

**Orbis Cascade Alliance  
Content Creation & Dissemination Team  
Draft Statement of Principles for Unique and Local Content  
For Comment by CCD Representatives and Alliance Teams and Working Groups  
2017 January 9**

**Context:**

This project fulfills a portion of the [CCD Team's FY17 goals](#): Facilitate a coordinated approach to discovery of unique collections in the Alliance Primo environment

Drawing on the Shared Content Team's successful creation of a statement of principles for collection development last year, the project is to develop a statement of principles that provides a framework for the Alliance and its member libraries as they engage in the curation, preservation, creation, and dissemination of unique and local content. The project recognizes that while unique and local content enriches the collections of Alliance libraries, and often requires investment in labor, tools, and other resources on par with commodity content, there is not currently consensus as to the appropriate role that Alliance standards, resources, shared work, or decision-making could take in supporting members' work with such content. As such, the project focuses on high-level organizational matters including, but not limited to: the role of the consortium and of individual institutions in developing approaches and best practices; consortium and local resources devoted to unique and local content; and opportunities for consortial work and systems to add value for institutions, their students, and their priority researchers.

The project is producing a written statement of principles to be shared in dialogue with other Alliance programs/teams, and with the Board and Executive Director as part of preparations for strategic planning at the Alliance in FY18. The forum with CCD Representatives is only the first step in this dialogue.

**Statement of principles:**

The Alliance's *Statement of Collection Development Best Practices* describes an aspirational commitment for Alliance institutions to "promote, expose, and preserve unique local collections and collection areas of strength as those add value to both institutional and collaborative collections." The intent of this document is to expand on that commitment by providing an overarching framework for the Alliance and its member libraries as they engage in both individual and consortial initiatives dedicated to creating, collecting, distributing, or preserving unique and local content.

For the purposes of this document, *unique and local content* is defined as items (singular or in collections) that are either:

- held by only a single library and cannot be readily replaced or substituted;
- held in a very small number of libraries, in aggregations unique to the institution;
- or are original works initially published/distributed from within the institution.

Unique and local content is strongly linked to the holding institution's community, whether through authorship, publication, distribution, source of acquisition, or connections to local academic and scholarly life. Because of these linkages, unique and local content primarily supports institutional missions; however, it often holds wide public relevance that requires broader priorities for access. Therefore, unique and local content is also characterized by an expressed commitment on the part of the holding library to permanent retention (and/or distribution, in the case of local publications) of the content due to its unique value. Finally, in contrast with commodity content, which is *only* available through purchase, unique and local content is acquired or distributed *primarily* by means other than purchase.

The Guiding Principles outlined here are grounded in four core assumptions:

- First, that despite the individual nature of unique and local content, there are common strategies--and opportunities for collaboration--that will benefit any Alliance institution engaged in working with this content.
- Second, that the creation, collection, distribution, or preservation of unique and local content is as valuable a role for Alliance institutions as is the purchase and provision of commodity collections. The context provided by the aggregation of unique and local content enhances its value in teaching and research for the community of each member institution.
- Third, that unique and local content is valuable because its primary nature supports cutting-edge teaching, learning, and research that secondary materials cannot, and its singular nature makes it an irreplaceable resource for both local users and a plurality of broad communities.
- And, finally, that the value of unique and local content is determined not by the size of the audience, but by the potential impact for any community of users, including underserved communities.

While each member library will necessarily develop unique and local content collections and services to best meet local institutional needs--or the needs of communities the institution partners with--this document is intended to complement local practices based on the recognition of the value of shared approaches and work within the Alliance.

### **Guiding Principles:**

The Alliance will:

- Ensure that Alliance work on unique and local content is organizationally integrated across the consortium.
- Incorporate unique and local content collections, services, and initiatives into strategic planning and development

- Advocate for the centrality of unique and local content to the mission of academic libraries, and the value of such content in teaching, learning, and scholarship
- Promote, expose, and provide access to unique and local content in a manner equitable to that provided for commodity collections
- Develop consortium-wide initiatives that address common needs in order to free up institutional capacity for needs only able to be addressed locally
- Adopt appropriate quantitative and qualitative metrics of use and impact to aid in assessing, and communicating the value of, unique and local content
- Provide open access to unique and local content whenever possible; encourage creators and contributors to permit open access to their content in support of teaching, learning, and scholarship; support distribution and publishing models that create free and open access to unique and local content.
- Support and fund collective efforts to aggregate, distribute, and/or preserve unique and local content in order to promote broad visibility, access, and persistence of individual institutions' content
- Work with appropriate partners to develop unique and local content collections that address areas of emerging scholarly interest, increase the diversity of available knowledge, or meet the needs of an underserved user community
- Support a cooperative and strategic, rather than competitive, approach to developing unique and local content collections, services, and systems
- Ensure that unique and local content is, at a minimum, as accessible for users with physical disabilities as are commodity collections; this includes both the content itself and interfaces used to aggregate or provide access to the content
- Make decisions about collective approaches to unique and local content that consider the characteristics of the individual institutions' content and their users, and the role of unique and local content within teaching, learning, and scholarship at individual institutions

**Examples of the scope of unique and local content:**

- Analog
  - Archives and records, including still images, moving images, and audio
  - Manuscripts, including still images, moving images, and audio

- Rare books
- College and university publications (department, newspapers, yearbooks)
- University press/publishing services titles/content
- Digital
  - Faculty and student scholarly and creative work
  - Electronic records
  - Digital open textbooks
  - Digital learning objects
  - Born digital archives, records, and manuscripts
  - Born digital college and university publications