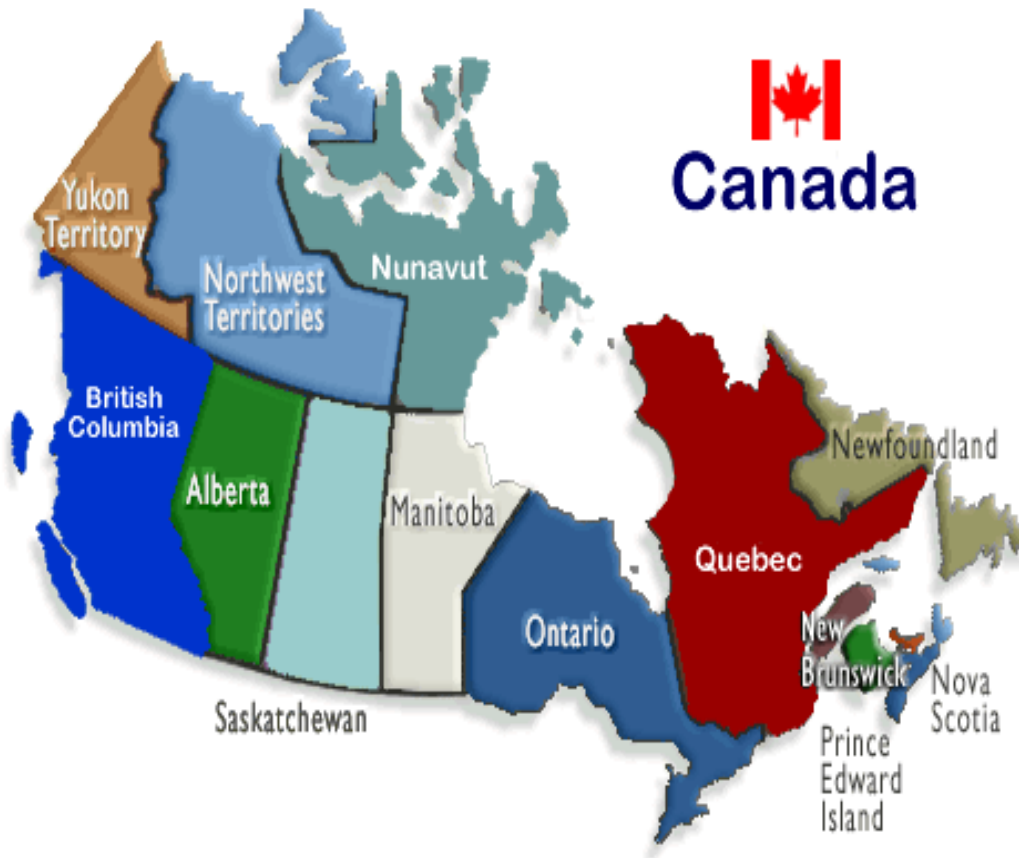CRKN / RCDR

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Consortia Collaboration: The View from Canada

Deb deBruijn • Executive Director

Canadian Research Knowledge Network
Réseau canadien de documentation pour la recherche

Canada: a nation of regions

- Population: 32 million

- Government: federal, provincial/territorial & municipal

- No national funding authority for education

- Federal research granting councils

- Federal agenda for innovation

University libraries

- University community nation-wide:
  - Less than 100 universities
  - Approx. 800,000 professors & students

- Strong tradition of resource sharing
  - overcome the "tyranny of distance"
  - make scarce resources go farther
  - harness strengths of multiple organizations
  - **seize new opportunities through new enterprises**

Consortia in Canada

CRKN / RCDR

- Development of local, provincial, regional, multi-regional consortia

- Response to scalability challenges

- Focus on electronic resources
  - Discovery, requesting, delivery
  - Content licensing
  - Maintain institutional mission and processes

Canadian Research Knowledge Network

CRKN / RCDR

- "Daughter" of Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP)
  - seed funding from Canada Foundation for Innovation
  - building a national community on regional strengths

- Collaborative program of Canadian universities & their libraries
  - not-for-profit corporation, April 2004
  - member-owned and funded
  - ongoing program

CRKN Overview

Mission:

- to expand the universe of digital research information available to Canada's academic research community, through the coordinated services and expertise of academic libraries

Core Purpose:

- to increase the capacity for research and innovation in Canada

CRKN Overview (cont.)

