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Curating Collective Collections — Emerging Shared Print Policy Choices as Reflected in MOUs

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How are consortia actually addressing the questions about shared print policy and practice outlined in the previous CCC column? The following analysis of a set of shared print Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) is an overview of the key policy choices consortia are making as they begin to build the foundations for a network of robust supra-institutional collective collections. The next column will discuss lessons learned from this analysis.

After reviewing 37 relevant documents,¹ the following criteria were used to develop a focused subset for analysis:

- Include MOUs from currently active shared print programs that:
 - involve multiple legally separate institutions;
 - were conceived as shared print programs from the outset²; and
 - are known to be operational and to have completed work on MOUs that address most of the key considerations in organizing a shared print program that can be reasonably expected to survive the tests of time in ensuring long-term preservation of and access to collectively managed legacy print collections.
- Exclude potentially relevant documents from programs that are:
 - outside North America;
 - for pilot projects of short duration;
 - not actual MOUs or agreements that require legally binding institutional agreement to a set of terms; or
 - “last copy” policies.

Applying these criteria yielded the following set of MOUs:

1. Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) “Collaborative Journal Retention Program” 2011
2. Central Iowa Collaborative Collections Initiative “CI-CCI Memorandum of Understanding” 2013
3. Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) “Memorandum of Understanding for Provision of Shared Print Repository Host Site Services” 2011 (draft; not for distribution)
4. Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries “COPPUL Shared Print Archive Network Member Agreement 2012
5. Five College Consortium (5C) “Five College Library Depository Policies” 2002 (last updated 2013)

6. Florida State University System Shared Collection “Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the FLorida Academic REpository (FLARE) 2013.
7. Great Western Library Alliance “GWLA Journal Distributed Print Repository MOU” 2012
8. IA State, UIA, UW-Madison (IA/UW) “MOU Distributed Print Repository” 2011
9. Maine Shared Collections Cooperative (MSCC) “Memorandum of Understanding” 2013
10. Michigan Collaborative for Library Services “MOU for Michigan Shared Print Initiative (MI-SPI) Participants” 2012
11. Orbis Cascade Alliance Distributed Print Repository “MOU – OCA Member Institution Agreement” 2009
12. Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium “PALCI Distributed STM Print Serials Archive Project – Member Library Agreement” 2009
13. Western Regional Storage Trust “WEST Program Statement” 2011

[Note: **Acronyms** are used to identify specific MOUs in the analysis.]

While these criteria excluded many thoughtful documents, they sharply focused the analysis on a subset of MOUs that are more directly comparable in intent and scope than the larger set of documents. Of the 13 MOUs that fit these criteria, the oldest (approved in 2002) is that of 5C and 10 (77%) were developed since 2010. Only two of these MOUs were included in **Constance Malpas’** very useful 2007 analysis³ of the first generation of shared print agreements. My hope is that analysis and lessons learned from it will provide an updated view of emerging shared print policies that consortia will find helpful in shaping shared print programs.

Analysis of MOUs

This analysis reports on major policy considerations in shaping a policy and governance framework for shared print, with particular attention to selection and collective management of these shared collections. Most of the actual MOUs are available for more in-depth analysis.⁴

1. Program description, principles, purposes, goals, and definitions — Many MOUs use language similar to that of the 5C to describe their purpose, which is to secure persistent deposit of lesser used materials to provide members with “...the assurance that they can withdraw duplicates of deposited items from their campus collections and rely with confidence on access to the copies placed in the Depository.” Of the 13 MOUs in this analysis, eight (62%) are distributed archives, three (23%) utilize centralized storage facilities, and two use both storage models. One MOU (PALCI) call for both a “light” archive and a “dark” archive (non-circulating copies).

2. Eligibility and participation — Ten (77%) of these shared print programs grew in some way out of pre-existing consortia, and three (MI-SPI, IA/WI, CI-CCI) are groupings of libraries that came together specifically for the purpose of establishing a shared print program. In most cases it seems that not all members of pre-existing consortia are required or expected to participate, though this is often implicit in the MOU. Nine (69%) specify only one category of membership, while two (15%) have multiple categories (e.g., archive holder, builder & supporter), and one allows libraries outside the existing consortium to join as “affiliate members.”

