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Remote Access through Consortial Agreement and Other Collection Initiatives: OhioLINK and the CIC

by Gay N. Dannelly (Collection Development Officer, The Ohio State University Libraries) <gnd+@ohio.net>

Establishing successful cooperative academic library programs has much in common with herding cats. First, many of the potential participants don't want to be part of a group; second, each wants to go in its own direction; and third, their owners may not really want them to play together. However, with the proper incentives, in the case of libraries, money and administrative insistence, they can be persuaded to cooperate to varying degrees. Indeed, libraries have cooperated for years and most recognize that their futures lie in furthering such endeavors; but that doesn't make the process either easy or smooth. Ohio State University Libraries participates in two major cooperative programs, a situation that is becoming more common as state, regional and national initiatives involve more libraries. Both these consortia, **OhioLINK** and **CIC**, share aggressive approaches in their quests to improve services and information access for their users, but the methods of approach to such programs differ greatly between the two groups.

OhioLINK

In the mid-1980s a number of capital improvement projects were submitted by several state-supported higher education institutions to renovate or build library facilities in Ohio. Subsequently, a detailed study of information, facility and technology needs led to the decision to establish a series of remote storage facilities and a cooperative network amongst the state-supported higher education institution libraries. The project was to include a shared central catalog with local systems that could, to a certain extent, be controlled by the individual institution. The local systems would allow for patron-initiated borrowing, as would the central catalog, thus turning a technological base into a new kind of resource-sharing program and providing the ability for library users to request materials from distant locations to be delivered to their local campuses. This was expected not only to ease the overburdened ILL systems but to increase the variety of resources available to students, faculty and staff; decrease unnecessary duplication; and stretch the state dollars spent on library materials further.

At last count, April 1996, there were nearly 5.9 million bibliographic records, of which 3.3 million or 56.1% are unique in the state. This latter figure, of course, represents variant editions, decisions to catalog collections as sets rather than monographs, and similar conditions. Clearly, however, the hope of increasing the scope of materials

available to library users has been realized.

Funding for **OhioLINK** is provided by the Ohio Board of Regents, a central point for the funding and review of all state-supported institutions of higher education. This funding continues and has provided both the equipment and licensing of a wide variety of shared electronic databases within the **OhioLINK** system or provided via gateways, including some with document delivery capabilities. At present there are more than 37 databases in place, with another 10 expected to be made available in the next several months and several more under consideration or negotiation. These databases include citation, fulltext and reference resources. The **Academic Press** electronic journal program, the first to be funded directly by **OhioLINK** members, will become available to **OhioLINK** members in Fall 96.

Most of my colleagues from other institutions want to know how the selection process works. In order to select a specific database, **OhioLINK** applies three principles. First, we want to get the greatest use of each database for the dollars invested. Second, we prefer to load databases locally, when appropriate, in order to add link to holdings information. Third, we want as few front ends as possible (although this is not really realistic even for citation databases).

The first databases loaded, UMI's **Periodical Abstracts** and **ABI Inform** were selected based on the document delivery capacity then under development. In addition, these two databases had ready-made audiences at every member institution. UMI's **Dissertation Abstracts** was selected for coverage and assistance to our many graduate students.

The medical databases suite was added next to support our several medical and nursing programs. This selection brought with it the decision to use **OVID** software as the front end for these databases and, de facto, many others such as **PsycINFO**, **ERIC**, and **Compendex**.

Subsequently, a strategic plan for the selection of databases was developed by the collection development committee and accepted by **OhioLINK** as a guide for a two-year period. From that plan, a number of initiatives began, including the selection of a suite of business databases and a set of basic reference tools as well as forays into

the provision of fulltext resources. The latter are provided either via a gateway or under Open Text software at **OhioLINK**. In addition, **OhioLINK** members are reviewing present subject coverage in order to assure our users of a broad-based access to information resources.