Objectives:

- **Expand** the research content available to researchers nation-wide

- **Speed** transition to digital materials & value-added forms of content, and **maximize its value** through networked access

- **Leverage** the buying power and influence of Canadian universities

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Base assumptions

- Our collections are inadequate

- Our resources are underutilized

- Our ability to predict & anticipate users' needs is flawed

- Our spending & efforts are fragmented

- We are small fish in a very large pond

- The environment is changing…

Why incorporation?

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- Empowerment & accountability of Board of Directors

- Members' rights & responsibilities

- Legal liability in executing contracts

- Relationship with regional consortia, national associations & host organization

- Organizational stability / maturity

Creating a new organization

- We share vision
  - we construct a collaborative response to need & opportunity

- We share a voice within the national agenda
  - research content *is* infrastructure
  - equitable access to research content is essential public policy
  - libraries are central to a thriving knowledge-based society

- We share expertise
  - we will demonstrate "proof of concept" on a national scale, and apply learnings to future work

- We share power
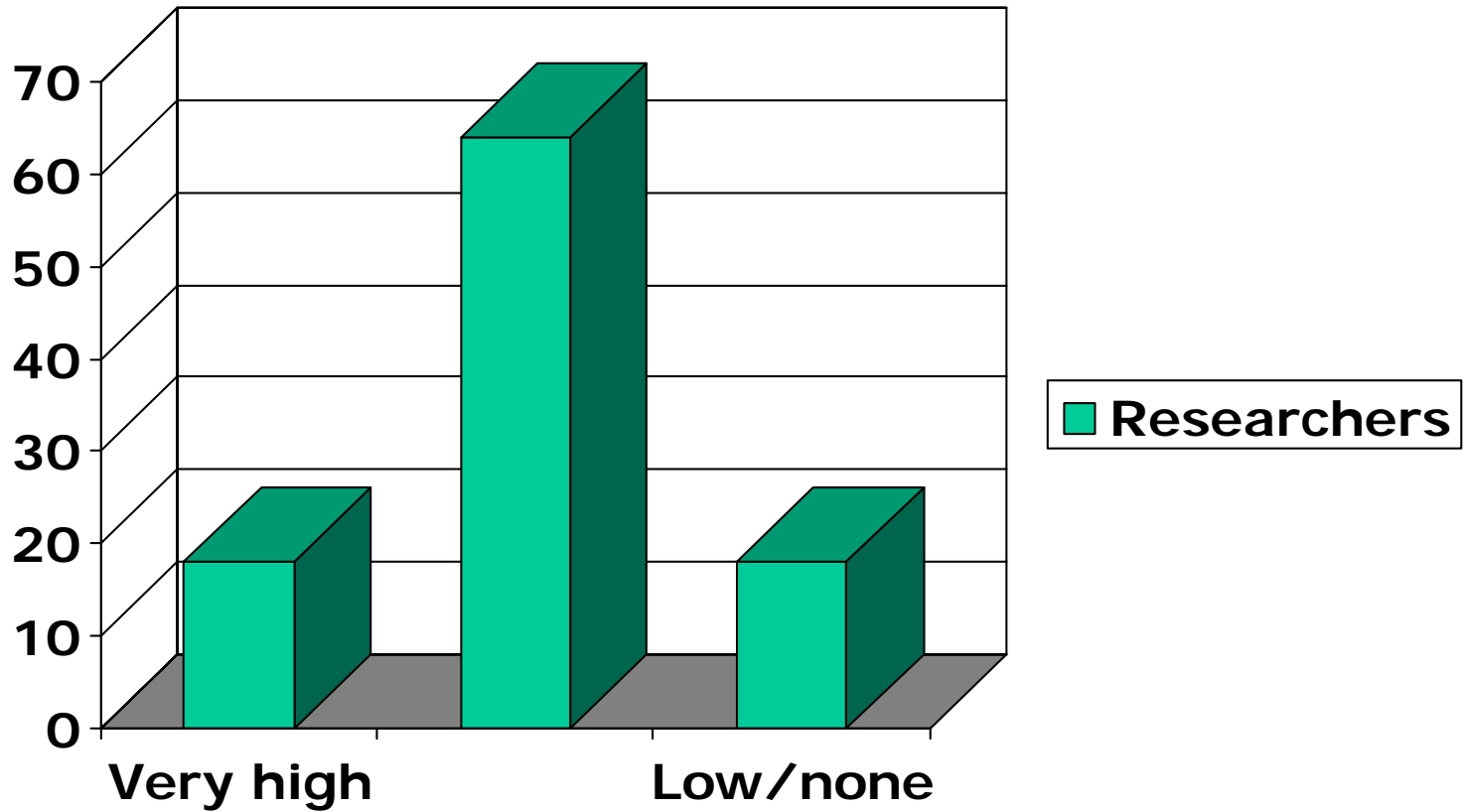 - we will create new models & value

