ATG Special Report -- A Pennsylvania Library Collaborative Celebrates its Past and Plans for its Future

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Recommended Citation
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4557

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When the actual cancellations of journals were done, we started looking at our older holdings, as the second part of my project was to take a little pressure off our stacks. We started out with the titles in JSTOR, as we deemed it the safest archive of them all. This time I matched the complete JSTOR package against our entire holdings — not just the current. As you can imagine, these lists were huge and it did take more than a few minutes to compute the overlap.

I think throwing perfectly good journals out is painful and extremely worrisome for all involved, so we contacted JSTOR to ask if they had hard copies of the titles we wanted to discard. We got a list back with quite a few titles that they did not have, which we subsequently pulled and shipped to Ann Arbor, discarding the rest.

All these savings meant that we actually had a little air in our budget and therefore were able to buy more online journals, journal backfiles, and databases. It was important to me to investigate how the individual backfile packages compared to our current holdings. Would they cover weak areas, lighten the load on our photocopy center? For this I had several tools: as a subscriber to Serials Solutions I used their Overlap Analysis tool for quick results as well as Ulrich’s for more precise answers.

I also had made an Excel macro to compare the different files and holdings, but since the large data load was too much for my PC for long periods of time, I decided not to; also the added benefit of Ulrich’s subject data eased the decision process.

Our current project is to examine our databases. Do we need new ones? What are they indexing? Many bibliographic databases have coverage resembling each other and it can be rather difficult to see what the actual difference is, but by loading the coverage for each database and comparing them, it is quite easy to see not only which journals they index and where they overlap, but also to see within which subjects the strengths and weaknesses are.

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ATG Special Report — A Pennsylvania Library Collaborative Celebrates its Past and Plans for its Future

A Forty-Year Commitment to People, Service and Collection Development

by Doug Cook, Steve McKinzie, and the ACLCP 40th Anniversary Planning Committee

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Organizations come and go it seems, more quickly than we can bookmark them on our Web browsers. However, one library organization, the Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania (ACLCP), has withstood the test of time. ACLCP is celebrating its 40th Anniversary. It is an organization with both a rich history and the promise of a robust future — a consortium with a shared vision of service, people and collection development.

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
A Pennsylvania Library from page 88

Although libraries have collaborated at least since the founding of ALA’s “Cooperation Committee” in 1876-1877, the Higher Education Act P.L. 89-329, (signed by President Johnson on November 18, 1965) spurred academic libraries to join together and pursue federal grants through a program of mutually supporting acquisitions, greater communication, and increased service.” Such resources as a union list of periodicals enabled the group to streamline interlibrary loan. Wilson Library Bulletin added that “permit cards” would be issued for “work in any member library.” These collaborative efforts laid the foundation for the next 40 years of mutual benefit.

Now, forty years later, ACLKP boasts 24 institutional members, including the original nine. The organization has expanded to include special libraries (such as the State Library of Pennsylvania, and the Army War College), campus libraries within large university systems (Penn State Harrisburg), community college libraries (Harrisburg Area Community College), and law libraries (Dickinson School of Law). Besides sharing journals, these organizations have had complex working relationships, including a shared library catalog, a “shadowing” program that enables library workers to learn new skills at other member libraries, and other services that assist students at any of the institutions to use the resources of another. Historically, the shared catalog and relative closeness of many of the schools also fueled cooperative collection development. Often librarians depended on the State Library’s holdings to satisfy their Pennsylvania and Federal document needs. Others curated buying in certain subjects in recognition of the specialties or collection strengths of nearby consortia schools. The result of such cooperation meant that the collections were far more diverse than they might otherwise have been.

