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## **Multi-Institutional Library Collaboration and the Future of Scholarly Collections**

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Academic libraries face a number of challenges in managing large collections of periodicals and books. Stewardship of these collections must balance the need to preserve older parts of the scholarly record with the constant space demands of the ongoing acquisitions, without also impinging upon other uses the library needs to support, including student study space. In many large academic libraries, including libraries of the University of New Mexico, the necessary expansion of campus library space is not forthcoming under current budget scenarios for higher education (or not forthcoming on a timescale that will meet the immediate crisis).

Some libraries have sought relief for collection space issues through use of offsite storage facilities. Although cheaper than building traditional library shelving space, these can, nonetheless, be expensive to lease or construct and maintain. Often, spaces that are not purpose-built for libraries do not meet the necessary environmental controls for long-term preservation of library collections. The University Libraries would benefit greatly from access to a suitable storage facility, but the space problem now faced needs more immediate action.

In recent years, many institutions of higher education have sought solutions to these problems through collaboration. Ohio, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, and New York are just a few states that have implemented multi-institutional, climate-controlled storage facilities for library collections. An even more ambitious enterprise has developed among North American academic libraries in the last decade: massive, multi-institutional and multi-state collaboration.

This scale of collaboration developed initially as a way to reduce the cost of electronic collections through group buying. The collaborators are now seeking ways to share the cost of not only resource acquisitions but also the personnel and space necessary for the preservation of large collections of print scholarly material.

Collaboration at this scale has only become practical as sophisticated analysis of library holdings data has become possible through national or regional bibliographic utilities. OCLC, for example, is an international, collaborative repository of library bibliographic information, which is used in many resource sharing projects. The ability to analyze library holdings across dozens or even hundreds of organizations means that library collection managers can pinpoint where, for example, the most extensive holdings of a particular journal are held. Librarians can then collaborate across multiple organizations to build the most complete holdings in those places where it makes sense. The benefit to other libraries is that those with less extensive collections can then withdraw marginal holdings with the assurance that other libraries hold a complete set.

This kind of collaboration requires complete trust among all the participant libraries. It also requires several levels of cooperation. There can be no “free riders” within this kind of multi-institutional organization. Participant libraries need to:

- Maintain complete and accurate records of their library holdings.
- Be willing to loan materials from their collections to other libraries.
- Hold in perpetuity those materials they have pledge to preserve on behalf of the collective organization.
- Be willing to withdraw materials that might be marginal in their own collection and shift these to other libraries that are attempting to build up comprehensive holdings for that journal title or in that subject area.

Under this type of collaborative scenario, all of the libraries together become the repository of information, without the need to build separate storage facilities. Collectively, a greater number and variety of resources can be preserved than any single library would be capable of doing. The greatest possible cross-section of the scholarly record is maintained and shared among all the libraries. Diversity is maintained but duplication of materials is reduced. Each library can focus on its own institutional priorities without the need to maintain collections of materials that are less important to that mission. The space requirements of each individual library are reduced without consequently reducing access to information for the library users.

There are, however, barriers to participation within such organizations. For the University of New Mexico, state laws are fairly restrictive regarding the disposition of state property, including library collections. UNM is unable to participate fully in this kind of collaboration without being able to withdraw materials from its collections and shift them to other partner libraries, particularly those outside of the state of New Mexico. In a library cooperative, those materials would still be accessible to UNM users, but statutes seem to restrict this kind of shared collection. Sharing collections across multiple organizations is a cost effective way to maintain access to information and preserve the greatest extent of the scholarly record, while also continuing to provide effective local library services for UNM students, faculty, and staff.

The loan of materials from one library to another is already a universal practice among academic libraries., but the permanent shifting of materials from one library to another is now becoming commonplace. The University Libraries seeks an understanding with UNM administration that resource sharing that would include withdrawing materials from UNM and shifting those permanently to other institutions, with the possible necessity of signing a “deed of gift” in some cases, is an acceptable practice. Such library collaboration is quickly becoming

standard practice among large academic libraries, including those at state universities. UNM will face being on the outside looking in as this type of cooperative library effort becomes the norm. The UL has, for example, become a member of the Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST), but will be unable to participate fully without greater flexibility to share library collections.