Of course, all this sounds remarkably logical and well-constructed. You know that it wasn't that smooth. As in

every organization, there are local agendas, political realities, costs of the databases, and the reality of what is actually available for purchase under reasonable terms and in a format that can be used at **OhioLINK**. And, as always, the directors, as a group, had some very specific agendas that did not necessarily fit the strategic plan. However, the process has, overall been remarkably effective and efficient and has allowed us to provide a wide variety of databases that none of us could have afforded, in toto, and saved us a considerable amount of institutional money. We have saved the individual institutions over \$700,000 in database costs and estimate that we have saved over \$1 million if each institution had attempted to acquire every database that **OhioLINK** provides centrally. This does not include the cost avoidance of equipment or staff investment in the acquisition, mounting and maintenance process.

In addition to the acquisition and provision of databases, **OhioLINK** has initiated a variety of cooperative collection development projects. Last year, Music, Physics and Business tested the applicability of the **Conspectus** in the **OhioLINK** environment to determine whether it was an appropriate tool for us to use. A variety of reasons led to the selection of these areas, including a desire to test the humanities, social sciences and sciences collections for applicability. Naturally the results of these projects were mixed. At present, the most successful cooperative collection development project has originated with the Music Librarians. This is attributable to a variety of factors, including the fact that a music librarians organization and regular meeting program had been established for some years, and the participants knew each other and their respective collections.

The larger music libraries have agreed to share responsibility for the acquisition of

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Profiles Encouraged:

Gay N. Dannelly

Born when and where: I was an Army brat, born in Victoria, Texas on October 10, 1943, eventually growing up in northern and southern California.

Education: Grad-uated with a BA in Anthropology from the University of Denver, an MALS from the University of Wisconsin—Madison with an interim sojourn in Washington, DC. You can take the brat out of the Army, but apparently you can't curb the wanderlust.

Current residence: Columbus, OH, about 4 miles from OCLC. I've been here 20 years, so maybe the wanderlust cures itself.

Family: One husband, on the faculty of the University of Kentucky, and two very demanding cats.

Proudest accomplishments: Making a commuting marriage work (with a very supportive and adaptable husband), and developing the Library Materials Budget Index which has continued to increase the OSU Libraries materials budget for the last six years (thanks to the generosity of our university administration!).

Most recent goal: Balance OSU, OhioLINK and CIC needs, commitments and demands, and retain my sanity.

Favorite pastime/hobbies: Mysteries, cookbooks, cats, Medieval and Renaissance music — listening to, not playing.

Literary tastes: I will read anything that is in front of me, but I prefer mysteries, English novels from between the World Wars, and cookbooks.

Pet peeve: People who think being a librarian is "such a quiet job," and "Don't you have lots of time to read?"

Single most irritating piece of advice concerns computer software: "Oh it's easy to learn ..." Well, NOT ...

Biggest surprise: OCLC was just a gleam in Fred Kilgore's eye when I went to library school and now I live at a computer terminal!

People would be surprised to know: I love to drive fast. My husband calls me "Leadfoot."

Behind my back people say: Well, I don't really know, but I'd like to find out.

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major American music scores within the state. With the cooperation of a single vendor, each library has established a profile that recognizes the local needs and also contributes to the acquisition of a larger body of scores than any single institution could afford. Each library has taken on responsibility for a particular area of music scores in addition to those materials that serve their local users.

Other projects are in the very early stages of development as listservs are established for approximately 29 subject areas to ease the communication process and the consideration of initiatives relevant to specific subject responsibilities. As OhioLINK has evolved, the central staff, who have made the project happen, have also provided advice, technical expertise, and excellent reality checks. Providing responsive leadership through their efforts with committees, negotiation of favorable licenses, and investigation of many kinds of support mechanisms, the staff has enabled the membership to provide a greatly increased variety of services and resources to our patrons.

Committee on Institutional Cooperation

A very different consortium, the **Committee on Institutional Cooperation** or **CIC**, has acted as a voluntary, regional institutional cooperative active in many areas of academic programs since 1958. Composed initially of the Big Ten institutions (Universities of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan State University, Ohio State University, Northwestern University and Purdue University) and the University of Chicago, CIC has expanded to include the University of Illinois, Chicago, and Pennsylvania State University, upon the latter's entrance into the Big Ten athletic conference. Directed by the presidents of each member institution, programs include cooperative programs, joint course offerings, and long-term library cooperation at the directors' level. The latter led to initial agreements for broad resource-sharing and on-site loan of materials to visiting graduate student and faculty. The library directors continue to provide leadership in program development assisted by a number of other groups with specific responsibilities.

