

# Breaking Up is Hard to Do: Deconstructing the Big Deal

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## Western Fast Facts

- 36,000 full-time equivalent students
- 8 service locations on campus
- 52 librarians & archivists
- 71 library assistants
- \$14.1 million acquisitions budget
- 5,403,879 monograph holdings
- 4,253 print serial subscriptions
- 123,664 online serial subscriptions

## Introduction

Until the fall of the Canadian dollar in 2016, Western University made collections decisions for journal packages based on cost per use. This was no longer adequate for the savings we needed. Western University developed a process for data-driven decisions building on the "big deal" analysis work initiated by the Université de Montreal. We explored:

- Conducting a journal overlap analysis
- Using a faculty survey to determine core titles
- Performing a citation analysis of faculty publications using Web of Science and Scopus
- Weighting criteria to determine potential buyback lists

## Faculty Survey

**Question: How involved should faculty be in collections decisions?**

- Designed with Qualtrics
  - Delivered to all Western faculty and select PhD students by liaison librarians
- Three main questions were:
1. With which faculty are you affiliated?
  2. With which department are you affiliated?
  3. Identify up to 10 journal titles important in your field of research and teaching
- 419 responses received
  - Responses were added to a core titles list for future collections decisions

## Overlap

**Question: Is embargoed content valuable to academic libraries?**

**Step 1:** Find an overlap analysis tool (e.g. Serials Solutions, EBSCO Usage Consolidation, Scholars Portal, WorldShare, etc.)

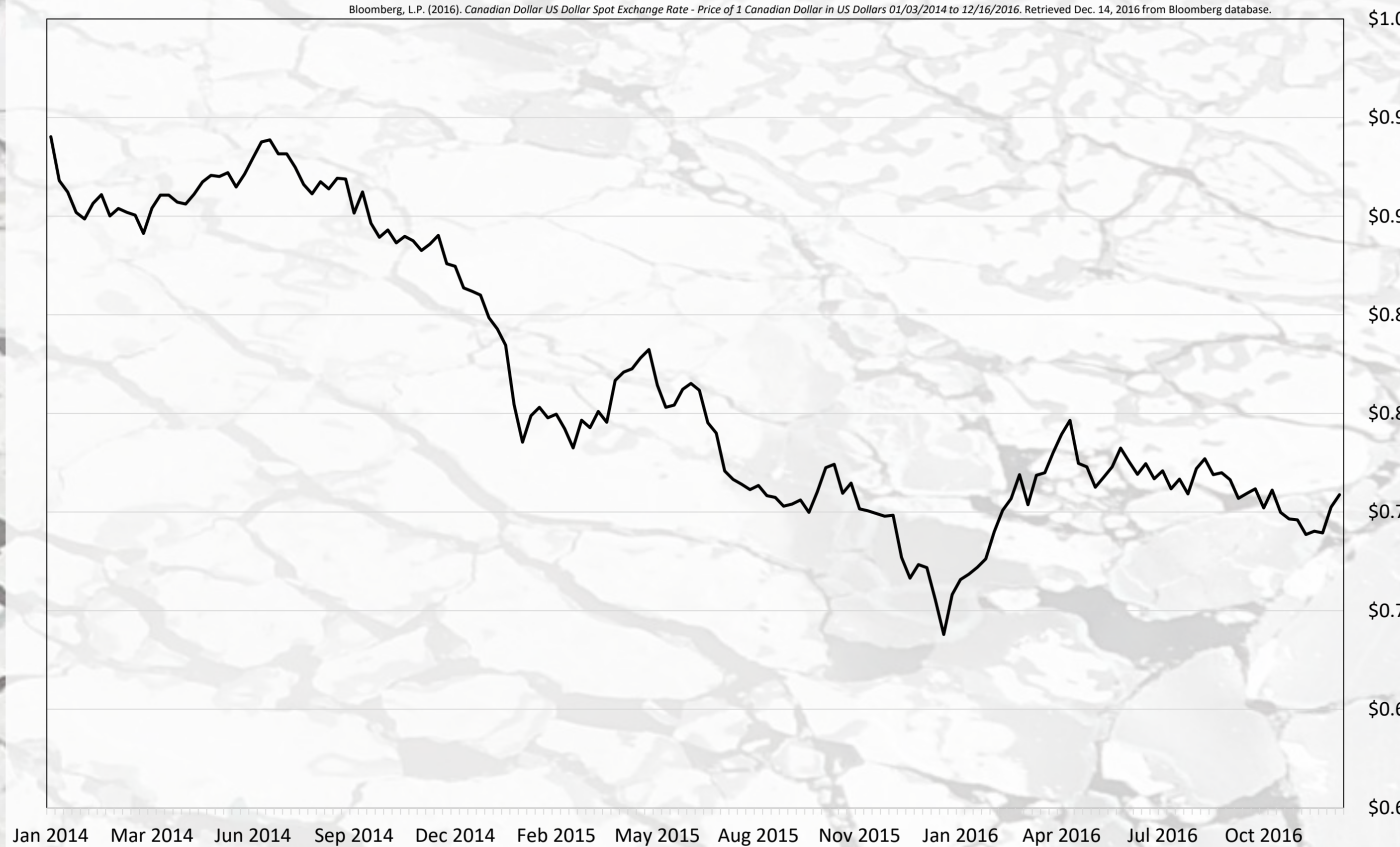
**Step 2:** Populate, and find overall overlap, individual package overlap, and individual title overlap

**Step 3:** Investigate what an average partial overlap entails (e.g. archive or embargo)

**Step 4:** Contrast embargoed titles with JR5 data

## Canadian Dollar Exchange Rate versus US Dollar

January 2014 - December 2016



## Citation Analysis

**Question: Should we keep journals where our own researchers publish?**

**Step 1:** Determine tools (Web of Science, Scopus) and time period (10 years)

**Step 2:** Include our authors and collaborators (hospitals, research centres)

**Step 3:** Export into spreadsheet, deduping titles, counting citations in each

**Step 4:** Match totals to those journals in our "big deal" package

## Paired Comparison Worksheet

Criterion	A: Use	B: CPU	C: Faculty Publications	D: Uniqueness	E: Faculty survey
A: Use		A, 2	A, 3	A, 3	0
B: CPU			B, 3	B, 3	E, 1
C: Publications				D, 1	E, 3
D: Unique					E, 3
E: Faculty survey					

Criterion	Total	Percentage
A: Use	8	36%
B: CPU	6	27%
C: Faculty Publications	0	0%
D: Uniqueness	1	5%
E: Faculty survey	7	32%

Scoring:
0 - No difference/same importance
1 - Slight difference/one a bit more important
2 - Significant difference/one obviously more important
3 - Major difference/one much more important

## Next Steps

We considered various criteria to evaluate journals within a package:

- **Use (JR1)**
- **Cost per use**
- **Faculty survey results**
- **Faculty publications**
- **Overlap analysis**
- **Use of current publications (JR5)**
- **SNIP, SJR, and other impact factors**

We scaled and weighted the variables, using them to rank journals within the "big deal" and prepare potential buyback lists for unbundling. With one of our largest packages, we decided not to unbundle – more consultation was needed, so we renewed for another year. We held a collections forum with subject librarians to discuss the process and next steps for potential unbundling in 2017. We are participating in a Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) study examining usage, citations, and faculty survey data on a national scale.