From its very inception, students’ needs shaped the service and structure of the consortia. The postwar information “explosion” and increasing enrollment created a need for small libraries to collect the world’s knowledge and serve the diverse needs of a larger student body. The founding librarians had their students in mind when they began to discuss resource sharing, and those students’ information and research requirements have driven the directions taken by ACLKP ever since. The importance of allowing students access to the various subject collections maintained by each institution was the primary cause for ACLKP’s formal organization. Originally, most of the private colleges within the consortia limited access to their collections to their own student and faculty and for good reason. Such libraries had no way of honoring borrowers from other schools accountable, but under the ACLKP borrowing umbrella, each individual library pledged to back maintain responsibility for its schools’ respective student borrowing. The result meant that students could use and check out books widely, enabling them to tap into the rich diversity of consortia’s holdings.

In addition to this, librarians and staff within the consortia took additional steps to promote access to those diverse holdings. One of ACLKP’s early projects included bibliographies of musical scores, as well as a union list of materials on the India-Pakistan conflict. A common library card and Interlibrary Loan agreements soon followed. Shared purchasing and a combined catalog greatly helped students in their search for information. In fact, some of the students from the early days of ACLKP are still borrowing. Berk Laite, who was a student at Shippensburg in the 1960s, worked in the Shippensburg Library for Miss Alma Winton, one of the founders of ACLKP. One of Berk’s tasks as a student was to prepare the IBM computer cards for the ACLKP Union Serials Directory. Berk is now the Library Director at Shippensburg and a past President of ACLKP.

Another constituency served well by ACLKP is its membership. One of the current most practical benefits of the organization is its commitment to the professional development of all library workers—library managers, faculty, and staff. Unlike many other library associations, paraprofessional support staff can take a leadership role in ACLKP. Typically 150 members gather twice-yearly to listen to speakers, discuss issues, and work on mutual projects. Individual members also have the opportunity to participate in Special Interest Groups, such as Circulation, Archives, Reference and other job-related groups.

Tina Maresco, head of InterLibrary Loan at Dickinson College, argues that her Special Interest Group for Document Delivery and InterLibrary has proved invaluable for her professionally, both for the mentoring she has received and the exchange of policies and procedures. Indeed such groups often foster shadow-exchanging programs, where individuals visit their colleagues with similar responsibilities in other libraries. Tina describes her experience in the shadowing program (both as a mentor and as a visitor) as “outstanding”—one of the greatest benefits of her library’s membership.

In addition to the importance of Special Interests Groups and various shadowing programs, ACLKP sponsors research and educational grants for faculty and staff. This sense of professional development was something that characterized the organization from the beginning. Peter Young, currently the Director of the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, MD, was a librarian at Franklin and Marshall College in the early days of ACLKP. He remembers an ACLKP fieldtrip to learn about the first service offerings from OCLC. “Little did we anticipate,” he remembers, “the sweeping changes that would result... in the intervening three decades.”

Professional Leadership & Collection Development

ACLKP provided an early model of collaboration for libraries. Susan Campbell, Library Director at York College, has been affiliated with ACLKP longer than any other current library director. (Susan joined York College as the library director in 1985.) She insists that ACLKP impressed her from the beginning, and that it has had a long history of benefiting the profession. It provided, as she phrases it, “extraordinary leadership, not only in Pennsylvania but also nationally in providing models for resource sharing through interlibrary loan delivery systems and early serials and catalog development.” As an example, she points out that ACLKP received a state grant in 1985 to purchase fax machines for each of the consortia’s libraries. Such a cooperative approach now seems almost primitive, but the initial use of fax and later the technology accelerated InterLibrary use among the member libraries and made cooperative collection development much more feasible.

Campbell also maintains that ACLKP was “among the first consortia to successfully negotiate group discounts. Long before other cooperatives even existed or considered cooperative purchases, ACLKP used its leverage collectively to purchase several important collections and valuable online resources. The value of such cooperative efforts was never lost on those involved in the process. Peter Young further reflects that his ACLKP experiences, “were formative in providing an understanding of the cooperative nature of library services.”

