI Workflow
Manual sorting of 15,000 slips each month.	Sorting/filtering done by selection interface.
Duplicate titles searched in Unicorn	Duplicate titles identified using resolver link
Copy searched in OCLC or created manually	Skeletal records provided, full MARC copy available free when using WorldCat Selection or Coutts.
Orders keyed into Unicorn	Orders loaded into ILS automatically
Orders searched and placed in vendor system	Orders are placed with vendor automatically
Invoices keyed into Unicorn	Invoices loaded into ILS automatically
Invoices keyed into Banner	Potentially, invoices can be automatically extracted for Banner feed

Disadvantages of Working with Multiple Vendors

There are significant difficulties with managing electronic selection in a multivendor environment:

- Collections Librarians & Acquisitions staff require training in several different interfaces
- Multiple workflows have to be managed
- Each vendor system has to be monitored for new notices and new selections
- Electronic slips from multiple vendors cannot be “de-duped”
- Communicating with faculty is cumbersome across multiple interfaces
- Acquisitions must run over 40 different ILS reports to import data. Acquisitions run 3 reports per order/vendor/currency. The remaining X12 reports are scheduled to run nightly.
- It would be more work to establish & maintain shelf-ready books and full MARC record services
- Very difficult to establish approval plans

See **Appendix C** for a diagram of EDI workflow using multiple vendor interfaces.

The easiest way to implement full electronic selection and EDI is to simply use one vendor for all selection and ordering. However, the simple and easy option is not necessarily the best option for building and maintaining the highest quality collection possible to support the instruction and research priorities of Memorial University. Subject coverage, pricing, discounts, format and language availability, and the speed and quality of service can vary across vendors, so it is important to maintain good business relationships with several vendors, particularly specialty vendors, to ensure a consistent supply of the types of resources that are required for the Library.

A streamlined acquisitions workflow that restricts or impedes collection development efforts would be counterproductive if it diminishes the quality of the services and collections in any part of the Library.

However, it is just as counterproductive for Librarians and Library support staff to waste their time sifting through thousands of useless vendor slips. In 2006/2007 Memorial University Library system received 176,985 slips from our three main vendors (Coutts, YBP & Blackwell), but only 7% of those notices resulted in orders. This means that 93% of the slips received were not appropriate to our needs or were duplicate title notices. Intra-vendor duplication (e.g. duplicate slips sent by a single vendor due to interdisciplinary subject profiles or differences in currency and format) is estimated to be between 19-30%. Inter-vendor duplication (notices for the same titles sent by two or more vendors) is very difficult to determine, but, based on the data available from two of our three main vendors, the best estimate is about a 60% duplication rate between our main vendor profiles. This suggests that about 40% of the titles were not duplicates. What were these “unique” titles, how important were they, were they available for purchase elsewhere and would Collections Librarians have known about the publication if the slip had not been generated by the vendor profile?

It is obvious that the slip profiles – paper and electronic - should be managed better to maximize the strengths of each vendor. This led us to investigate electronic slip management systems that will automatically sort and filter duplicate slips from multiple vendors.

WorldCat Selection

In December 2006 OCLC introduced the WorldCat Selection (WCS) service which attempted to address some of the problems that academic libraries working in a multivendor environment have encountered. The system:

- Allows selectors to view electronic slips from multiple vendors in a single interface
- Allows selectors using the service to see their colleagues’ selection decisions which reduces the risk of accidental duplication of orders
- Provides OCLC MARC records to be loaded into the ILS at the point of order which eliminates the need to rekey and import records from multiple sources
- Indicates whether the Library’s holding symbol is already linked to the title in the WorldCat database
- Includes an option for automatic removal of duplicate title notices across vendors

Although there was initial reluctance among vendors to get involved, many of the prominent academic suppliers have since signed on as WorldCat Selection partners. Coutts, Blackwell Book Service, Harrassowitz, Touzot, YBP/Lindsay & Croft, Casalini Libri, Aux Amateurs de Livres International, China National Publications Import & Export Corporation (CNPIEC), East View Information Services, Erasmus Boekhandel BV, Howard Karno Books, Leila Books, Librairie Erasmus, and Library of Congress are now active partners. China International Book Trading Corporation (CIBTC), D.K. Agencies, Susan Bach Books will be participating soon and OCLC is continually working to add more vendors to the service.