In 1983, the **Collection Development Officers** began meeting to try to establish cooperative collection development programs. Part of the impetus was provided by increasing costs and the loss of purchasing power in library acquisitions budgets; part was based on a recognition that it would be most advantageous for all the members of **CIC** if we could find ways of more effectively using our financial and collection resources.

Until 1994, the Director of the CIC, and

his small number of staff, provided the only administrative support for the various grant and project activities of the libraries. However, in 1994, the library directors agreed to establish a position for **Director, Office of Library Initiatives**. The convergence of several other initiatives and the establishment of this position have led to significant progress since August 1994, including shared database acquisition, a conference on the potentials for shared electronic fulltext resources, an additional grant proposal, and the furtherance of several subject projects. Funding for all these activities, outside those funded by grants, must be provided by the librarians themselves.

In 1993, the library directors requested that the **Collection Development Officers** establish a plan that would bring about a series of specific subject cooperative efforts. In addition to earlier cooperative preservation grants and programs, the **CIC** libraries also applied for a grant to establish a **virtual electronic library** to provide many of the same patron capabilities available through **OhioLINK**. This project was seen as a way to provide ready searching of the catalogs of each member through a Z39.50 search engine. A subsequent phase would include the consideration of patron initiated borrowing with delivery via a shared system, thus moving much of the current ILL traffic into a circulation function and changing the labor involved in providing resources across the consortia. The actual implementation of the **Virtual Electronic Library**, at present in a Beta test stage, will be a major step in providing this information.

In 1993 the **Library Directors** also appointed a **Task Force on the CIC Electronic Collection** to "explore the management and use of shared electronic resources and to consider relevant issues for the CIC libraries." Although reporting to the Directors, this group has also been instrumental in assisting the cooperative collection development efforts of several subject groups as well as initiating, with the approval of the **Collection Development Officers**, specific subject selectors, and technical support of **CICNet**, a variety of projects. Among the best known is the **CIC Libraries Electronic Journal Collection**. Initiated by **CICNet** at the request of the **Collection Development Officers**, this archive was subsequently reviewed by the Task Force and a number of organizational issues clarified and policies established. At present **CIC Libraries** have agreed to fund the planned expansion of the more organized **Collection** (as opposed to the **Archive**) to serve as a major test of consortial cooperative efforts in selection, processing and cataloging, and the applications of technology.

The provision of a variety of databases through mounting at member institutions and cooperative costing, price negotiations, and similar methods have also assisted the

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Schleiermacher; and *Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science* (HSK). De Gruyter regularly publishes new editions of standard reference works, such as *Concise Encyclopedias* in the fields of biology, chemistry, and biochemistry and molecular biology; both a German/English and an *English/German Law Dictionary*; and *American Universities and Colleges*, mentioned earlier.

De Gruyter's complete catalog is available on a CD-ROM, and detailed information on our titles can be found on our Web Site: <<http://www.degruyter.de/index.html>>.

ATG: *I know this is a touchy issue, but will de Gruyter continue to publish scholarly monographs?*

ES: It is a lot harder for any academic publisher to publish monographs today, and a number of presses, including many university presses, will no longer publish them at all. The market has changed despite the pressure from universities and research centers to produce monographs remaining constant, because today it is possible to transmit book-length studies, both one's own and other researchers', electronically. The market has narrowed because fewer institutions and very few individuals are purchasing monographs today, thus driving up unit costs and sales prices.

ATG: *Where does that leave your company?*

ES: We have made our reputation on monographs of high quality, and (to answer your earlier question) we will continue to publish the best of them. The institutional market, however, has made that continuance problematic. We understand that libraries, in order to be cost effective, cannot buy everything, even in those areas in which their home faculties are strongest, and must share resources through networking. On the other hand, we hope that librarians remain vigilant and continue not to authorize unlimited use of materials under copyright. The information in monographs is not free in any sense; it is the fruit of scholars' and scientists' labors, and it is protected by copy-

right laws, just like trade publications. To dilute that protection will not only hurt publishers, and does hurt them; it also discourages original research, because scholars as authors expect that their work will be protected from piracy and unwarranted exploitation and circulation.