3. Governance and operations — Five programs (38%) use the existing consortium governance group as the operational group for their shared print program (this is implicit in three MOUs and explicit in two); and eight (62%)

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News From the Field

- **ARL** published Spec Kit 337 “Print Retention Decision Making” Oct. 2013.
- **WRLC** Board has approved construction of a third storage module. **WRLC** is working with **Sustainable Collections Services** on an analysis of their circulating collection.
- **PALCI’s** distributed print serials archive is in the process of adding journals published by the **American Psychological Association** to its existing archive of three STM publisher journals (ACS, AIP, and APS).
- **WEST** is embarking on a process of program evaluation and strategic planning as it works to achieve sustainability as a fully member-supported program, and as it considers new programmatic changes.
- **HathiTrust** has initiated a program to expand and enhance access to U.S. federal publications. The first step is to get an idea of the total corpus and compare the holdings of its members, to determine what portion of the corpus is already in the **HathiTrust**, what portion is not but has already been digitized, and what portion remains to be digitized. <http://www.hathitrust.org/usgovdocs>
- **Maine Shared Collections Strategy** is co-sponsoring with **CRL** a shared print pre-conference at the **2014 ALA Annual Conference** on June 27. For more information on “Looking to the Future of Shared Print,” see <http://www.maineinfolnet.net/mscs/ALA2014/>. 🐾

specify that there will be a separate group (typically an operations and collections group or a steering committee). The degree of definition of roles and responsibilities of these “steering committees” varies greatly. Three MOUs (23%) provide for an administrative host or fiscal agent for the program.

4. Scope and selection of materials — Five MOUs (38%) cover print journals only, one (8%) covers monographs only, and seven are written to anticipate the development of shared collections comprising both monographs and journals (and in a few cases an even broader scope of materials). Definitions of the shared collection vary greatly. Seven agreements (54%) mention specific title lists (journals or monographs) that are either appended to the MOU or referenced in it. Six agreements (46%) mention or imply a minimum number of copies for which they seek retention commitments, but most do not specifically address this topic. Only one MOU (5C) explicitly states a “last copy” retention policy. Four MOUs (31%) concerned primarily with journals mention provisions for transfer (or permanent loan) of materials to achieve completeness in retention sets. While a number of MOUs mention the importance of condition (vs. completeness) of materials retained, only four (31%) require visual inspection to determine if the item is actually on the shelf and in good condition. Most MOUs make some reference to the development of future selection methods; this is most often designated as the responsibility of a “steering committee,” or by future collection analysis, or at the discretion of the individual member libraries.

5. Duration of retention commitment — Two MOUs (15%) specify “permanent deposits” (5C and FLARE). Overall, the most common retention period is 25 years (31%, of MOUs). Of the remaining, 23% require ten years, 15% require 15 years, and one group (CIC) requires only a five-year commitment. One MOU (COPPUL) specifies different retention periods (10 and 25 years) for materials at different risk levels. All provide for renewal of retention commitments, usually in the same increments as the initial period.

6. Ownership and location of materials in shared collection — Eleven agreements (85%) state that the member making the commitment retains ownership of the title. FLARE states that ownership of all deposits is transferred to the U of FLA. 5C transfers ownership to the consortium, except for UMASS, which retains its ownership of deposits. Materials are stored in the owning library in seven cases (54%), while the balance are in a centralized storage facility or have hybrid arrangements encompassing both options.

7. Collection management/maintenance — In describing the conditions in which shared materials are to be housed, four MOUs (31%) provide specifications (or refer to guidelines that will be provided in future). These are usually posed as recommendations rather than requirements. The remaining nine MOUs are either silent on this topic, or make general statements such as “best environmental and physical conditions it can reasonably offer” or “provide secure and environmentally controlled conditions.” Most MOUs make at least some mention of collection management responsibilities. Four MOUs (31%; COPPUL, CIC, OCA, WEST) articulate specific expectations (or state that guidelines will be provided in future) on matters such as physical handling, marking, bibliographic identifiers, temperature and humidity, security, conservation and preservation treatments, and protections against inadvertent discard of retained materials. The remaining 69% either avoid detailed address of this topic or use more general language, such as “Use their best effort to maintain, house, preserve...” or “...treat retention titles with the same or better care as other materials in their collections...” Only one MOU (PALCI) requires inventory of retained titles (“from time to time”), and none provide any specific guidance or expectations on security (though WEST has separate documents that define requirements for different archive types: bronze, silver, gold and platinum). Nearly all the MOUs include language about replacement of lost or damaged materials, most often along the lines of “...expected to follow their usual workflows and procedures...” Some also require notification if materials are lost and not replaced, or are replaced with a different edition.