Given our ongoing requirement to work with multiple vendors and the need to make the transition from paper slips to electronic selection, the EDI Team and the Collection Development Division, after consultation with OCLC and a product demonstration, agreed to subscribe to the WCS service to determine whether it could be used as the Library’s primary electronic selection interface.

Current State of Affairs

Coutts (OASIS), YBP (GOBI) and Blackwell (Collection Manager) are completely configured for electronic selection and EDI orders. The electronic versions of the paper slip notices from these vendors are accessible in each of these databases. Titles that are available from the vendor but not covered by the Library's slip approval plan can also be searched and ordered in the vendor's database. Librarians at the QEII branch are able to make selections in each of these interfaces and Acquisitions staff members are able to log in, manually check the selections against current library holdings, and create orders with the vendor.

Due to SirsiDynix Symphony's lack of support for the EDIFACT standard, our European vendors -- Harrassowitz, Touzot and Casalini Libri -- are not yet set up for automated ordering and invoicing. However, the electronic slips from these vendors are being distributed in WCS, so librarians can select titles electronically and Acquisitions staff can use 9xx to receive the requests and place the orders with minimal re-keying. Harrassowitz discontinued their paper slip service in January 2009, so the timing of our WCS implementation was surprisingly fortuitous. The remaining vendors will undoubtedly follow Harrassowitz's paperless example within the next few years, but the Library is well positioned to deal with this eventuality with minimal disruption to the flow of new title information.

WCS has been configured to distribute title notices generated by the slip profiles on file with all six of the Library's approval vendors. Implementation of the service was delayed for a few months when it was discovered that the WCS acquisitions features and the SirsiDynix acquisitions module could not accommodate the Acquisition unit's requirement to check selections against current library holdings before placing orders. A work-around solution requiring Collections Librarians to forward their selections to Acquisitions within WCS was eventually implemented and has been working reasonably well, although it would be better if *selectors* could actually *select* in the system. If Symphony had more functionality and generated more user friendly reports, then WCS could be set up to automatically export the selections to an ftp site and Acquisitions staff would not have to log into WCS at all.

QEII selectors have been provided with logins and with training opportunities and all full-time Collection Development Librarians have participated in at least one training session. As of this date, more than 1300 orders have been created from selections made in WCS. OCLC supplies the most complete catalogue record that is available for these titles at the time of order, so "on order" items can be easily searched in the catalogue and very little has to be done to update the record when the book arrives in the Library.

Acquisitions staff feel that WCS would work better if sorting could be done by fund as found in other vendor interfaces. OCLC has indicated that they will work on this enhancement. Maneuverability within the site also remains a problem for Acquisitions, however there are various work-arounds that have been instituted to help correct this. OCLC does admit to known problems with speed in the acquisitions interface, and assures us that these enhancements are on their development roadmap. Despite the fact that they are not using the system exactly as OCLC had envisioned, our Acquisitions staff are still relatively happy with WCS and do see time savings in processing orders in this system.

WCS has received very mixed reactions from Collections Librarians. Some love it, some hate it. Comments have ranged from, “I am really enjoying working with WCS...” and “I think I could use it for ever and ever (with some changes)...” to “[it is] cumbersome to use and much less efficient than if I had been sorting through paper slips,” and “I’m fit to be tied!” Those who like it readily acknowledge that improvements are needed, but are willing to accept that there are going to be some technical glitches in a new product that will, hopefully, get better in time. The biggest complaints that Collections Librarians have had about WCS:

- The system is too slow and there are frequent server errors that will unexpectedly terminate sessions
- It does not have a built in feature for quickly and easily sharing title notices with faculty
- The volume of slips is more unmanageable in an electronic environment than it was in paper

The first two issues must be addressed by OCLC, who are constantly working on speed issues, and who have committed to delivering the faculty communications feature in their November 2009 release. The third complaint, however, can only be addressed locally with profile revision, which is currently underway, and by agreeing on vendor priorities so the WCS system’s automatic de-duping feature can be set up.