See appendices attached

## **Appendix A: Current UL participation in collaborative projects**

### **Center for Research Libraries (CRL):**

LAMP Latin American Microform Project

LARRP Latin Americanist Research Resources Project

TRAIL Technical Report Archive & Image Library

### **Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST):**

Shared/distributed print repository to preserve physical copies of journals--primarily those that are widely available in digital form already (JSTOR and others).

### **Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA):**

Annual Reviews shared/distributed print repository, UNM responsibilities:

- Annual Review of Biophysics and Biophysical Chemistry
  - Annual Review of Energy and the Environment
  - Annual Review of Plant Physiology and Plant Molecular Biology
- Needs: shared print repository local holdings note (MARC field 583)

Collections task force: working with OCLC to collect overlap data for all GWLA libraries.

### **Potential collaboration:**

Hathi Trust

shares, maintains, and preserves both tangible and digital collections

DPN: Digital Preservation Network

new organization investigating the collaborative preservation of scholarly data and other digital resources.

### **Information Sharing:**

CRL: Serves as a clearing house of distributed archives information

PAN: Print Archives Network (discussion group that meets at ALA conferences)

PAPR: Print Archives and Preservation Registry (database of distributed repositories)

## Appendix B: Members of WEST:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Arizona State University                     | University of California, Davis                        |
| Baylor University                            | University of California, Irvine                       |
| Brigham Young University                     | University of California, Los Angeles                  |
| California Institute of Technology           | University of California, Merced                       |
| California Polytechnic State University      | University of California, Riverside                    |
| California State University, Channel Islands | University of California, San Diego                    |
| California State University, Fullerton       | University of California, San Francisco                |
| California State University, Northridge      | University of California, Santa Barbara                |
| Claremont Colleges                           | University of California, Santa Cruz                   |
| Getty Research Institute                     | University of Colorado, Denver Health Sciences Library |
| Huntington Library                           | University of Denver                                   |
| Iowa State University                        | University of Hawaii                                   |
| Kansas State University                      | University of Idaho                                    |
| New Mexico State University                  | University of Kansas                                   |
| Northern Arizona University                  | University of Missouri                                 |
| Occidental College                           | University of Nebraska-Lincoln                         |
| Oklahoma State University                    | University of Nevada - Las Vegas                       |
| Oregon State University                      | University of New Mexico                               |
| Portland State University                    | University of Oklahoma                                 |
| Rice University                              | University of Oregon                                   |
| San Diego State University                   | University of Utah                                     |
| San Francisco State University               | University of Washington                               |
| San Jose State University                    | University of Wyoming                                  |
| Stanford University                          | Utah State University                                  |
| Texas Tech University                        | Washington State University                            |
| University of Arizona                        | Washington University in St. Louis                     |
| University of Arkansas                       | Western Washington University                          |
| University of California, Berkeley           |  |

Also includes consortial members from the Orbis/Casade Alliance of libraries in the Pacific Northwest and members of the Statewide California Electronic Licensing Consortium (SCELC).

**Appendix C: Members of GWLA:**

Arizona State University  
Baylor University  
Brigham Young University  
Colorado State University  
Iowa State University  
Kansas State University  
Oklahoma State University  
Oregon State University  
Rice University  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale  
Southern Methodist University  
Texas A&M University  
Texas Tech University  
University of Arizona  
University of Arkansas  
University of Colorado at Boulder  
Other memberships pending (August 2012).

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
University of Houston  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of Kansas  
University of Missouri at Columbia  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
University of New Mexico  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Oregon  
University of Southern California  
University of Texas at Austin  
University of Utah  
University of Washington  
Utah State University  
Washington State University  
Washington University in St. Louis