8. Access/service model — The majority of MOUs indicate that most materials are meant to circulate in accord with the policies of the owning institution, that periodicals do not generally circulate but reproductions are provided, and that normal ILL channels will be used for loans beyond the participants in the shared print program. All but one MOU (OCA) allows for loans beyond the membership. Several MOUs specifically allow

for loan of long print runs of journals for research purposes, while most do not address this issue.

9. Business model — These MOUs reflect two general business models: in seven MOUs (54%) each member covers its own costs in identifying, processing and maintaining retention titles; in six of the agreements there are provisions for cost sharing for both one-time and ongoing costs based on a consortial formula administered centrally. The latter tend to be the larger programs associated with robust pre-existing consortia. In some cases central financial support is provided for members that have taken on extra responsibilities on behalf of the participants (e.g., host site for storage of materials, and “archive builders.”

10. Bibliographic control and disclosure — Four MOUs (31%) contain some specific guidelines for bibliographic control. Five MOUs (38%) contain general statements about the expectations for records supporting discovery and disclosure (e.g., “...shall take all steps reasonably necessary...” or “...title and holdings information shall be made freely and easily available via OPACS...”). Some refer to future guidelines.

11. Withdrawal of members and materials — All but one (5C) MOU makes provision for participants to withdraw from the agreement. Most require a period of notice (usually 1-2 years) and mutual agreement on the withdrawal. The critical question is: does the commitment to retain materials survive withdrawal from the agreement? Three MOUs (23%) do not allow for removal of retention titles from the shared collection (5C, FLARE, CIC). Six MOUs (46%) require members to offer retention titles to other participants upon withdrawal from the agreement. Several provide for waiver of this requirement “...if it determines the materials no longer need to be archived.” Two others (15%) make such offering of retained titles optional. In two cases the disposition of retained titles upon withdrawal is unclear. Finally, there is a wide range of approaches and some lack of clarity about the circumstances in which a retained title may be withdrawn by an active participant while still active in the shared print program.

12. Amendment and review of MOU — Nearly all MOUs provide for regular review on some agreed schedule, or on an as-needed basis. Requirements for amending MOUs are generally defined, most commonly as either 2/3 vote or unanimous consent. Few MOUs directly address the question of dissolving the shared collection agreement entirely.

13. Institutional commitment: signatories to the MOU — In seven cases (54%) the signatory is unclear, either because the document did not include a signature page or because the level of institutional signatory is not designated. Two MOUs (15%) specifically call for signature by a President or other university official (CIC, CI-CCI). Three agreements require signature by the library director, and one appears to have been approved by vote of the consortium governing council.

14. Related policies, procedures, and/or guidelines — Most MOUs have related materials appended to the MOU, or refer to other documents, or mention future policy & procedure development to guide action on specific topics.



Conclusion

While the previous column⁵ outlined the major considerations address in developing MOUs, this one looks at how these policy choices are playing out in a set of recent MOUs. In the next column I will examine what we might learn from this analysis, and offer observations and recommendations, along with topics for further work towards identifying trends, issues, and best practices in policy work in building the collective collection. 🐘

Endnotes

1. These are listed in a spreadsheet at www.samdemasconsulting.com.
2. This eliminates a number of “de facto” shared print collections; these began, typically, as shared storage facilities and are in various stages of transforming themselves into intentional shared print collections.
3. Malpas, Constance. 2009. Shared Print Policy Review Report. OCLC Research. www.oclc.org/programs/reports/2009-03.pdf
4. The Center for Research Libraries “Print Archive Preservation Registry” (<http://www.crl.edu/archiving-preservation/print-archives/service-agreements>) is a good source of sample MOUs to peruse.
5. Demas, Samuel. “Policies for Shared Print Programs: Questions to Address in Writing a Memorandum of Understanding.” *Against the Grain*, v.26#1, February 2014.