The problems with WCS have undoubtedly been a deterrent to QEII Librarians adopting WCS as their primary electronic vendor interface. While it is convenient to have all of your new title notices in one place, WCS does not have the functionality and the value added features that are available in OASIS, GOBI or Collection Manager. Correspondence with some of the other WCS libraries suggests a level of consensus that WCS tends to be used more as a supplement to the library’s principal vendor systems.

Katherine Farrell wrote:

At Princeton, some of our selectors use it [WCS] as a primary tool, especially those selectors whose area of responsibility requires buying from a number of different countries, and in various languages. Some of our selectors use it in conjunction with a vendor online system, typically because the vendor system, in conjunction with a book approval plan, provides context that WorldCat Selection cannot provide (2009, June, 10. Re: How does your library use it? Message posted to OCLC-WorldCat-Selection-L discussion forum).

Valerie Fortin from McGill University wrote:

We actually encourage our librarians to go back into GOBI for Yankee Book Peddler and OASIS for Coutts, our two major vendors, to do actual ordering as they have more robust systems. Some liaisons have “turned off” YBP and Coutts in WorldCat Selection, but that is an individual decision (personal communication, June 10, 2009).

Marie Munns at the University of California San Diego wrote:

When we first considered WCS, we planned to use with our main approval vendor (YBP). However we quickly realized that YBP’s database (GOBI) was more flexible and had more

options (searching, folders, etc.) than WCS and we would actually lose functionality by moving our slips to WCS.

WCS works well for our foreign language selections (Harrassowitz, Touzot, and Casalini) because it's easier for our collection managers to review the titles in one location (personal communication, June 5, 2009)

Caryl Ward at SUNY Binghamton wrote:

Right now our main vendor is YBP and the bibliographers are comfortable working in GOBI, so for most of them WCS is now a supplement to GOBI (personal communication, June 1, 2009).

From the perspective of Acquisitions workflow, the simplest and most efficient approach would be for all ordering to be done through WCS without exception. For many reasons, however, WCS cannot be used as the sole selection interface. WCS is a tool for managing new title notification slips from multiple vendors. It cannot be used for retrospective collections work and it cannot be used to submit orders for items that were not included on the vendor profiles. For these types of activities, Collections Librarians need to be able to submit order requests in at least one additional vendor system. It is also important that selectors have the option of providing the Acquisitions Unit with printouts or electronic files with bibliographic data from resources such as Global Books in Print, AbeBooks, or online catalogues, which sometimes list titles that are not available from the main approval vendors.

Librarians and Acquisitions staff at Memorial University are now working in multiple electronic interfaces. Many selectors are supplementing their electronic requests with paper slips, and some selectors are still completely reliant on paper slips. The current situation is unsustainable from the perspective of both Acquisitions and Collections. Working with multiple vendor interfaces as well as paper slips creates a ridiculously complicated workflow for Acquisitions, while selectors are bombarded with unmanageable numbers of slips, most of which will not result in orders. The following recommendations are intended to help streamline and simplify the existing EDI workflow.

Recommendations

1. That the Collections Division set a date (e.g. January 2011) to discontinue the distribution of all paper vendor slips to subject selectors (Harrassowitz ceased paper slips in 2009; YBP will discontinue their paper slips in January 2010).
2. That new Collections Librarians starting in any of the branches before this set date for terminating all paper slips will not use any paper slips for their selecting.
3. That the Collections Division, in consultation with the branches, and with the head of Acquisitions, should designate one of the major approval vendors (Blackwell, Coutts, or YBP) as the Library's primary or "preferred" vendor interface. Collections Librarians will then have the option of using any of the six vendors in WCS or the preferred vendor, or some combination thereof, for making electronic selections.