I do not mean to sound negative, or get off the subject. It is wrong to think of scholarly monographs as existing in a vacuum, unrelated to market forces, to piracy issues, to university pressures and university budgets. We should also remember that a company like de Gruyter must compete with academic presses that are nominally not for profit, and therefore pay no taxes and receive subsidies from their parent universities or sponsoring societies. That in itself would account for the higher prices we must attach to our monographs.

ATG: *We seem to be moving into the darker and gloomier aspects of publishing today. Are there some particularly vexing problems you want to address?*

ES: There are many other areas which concern us as much as any other scholarly publishers, such as libraries purchasing paperbacks instead of hardcover books; declining journal subscriptions (de Gruyter publishes approximately 60 journals); the used-book market for textbooks; the whole issue of desk and exam copies for upper-level course texts; the problem of getting bookstores to carry scholarly titles; etc., etc. A discussion of these issues of concern to any scholarly publisher would only repeat or elaborate on what has been said or written by people more qualified to comment on these matters.

ATG: *It is often said that publishing is moving from a print culture to an electronic information culture. What are your company's thoughts on this?*

ES: Like many other publishers, even some large houses, de Gruyter began to think about electronic products relatively late. (By way of contrast, many of the librarians with whom we do business got into computer networks early, and are far more knowledgeable about these matters than we are.) We work largely in the print media, and as a

result, much of the impact of the new technologies has discouraged us from continuing with certain traditional lines because they lend themselves more readily to electronic delivery.

In a rather careful approach, we have produced a number of CD-ROMs. For example, de Gruyter is the major publisher in the world of the works of the philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche**, including a lot of writings, (correspondence, notebooks, and the like) that were left unpublished during his lifetime. We are currently offering in both Macintosh and IBM editions, collections of Nietzsche materials in CD-ROM format as an alternative to print.

Another example is a new reference work, an *Encyclopedia of Plant and Animal Drugs*. In addition to the full printed version and a concise paperback version (for the individual and student market), we offer a fully searchable CD-ROM version. Also, in an edited collection that Aldine, our American imprint, is publishing next year, we will include a floppy disk as a tool for practitioners.

We are also well aware, as I believe the President of *Encyclopedia Britannica* has put it, that CD-ROM may be an intermediate technology. De Gruyter publishes many long-range projects that take decades to complete and does not want to invest in expensive technological delivery systems that will be obsolete before a work has been completed.

ATG: *Can you tell us a little about your private interests and your family? What do you like to do when you're not working?*

ES: My wife works part time as an administrative assistant; my son is a senior at **Hofstra University**, majoring in International Business. We enjoy outdoor activities, which I definitely need to offset long hours of sitting behind a desk. In the summer we like to play tennis and go boating on the Hudson River; in the winter we like to go skiing as much as conditions and time permit.

NB: *I'd like to know more. Wouldn't you?*

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members in their efforts to expand resources available to their users. These initiatives have been both opportunistic and planned, originating from a number of locations within the organization, rather than from the formal consortial committees. The CIC member libraries have successfully negotiated site licenses for many large information databases. Through these efforts, CIC libraries have realized cost avoidance and direct sav-

ings of some \$700,000.

Although there is some overlap between the efforts of the two consortia, OSU is really getting the best of both worlds. We receive more databases from **OhioLINK**, but we are also able to take advantage of those offered through CIC that may be even more specialized. Our participation in the OhioLINK acquisition of resources has aided CIC in that OSU is counted as a participant in the CIC arrangements when OhioLINK pays the bill. While OSU has certainly not ceased its efforts in the provision of elec-

tronic resources locally, it is clear that cooperative efforts can greatly expand horizons for our users. We are committed, in a variety of ways, to furthering these efforts while continuing to expand local resources for our campus.

(An earlier version of the paper was presented at the EBSCO Executive Seminar, Remote Access through Consortial Agreement, January 21, 1996.)