Impacts

- Formal evaluation
  - Researcher study
  - Survey of library directors
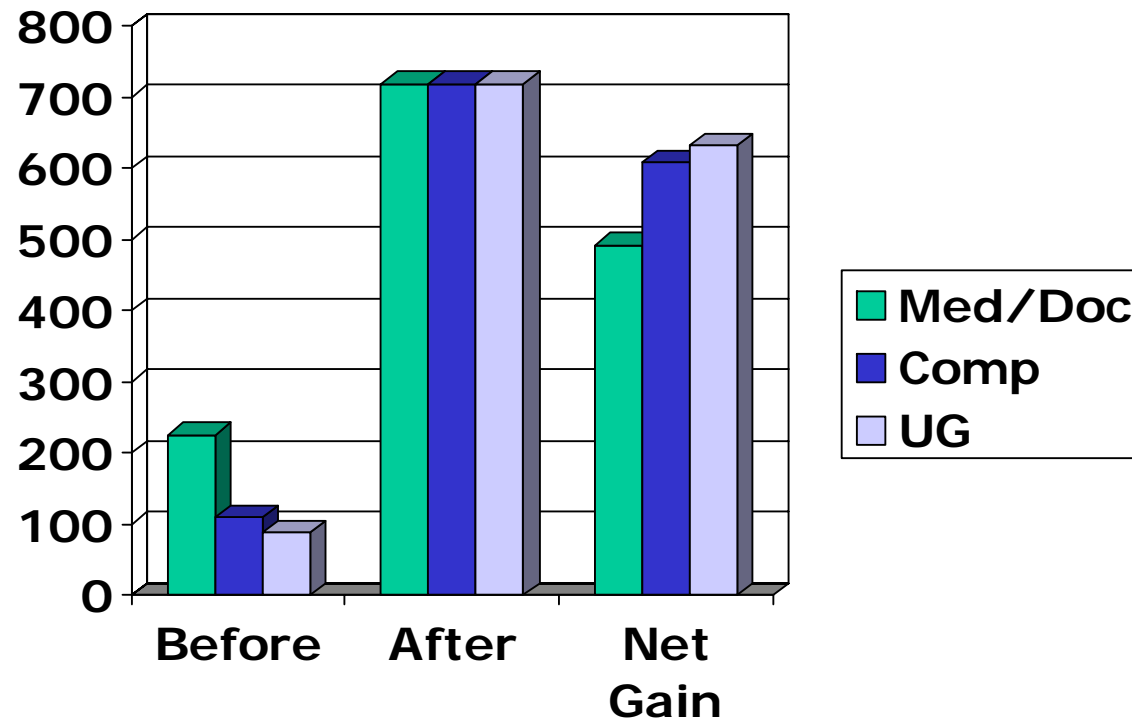 - Usage