4. That QEII, HSL, & Marine should all agree to use the same preferred vendor. [Grenfell is an exception, as discussed at the beginning of the following section “Outstanding Questions”].
5. That HSL & Marine selectors establish slip profiles once a preferred vendor has been chosen. These slips would also be made available through WCS, allowing these two branches to fully participate in 9xx/EDI ordering, explore approval plans, etc.
6. That the Library’s designated vendor priorities should be set in WCS so the system’s de-duping feature can automatically reduce the volume of redundant slips being distributed to selector inboxes.
7. That Collections Librarians keep their individual login accounts to CM, GOBI and OASIS for discovery purposes, for compiling lists of titles, and for administrative purposes like tweaking profiles and viewing vendor reports. The native interfaces of our lower priority vendors should, however, no longer be used for submitting electronic selections.
8. That Acquisitions staff will check for new electronic selections in two systems only (WCS and the preferred vendor interface).
9. That Collections Librarians retain the option of submitting bibliographic information to acquisitions staff from collection development resources such as Global Books in Print, AbeBooks, or other online catalogues, for titles that are not listed in either WCS or the preferred vendor database. This will include non-book items such as dvds, cds, scores, maps, etc, which are often not listed in OASIS, GOBI or CM and are not included on our slip approval profiles.

Paper print-outs will still be accepted from the above sources, and an online form will also be developed to allow selectors to place these types of requests electronically.

10. That the Collections Division and Acquisitions unit develop and standardize procedures for dealing with RUSH or Priority requests. This will include the creation of an online form through which selectors will submit RUSH requests.
11. That all Collections Librarians who currently have vendor slip profiles for their subject areas significantly adjust these profiles to take better advantage of the strengths of each vendor, to reduce duplication, and to bring slip volume to a more manageable level.
12. That Collections Librarians who require feedback from faculty should use the notification features in either the preferred vendor system; the communication features in WCS (when available); or, the social networking options in sites such as WorldCat.org, Global BIP 2.0, Google, or Microsoft OneNote. Each Librarian will have to instruct their faculty representative in how to use these feedback features. The Collections Division might eventually consider standardizing electronic feedback procedures.
13. The Acquisitions workflow is extremely cumbersome due to the need to check every ordered title to ensure that any duplicate purchases are intentional. Tighter slip profiles would be a very good start to prevent duplication of orders across vendors. Diminishing the number of vendor interfaces used would also help. The reclamation will allow selectors to

- remove titles from their inbox that match the current MUN holdings in WorldCat. Several additional solutions are to be investigated, including: the use of JTACQ software for streamlining the title checking process prior to importing records; use of the resolver to check the catalogue before the order is placed by the selector; and the SirsiDynix cataloguing review file and *Review Bibliographic Records Report*. Ideally we will develop best practices that bring unintentional duplicate orders down to a small enough percentage that they can simply be absorbed without human intervention.
14. That the Library should proceed with the OCLC Reclamation project and with nightly updates to OCLC, which will improve our ability to filter WCS slips for titles that are already owned. Assuming that our OCLC updates, which include ON ORDER records, are sent nightly after the Reclamation, we will be as close as is currently possible to real-time reflection of holdings.
 15. That BCS investigate purchase of full copy where it is not already free, possibly via OCLC's WorldCat Partners program. (Note that use of WCS already yields full copy at no additional charge.)
 16. That selectors begin to investigate the viability of book approval plans for certain subject areas with our preferred vendor.
 17. That the Library should investigate the possibility of acquiring shelf-ready books from our preferred vendor. (Grenfell would be a good site for a shelf-ready pilot project.)
 18. That the Systems Office and Acquisitions work with SirsiDynix and our various monograph vendors to try to improve the proportion of invoices that load into the ILS without error. Invoices are loading successfully only about half the time. The problem here lies partially with Sirsi's acquisitions module, which has a number of known issues in the EDI implementation, and partly with the invoices that we receive from each vendor, each of which are slightly different, and all of which are prone to occasional errors. It is hoped that a few Sirsi Patch clusters and an upgrade will help to clear up this problem, but it should receive some immediate attention so the problem can be properly defined.