The interlibrary loan delivery service Campbell alludes to is Pennsylvania’s Interlibrary Delivery Service (IDS), founded by ACLKP and the Lancaster County Library System, and funded as a pilot program through the Library Services and Construct Act in 1969. This innovative program linked (and continues to link) more than 30 libraries in South Central and Eastern Pennsylvania through a van service that delivers materials to the libraries several times per week. Over the years, IDS expanded across the state and now serves more than 1100 libraries.

ACLKP’s (Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania)
40th Anniversary Celebration

Time: October 7,2005 (9:00 am)
Location: Holiday Inn, Granville, PA

Attendees can also look forward to a historical exhibit and special music to commemorate this special day. ACLKP Home Site: http://www.aclkp.org/

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A Pennsylvania Library
from page 90

Many of the people involved in ACLCP's beginnings had no idea that they were pioneers in the field. They were merely interested in collaborating to solve shared problems, such as limited resources. Efforts which we take for granted today, such as the ability to send a copy of an article to another library both cheaply and conveniently, were only able to be solved by forward thinking. ACLCP has always been able to focus on the individuals served by the organization. Historically, ACLCP librarians were more concerned about making limited resources stretch as far as they could go to meet patron needs. Berk Laite said that "what surprised everyone the most (including the founders) was that the administrations [of the founding schools] were hesitatingly willing to share their resources with each other — no strings attached."

On the national scene, the emphasis on collaboration turned toward "networking" during the 1970s and 1980s — particularly focusing on the application of computer technology to organize and make accessible the country's vast information resources. ACLCP remained in step with this national trend, contributing records to the Pennsylvania Union List of Serials. It also created a union list of member libraries' holdings on CD-ROM (This catalog or union list quickly migrated to a Web-based product when the newer technology came into vogue), and during the 1990s, produced a directory of databases which were accessible at its libraries. All these efforts were undertaken in light of serving local users' needs, within the context of small academic libraries.

**ACLCP: A Human Factor**

Why do some consortia survive and others die a quick death? Jonathan Lauer, Library Director at Messiah College and past President of ACLCP, believes that ACLCP can attribute its longevity to its focus on people. Lauer says, "ACLCP continues to be an important organization for area libraries because it still builds professional identity and real community in an increasingly atomized, fragmented, and technologically-driven world." Jonathan calls this the "human factor." It was people that brought ACLCP together, and it is people that have kept ACLCP together.

Susan Campbell adds that the real strength of ACLCP is "the interaction of the individuals who represent all levels in the member libraries. It is an extraordinary group of people who come together to share ideas, solve problems, envision the future, and meet all manner of challenges." Organizations such as ACLCP remain strong because of the people involved. They also remain strong because they emphasize the "human factor," placing patrons and members as the highest priority.

**The Present and Future ACLCP:**

Of course, with so much success behind, one wonders about the consortia's plans? Does ACLCP have a bold and innovative vision for its future? Are there possible renewed cooperative collection development projects afoot, or plans to upgrade and improve its cooperative online catalog of joint holdings?

Jonathan Lauer insists that the organization actually has no plans at present to use its leverage to broker any cooperative purchases of online products. "Even though we may have set the standard for such brokerage in the past, we're unlikely to pursue that in the future. Too many larger groups or consortia such as Palnet (OCLC's local affiliate) and PALCI (Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium) are doing that." He added that the same thing was true of the ACLCP union catalog. "We actually abandoned our contract this year for the catalog, and we've no intention of continuing it. OCLC's FirstSearch World Cat serves our users well enough now. Indeed," Lauer muses, "the era of localized online union catalogs may be gone. Such catalogs have to a sense outlived their usefulness. Other cheaper and more powerful products do the work as well."

None of this, however, means that ACLCP itself has backed away from its commitment to technology, traditional collection development and services to its users. "On the contrary," argues Lauer, "a local consortia, especially a great one like ACLCP, may now be more relevant than ever." Lauer claims the reasons for this are obvious. "The ongoing value of such cooperatives is the power of localized professional development and the sharing of best practices." In Lauer's estimation, a localized network is always more powerful than a national." This is "because participants have some hope of getting to know continued on page 93
short courses not only in information management but also basic software technical skills. These rooms could also be used by teachers for other purposes and during exam and paper writing periods the computers were opened up for general student use, adding to the number of terminals available.

