June 2004

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4335

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Some Practical Models For Cooperative Collection Development

by Margo Warner Curl (Coordinator of Cooperative Collection Development, CONSORT Colleges (after July 1, Technical Services Librarian, The College of Wooster Libraries) <mcurl@wooster.edu>

There is a lot of interest in Cooperative Collection Development (CCD), and increasing pressure to participate in cooperative projects as a way to maximize materials budgets. Many library partnerships and consortia have formed in order to collectively purchase electronic resources (electronic journals, databases) or to create efficiencies through a shared integrated library system (ILS). These types of cooperative projects, though time-consuming and difficult, have proved themselves as they continue to thrive. Cooperating in developing print collections is more of a challenge, and there are few successful models out there. This lack of models makes it harder for new projects to start. This has certainly been the case for our cooperative project (CONSORT Libraries — see ATG volume 14, no. 6, December 02-January 03 issue for some somewhat naïve musings as we started into our project): the only models we could find three years ago were those of comprehensive country coverage distribution among Research Libraries, and the college groups of CTW (Connecticut-Trinity-Wesleyan) and the Tri-Colleges (Bryn Mawr-Haverford-Swarthmore) that were also just in the early stages of exploring cooperative collection development. These latter two groups have been of assistance to us as our project has evolved, just as they have also gleaned from our experience.

Based on the descriptions in the articles that follow, it seems to be a number of common factors that contribute to the (potential) success of projects. All the projects described in these articles come out of formal consortia, though not all involve all consortial members. The projects do not always involve only those libraries of a similar size. A shared ILS is useful, but not necessary if patrons can easily see the holdings of institutions participating in the CCD project. An efficient system to deliver materials among the participating libraries is a strong supporting element. Working with a common vendor is especially useful when the project involves the acquisition of current print monographs. A financial commitment to the project strengthens it; but in all projects described here, the money for material comes from within current budgets, so extra funding is not a necessary ingredient.

While the articles do not represent the entire universe of CCD projects underway, they all claim some degree of success. They all claim a good working relationship among the member libraries. They all emphasize that member libraries retain their autonomy in collecting decisions — no member is forced to give up acquiring what is needed locally; none is forced to collect in areas of little local interest. The projects all focus on a particular material type or subject area, rather than trying

If Rumors Were Horses

I want to take a minute to update everyone on the 2004 Charleston Conference. The conference will be the same as always! This year it is being held (November 3, preconferences and Vendor Showcase, and November 4-6, main conference) in the Francis Marion Hotel on King Street, right next to the now-closed College of Charleston Conference Center. The Francis Marion has added a new Conference Center which will allow us to hold the Conference in one place. Since the College of Charleston has closed their Conference Center, it became necessary to set up a separate group to manage the Conference independently of the College. This group is Regina Semko <rsemko@comcast.net> (once a head honcho at the Conference Center) and Ilze Visocka <rvisocka@hotmail.com> (her able assistant) as well as John McDonald <mcdonaldj@gofor.com> of the College of Charleston, Edna Laughrey <elaughrey@aol.com> of Against the Grain, Toni Nix <justwrite@lowecountry.com> of Just Right Group, LLC, and Yours Truly <ktrauch@comcast.net>. This year the theme is “All the World’s a Serial!” and the Website is http://www.katina.info/conference/. There is a registration brochure included with this issue of ATG and you can also register on the Website. See you in November!

So exciting! The perfect Rosann Bazirjian <rvb9@psu.edu> is the new University Librarian at Walter Clinton Jackson Library at UNC-Greensboro effective August 15, 2004. Besides being
Give us the Tools: The CURL-CoFoR Project in Britain

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Origins of the Project
CURL-CoFoR has its roots in the earlier COCOREES project, which ran from 1999 to 2002 as one of several Collaborative Collection Management (CCM) initiatives launched by the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) with the support of UK government funding agencies for higher education. For the first time, it provided the resources with which to lay the groundwork for the major British collections in Russian and East European Studies (REES) to work together systemically on improving library provision for researchers in the field. Four interim COCOREES reports and its Final Report are accessible on the project Website.¹²

Early in 2002 the project management was approached by the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL), representing 25 of the largest academic libraries in the British Isles. CURL's Task Force on Resource Management was looking to work up and implement a range of procedures and documentation ('tools') to support CCM for a variety of subjects in research libraries, and saw in COCOREES a promising platform for further development, testing and demonstration. In October 2002, shortly before the COCOREES project ended, the CURL Board accepted the proposal for a successor. While Russian and East European Studies remains the subject focus, the new project's remit has been to produce tools for CCM which can be widely applied in other fields.

The Project in Brief
The CURL-CoFoR project runs from December 2002 to August 2004. It is a partnership of twenty UK libraries, all with important collections in Russian and East European Studies, with two further associated institutions (for a full list of partners, see Appendix). CURL has provided funding to support a part-time Project Manager and two part-time Project Officers, while certain other partners notably the British Library have generously contributed additional staff resources and other facilities. The project is committed to delivering tested and agreed procedures and tools (model agreements, protocols, templates, etc.) to serve as a practical basis for the Collaborative Collection Management (CCM) of research resources in UK libraries. All deliverables have REES material as their subject matter, and academic REES research as their primary object of support; but it is fundamental to the project that the outcomes should be delivered in forms that allow wider subject applicability. The committees of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (BASEES) and the Council for Slavonic and East European Library and Information Services (COSEELIS) are the project's academic and professional advisory bodies respectively.

The COCOREES Inheritance
CURL-CoFoR is much more than a simple extension of the RSLP COCOREES project, but COCOREES has provided CoFoR with an essential set of products, people and relationships:

- A searchable set of descriptions for research collections in REES in 80 UK libraries.
- A searchable location list of Russian and East European serials held in 52 UK libraries, currently recording c. 35,000 titles.
- Standard-format collection policy statements for partner libraries.
- A National Desiderata List of major research resources for REES to act as a basis for consortial acquisition.
- Development of an IT infrastructure for the above, all of which are accessible on the project Website at http://www.cocorees.ac.uk.
- Accessions and expenditure data for REES from partner libraries.

CURL-CoFoR has benefited immensely from this inheritance of several major bodies of factual information about the library resources with which it is engaged, as well as from the experience of area/subject-specialised IT development work. There has also been the advantage of continuity in personnel. All four members of the COCOREES management, including the present Project Manager, joined the new Management Team, and both Project Officers also transferred to CURL-CoFoR.

The Partnership Agreement
CURL is committed to playing a leading role in seeking to maintain and develop a governance structure for a UK-wide CCM scheme built on the completion of the CURL-CoFoR project in August 2004. This is likely to have been a situation that has arisen from the project's efforts to develop a sustainable model for collaborative collection management. 

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>