Outstanding Questions

1. WCS and the Branches

At this point there is still some uncertainty about how the integration of the branch libraries will affect the distribution and selection of titles in WCS, especially when the automatic de-duping option is activated. Given the overlapping collecting efforts of the Ferriss Hodgett branch and the QEII branch, it is quite possible that there will be problems with slip distribution in WCS. It is therefore recommended that the Collections Librarians at the Ferriss Hodgett branch should not use WCS. The Librarians at this branch have not typically used vendor slips from multiple vendors in the past, and, with Grenfell being a small undergraduate liberal arts and science college, there really is no reason to do so.

Although the decision should ultimately be left to them, the Ferriss Hodgett branch would undoubtedly be best served by Coutts. This vendor has broad coverage of North American - especially Canadian - and European publishers; Coutts slips have traditionally been used by the Librarians at this branch to make most of their selection decisions; the Librarians recently made substantial revisions to the Coutts profile for the Grenfell College Library; and each of the Librarians at the branch already have OASIS accounts. It makes the most sense for them to continue with this vendor and simply make the transition from paper to electronic slips.

The Health Sciences Library and the Dr. C.R. Barrett (Marine Institute) have more specialized collection priorities, so there isn't quite as much of an overlap in collection efforts between these branches and the main branch. It is therefore unlikely that there will be any problems with slip distribution and ordering in WCS. It is possible that the St. John's branches would actually benefit from consolidating their collection development efforts. It is therefore recommended that all of the St. John's branches of the Library system use the same "preferred" vendor. If the Librarians at the HSL and Barrett branches wish to use WCS to supplement their selecting, then they can create new vendor profiles with the appropriate "secondary" or "specialized" vendors for distribution in that system.

2. OCLC Response to Technical Issues with WCS

OCLC must address the issues that Memorial University Library has been having with WCS system response time, error messages, bugs, and general system instability. Librarians cannot be expected to use a system that is unreliable, frustratingly slow, and basically creates more work than it saves.

Acquisitions staff are impacted in an even more immediate way as they must quickly modify their workflow practices to accommodate work-arounds that result from problems with WCS or other vendor sites. Because of the high turnover and constant need for training in that unit, stable, reliable systems are essential.

3. E-Books

There are still many questions surrounding the issue of E-Books at the Library. Should the Library have a preferred E-Book vendor and/or E-Book platform? Are there any technical issues

with placing EDI E-Book orders? What sort of information should Collections Librarians include on their E-Book requests (single user/multi-user license, fund #, platform, etc)?

