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Biz of Acq — Cooperative Collection Development Among Michigan's Public Universities

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Column Editor's Note: *This article about cooperation in collection development among Michigan's public universities describes structure, logistics, and benefits, including shared collection development and the cooperative acquisitions of electronic resources. This article adds nice perspective to previous articles on the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions Consortium in describing how it's done in another state, and indeed, Michigan takes a very different approach than Maryland but one that still provides clear benefits to participating libraries. — MF*

Universities compete regularly against each other, from vying for potential students to battling in various sporting events. Public universities compete for financial support from their state government. On the other hand, libraries have been bastions of cooperation, from sharing cataloging to sharing resources via interlibrary loan. The public university libraries have taken cooperation a step further in the state of Michigan, thanks to COLD (Council of Library Directors).

2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the first Council of Library Directors/Deans Collection Development discussion group meeting. It was held at the **University of Michigan's Dearborn** campus on April 21, 1995. It grew out of an idea by co-chairs **Bettina Meyer** of **Western Michigan** and **Joanna Mitchell** of **Northern Michigan**. They were the Collection Development Librarians at their institutions and had represented their institutions at a 1994 meeting of the COLD directors. They proposed that a discussion group be formed of the collection development librarians from the Michigan public universities. A discussion group for representatives from the interlibrary loan units had already been formed in 1991, and the directors approved of one for the collection development librarians.

The members of COLD are the fifteen Michigan public universities: **Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Ferris State, Grand Valley State, Lake Superior State, Michigan State, Michigan Technological, Northern Michigan, Oakland, Saginaw Valley State, Wayne State, Western Michigan**, and the three **University of Michigan** campuses — **Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint**. In addition the **Library of Michigan** and **MCLS** (the **Midwest Collaborative for Library Services**, formerly **MLC** — the **Michigan Library Consortium**) have been included as members.

The ILL and CD discussion groups meet at the same time twice per year, spring and fall. One of the institutions volunteers to host the meeting. The host picks a date that works for their campus. They suggest housing for travelers arriving the night before and often arrange a group dinner for those arriving the day before. The host also traditionally offers a light breakfast, lunch, and free parking to its guests. All institutions have hosted the meeting. The logistics can be amazing, considering Michigan is a large state and three of the universities are in the Upper Peninsula. Attendance is usually very good, and in recent years libraries have had the option of participating through a conference call when travelling is just not an option.

The ILL and CD groups have each created a listserv. It is used to announce information about the upcoming meeting, or people can ask questions or take a poll between meetings or just stay in touch.

Ms. Meyer and **Mitchell** provided solid leadership for the CD group until they retired. Ever since then one of the librarians has offered to chair for a year or two. The chair will establish the agenda for the meeting, often asking for feedback and advice from the others. The ILL group has always rotated chairs.

What happens at each meeting varies. Sometimes there are guest speakers, or members will present about something new at their institution. For instance, **JSTOR** and **ProQuest's ebrary** have sent representatives to past meetings. **Susan Powers** from **Central Michigan University** has reported on their experience in using the **Copyright Clearance Center's Get it Now** resource to obtain journal articles. Usually **Diana Mitchell** from **MCLS** will inform the CD group about upcoming electronic renewals or new offers. Sometimes the topic is relevant for ILL and CD, so part of the meeting will include both groups. The essential point is that the discussion percolates from the participants to the directors: we do not receive edicts from our bosses about what to discuss.

A popular feature for both groups has been the Round-Robin reports. We go around the room, and everyone talks about the latest news at their library and university. If the agenda is full, the Round-Robin reports will be put in writing in advance. The meeting results are shared with the COLD deans, either in writing or in person at one of the directors' meeting.

Probably the most important reason to meet is for the invaluable networking. There is a sense of camaraderie. You can ask for advice or clarification without judgment and learn from others' mistakes. People can vent, but overall

it is an amicable atmosphere. The new librarians and staff are mentored by their seasoned colleagues. Since you see these people twice per year, you become comrades. People look forward to these semi-annual meetings

The growth of electronic resources has meant that there is often financial incentives for group purchases. **MCLS** has led the way in brokering deals on behalf of state universities, as well as other Michigan libraries. We can opt in or out, depending on our interests or finances.

There have been several interesting actions that have grown out of the discussions. The concerns about storage issues and cooperative retention in the CD meeting led to the formation of the MI-SPI, Michigan Shared Print Initiative. Using the services of **MCLS** and **SCS, Sustainable Collection Services**, seven of the public university libraries reviewed their shared holdings and came up with a plan for retention and weeding. Several other state universities have expressed interest in participating in a follow-up analysis.

The ILL group has discussed the need for reaching out to other ILL departments. A subgroup worked with **MCLS** and representatives from other nearby state libraries to create the inaugural **Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference**. It was held on June 5 and 6, 2014, in Perrysburg, Ohio. Its success has led to a second conference to be held in summer 2015 at Kalamazoo, Michigan.

As for my library, we became interested and later implemented a DDA (Demand-driven Acquisitions) program for eBooks after learning about **Doug Way's** experience at **Grand Valley State University**.

Unlike our southern neighbor state, Ohio, the libraries at the Michigan public universities do not have a state legislative mandate to cooperate. We do not have the same ILS. We do not all use ILLiad or MeLCat for interlibrary loan. We do not use the same serial vendors or book jobbers. The impetus for continued cooperation has evolved from the semi-annual discussions.

There has been the expected turnover in library staff over the decades since the first COLD meeting that I attended in 1996. I have gone from being one of the new kids to one of the old timers. As the COLD discussion groups have evolved, we have been having discussions about the future. The COLD directors have expressed their continued support. In 2011 the COLD directors created a third discussion group. This is for heads or chairs of reference services. I am confident that the COLD discussions will continue, with substantive benefit to all of the participating libraries. 🌱