- Multimedia workstations. The emphasis seems to be on campus integration, that instead of having disparate facilities on campus doing this sort of thing, a successful Commons brings all the equipment and staff who know how to use them together with everything else happening in the Commons — this is a one-stop shop for integrating multimedia information, technology, software, and learning.
- Consultation stations. In this case one-on-one reference and technology consultation sessions are integrated within the Commons and not located outside it on another floor or area of the Library. These stations, moreover, are not seen just as the private property of library staff members but can also be used by teachers and TAs as needed — the library is not separate from the rest of the university but an integrated part of it.
- Writing lab. This is clearly a case where non-librarians are integrated within the physical space where students are accessing and manipulating information instead of taking their printout or sending their paper to a writing lab teacher for help.
- Extended hours. The principle of integration here is integrating what can happen in the Commons with the life cycle of students who tend to do their searching and writing in the late afternoon and night, instead of the morning and early afternoon when classes are being held.
- Lounge. Students rest, eat, study, and play. The idea for lounges seems to be to integrate opportunities for resting, hanging out with friends, and studying within the Commons. Interestingly, there is no mention of food in the BYU report.

Wal-Mart is an example of integration. Everything you want is in one location. Instead of going from one shop to the next, each with its own culture and cash register, at Wal-Mart you have a single integrated culture and you pay once. My library is like a small town or even a mall with all the needed services but it has lost the integration that exists in much smaller libraries. I still hope to get a new library to house the 100,000 or so new books we add annually, but I also want an information commons and I want to spread the principles that govern it across the entire library system.

Endnotes

Wandering the Web
from page 92

1980s and is essentially a music and dance culture of events that feature primarily electronic music and extended dancing often to the point of trance. Maligned and suppressed for its tolerance of certain trance inducing drugs, the rave culture nevertheless is evolving into a more mainstream expression.

http://www.rave-network.com/ — An extensive site with many links for research into the rave movement.

http://www.ravelinks.com/ — Another extensive site with regional calendars and links to worldwide rave organizations.

Hip Hop culture: Beginning in the 1970s in America’s inner cities, the Hip Hop movement began as a dance and music culture ostensibly by and for minority youth. As with all such movements, it has moved into the mainstream and become a billion dollar music, fashion, entertainment business while maintaining its various sub-cultural elements.


Furries: Let me be your, Teddy Bear?
http://www.interactive-websites.com/scripts/fuzzwolf/fuzzfaq.tar — http://www.tigress.com/eris/furries/furry_eng.html — http://www.furfurconfusion.org/fz/2003/ — I must confess, the furry subculture, was one I knew nothing about until informed of its existence by a colleague. This culture began around 1985 and is focused on the love for and role-playing surrounding the concept of animals with human characteristics and intelligence. Although not a new concept in film and literature, this cultural expression evolved out of the SciFi and Gaming conventions environment. Some individuals even take the next step and begin to dress in full costumes for their events. The first two sites provide definitions and examples for the uninitiated and the third site is an example of an anthropomorphic furry convention. There is even a subculture of the furries called “plushies.”

Endnotes
1. This article was written with the collaboration of the ACPLC 40th Anniversary Planning Committee, Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania, including Jonathan Lauer (Chair), Doug Cook, Tom Duszak, Bernadette Lear, Steve McKinzie, Lawrie Merz, Sara Pike, and Ruth Runion-Slear.

A Pennsylvania Library
from page 91

one another and one another’s libraries. Not only is the personal comfort level higher and longer lasting, but the application of what is learned is more likely to be apropos.”

Susan Campbell agrees. “ACPLC has always been about networking,” she contends, “and that still goes on at almost all levels. It’s a great organization, — probably the best of its kind. I cannot say enough good things about it. It has proved invaluable for librarians and staff here at York College.”