4. The Effect of Selecting a Preferred Vendor on the Library's Current Vendor Discounts

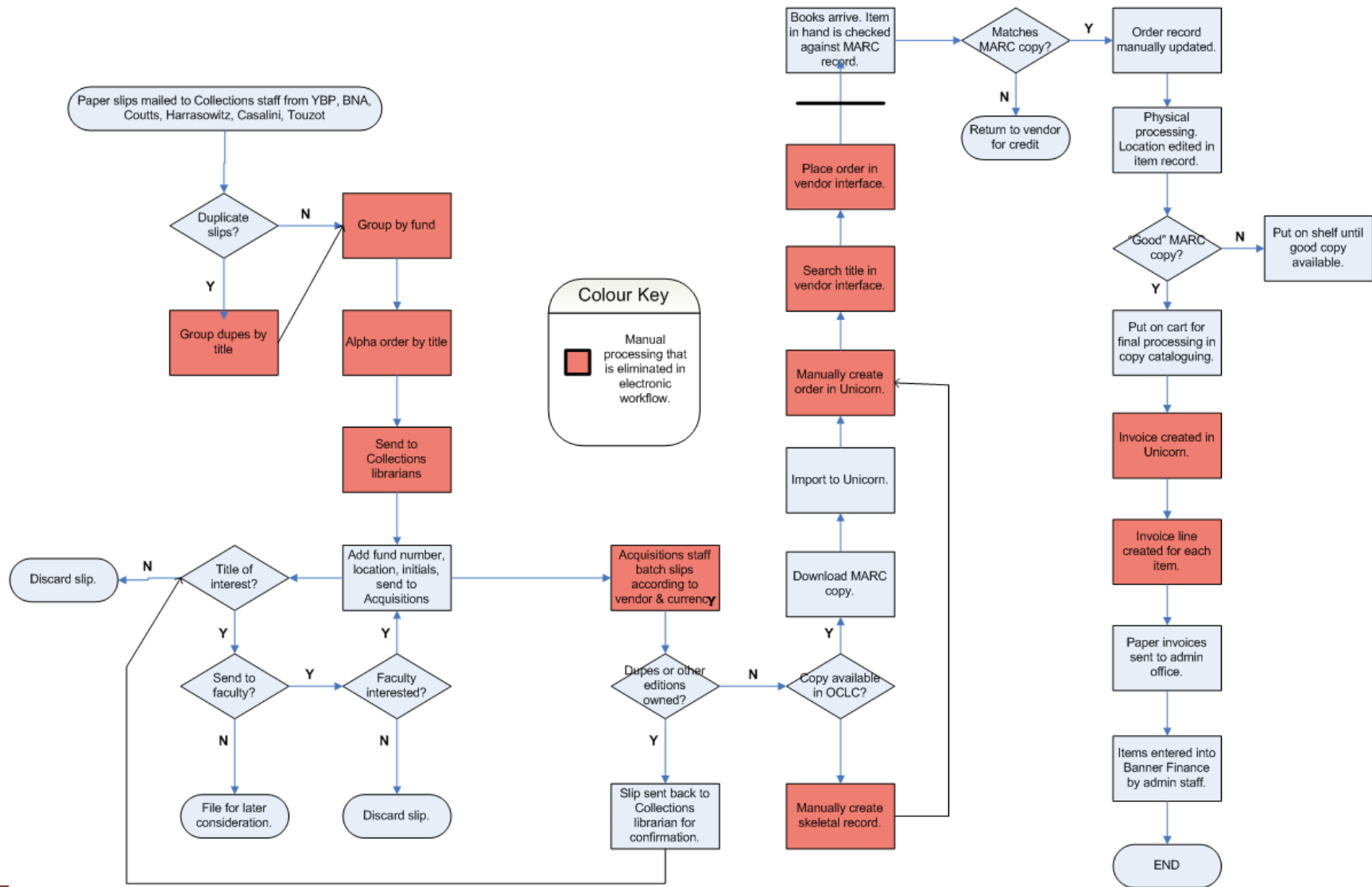
Orders will still be placed with all six vendors, but obviously the higher priority vendors and those with unique title notices will get the bigger share. This committee suggests that we designate the preferred vendor and then treat the remaining 5+ as specialty vendors by setting up profiles that try to pull out specific types of resources. For example, if Coutts is not the preferred vendor, then maybe those profiles should be modified to focus on Canadian content. The committee is not in a position to predict the way in which this new distribution of orders will affect the discounts received from each vendor.

5. Direct Feed into Banner

A prototype for a Banner feed was written about two years ago, and then largely abandoned because too many changes were underway at the time. We have, however, reorganized the funds to simplify the matter of extracting EDI invoice information for Banner. One important aspect of this will be gaining the support and guidance of Financial Services. The Campus Bookstore already has such a feed, but it was written by external consultants, so no help is forthcoming from that department. The Banner invoice feed should be re-examined once a preferred vendor has been selected.