Accelerated Use of Digital Formats by Researchers

CRKN / RCDR

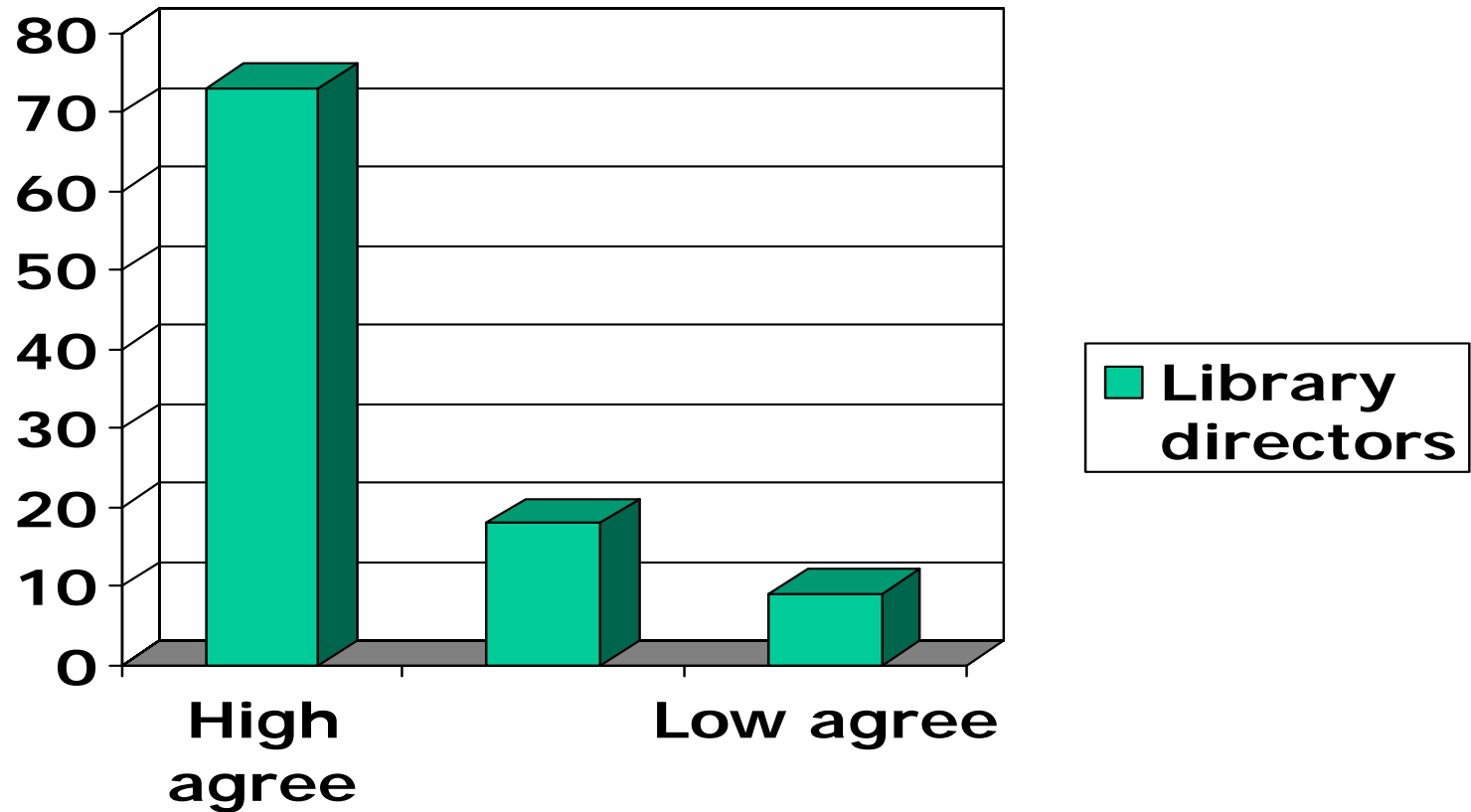|	Paper	Digital
2001	70%	31%
2003	35%	65%

Impact on Conducting Research

Increased equity of access for researchers

Accelerated E-journal Adoption

Accelerate E-journal Adoption (cont.)

- *CNSLP had a high profile with our university administration; their philosophical support aided in the transition to financing e-only journals.*

Usage

- Annual growth in usage

- Usage growth holds true across regions & types of universities

Tough lessons learned

- assume nothing

- "negotiations" with consortia members and partners can be more complex than negotiations with vendors

- there can never be enough communication

- our strengths are our weaknesses

Base assumptions

- Our collections are inadequate

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Strategies for success

- **Move from "problem-driven" to "vision-driven"**
  - problems = catalyst ; vision = commitment
  - seek broad agendas
  - build agreement on big issues

- **Focus on collaboration, not merely cooperation**
  - look beyond institutional self-interest
  - extend reach & impact, not cut costs
  - define relationships & build trust through pilot projects
  - build interdependence

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Strategies for success (cont.)

- **Build consensus**
  - agree on process for decision making
  - value disagreements
  - avoid thinking in terms of win-lose
  - use small groups to mobilize large group
  - articulate agreement / decisions clearly & often

- **Pay attention to accountability**
  - "goodness" is not self-evident; good ideas fail every day
  - demonstrate return on investment

Strategies for success (cont.)

- **Risk reduction is good for all parties**
  - encourages movement / innovation
  - allows shift in business practices

- **Be aware of unintended consequences**
  - e.g. empowerment vs. disenfranchisement
  - be careful what you ask for…
  - no single answer: adopt complementary strategies, experiment, build alliances

- **Small can be beautiful**

Thank you

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