Appendix A

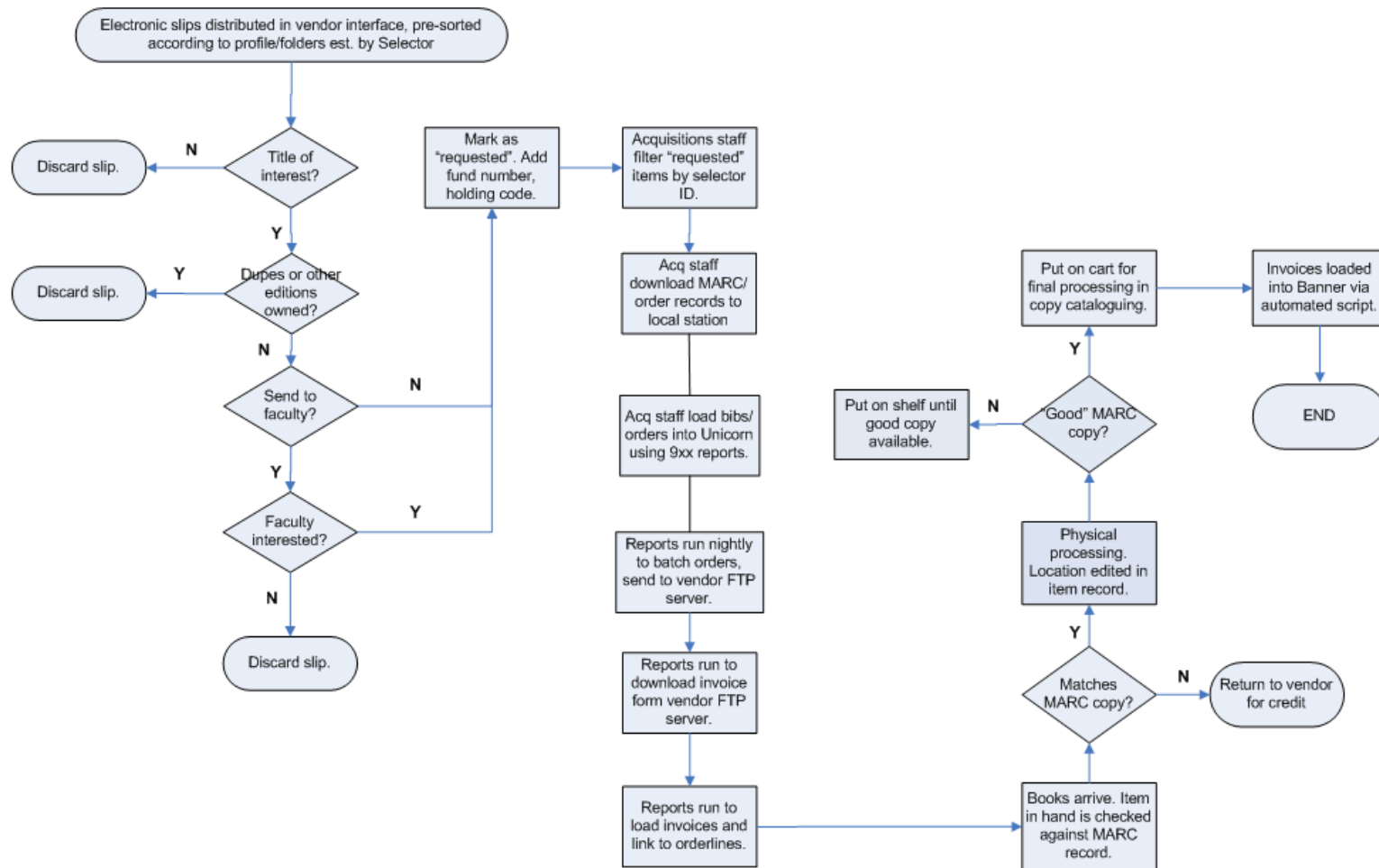
Paper Workflow - Selection & Acquisition – Memorial University Libraries Created by Lisa Goddard – October 2008



Appendix B

Optimized Electronic Workflow - Selection & Acquisition – Memorial University Libraries

Created by Lisa Goddard – October 2008



Appendix C

Electronic Workflow – Three Vendors – Memorial University Libraries Created by Lisa Goddard – October 2008

