

**Collaborative Collection Development  
Presentation to the Orbis Cascade Alliance Council  
Mark Watson, Chair, CDMC Steering Team  
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Collaborative CD needs little introduction to this group. Back in 2004, Council responded favorably to the recommendation to “Establish and appoint a permanent standing committee to advance the goals of fostering shared collections, maximizing the use of Summit and positioning the consortium to leverage the combined strength of its resources to most effectively meet the research and teaching needs of each member institution.” Since that time, the CDMC has been at work trying to “Think consortially while collecting locally.” By working together the belief is that we can accomplish two things:

- Buy fewer *unnecessary* duplicates
- Buy more titles overall to increase the pool of available works

As Rick Lugg points out in the white paper, a compelling vision for shared collections was reached when the Council adopted the statement: “As an Alliance we consider the combined collections of member institutions as one collection.”

And, as he goes on to say, the Alliance has taken many collaborative actions.

But, for all that we’ve accomplished, collaborative CD seems even more urgent today than it did five years ago perhaps because the financial challenges we are facing in our country and at the state and local levels are unprecedented. Precious resources demand an even higher level of stewardship and that means thinking outside our respective library silos and truly coming to grips with what it means, not only to share a collection but to share the selection, ordering, and maintenance that goes into its creation and ongoing care.

Rick Lugg has challenged us to think about moving our operations to the network level. Are there barriers? Yes. Rick states that, “it is almost impossible to overstate the cultural shift that must occur for any of these ideas to really work.” Why? For one thing, we suffer from schizophrenia. What is job #1? Is it to prioritize our work to meet the needs of primary users or to collaborate on behalf of the whole? The way we currently operate puts collaborative action into job #2. As Deb stated in her speed dating presentation, “Building a cooperative collection cannot be one thing we do, it has to be what we are about. It has to happen first; first we work at the consortium level, then we go to the local level.” Currently, this does not happen, and frankly I don’t think our current committee structure will enable it to happen. Steering team members are selected for other reasons (like representative balance) than making sure action will be taken in the local library. Leaders and decision-makers “back home” are often not present, get the news second hand and don’t feel any sense of obligation to follow through on the “extra work” that some consortial committee is deciding that it thinks is important. [anecdote about DPR labels]

The forces of inertia are also very strong. Our procedures and ways of doing things have been honed down through the generations and we will not easily give them up. We believe we are adding value to the process and customizing the results for local users. I think we have blinders on and we really can’t see the enormous duplication of effort that is going on. Or if we see it, we don’t really, in our heart of hearts, believe that it’s a negative. For example, when I bring up the subject of limiting the maximum number of copies in Summit to selectors, I invariably hear about the “exceptions.” And that’s part of our

problem. We want to talk about the exceptions and not the rule. What about this? What about this and this? Soon the concept of the collaborative forest is lost among all the exceptional trees.

We also distrust the notion that anyone could do what we do as well or better. There is an old saying that no cataloger will ever accept another cataloger's work. And I think this is just as true for many subject selectors.

Finally, and this may be the biggest problem we face, is that everything related to collaborative CD is voluntary. All progress is predicated on the assumption that libraries will not participate if they are compelled to do so. Never violate the sanctity of a library's autonomy. So, it's been all carrots and no sticks. This mindset also operates in OhioLink where YBP roadshows have the purpose of persuading, educating and cajoling other libraries into accepting the promises and benefits of collaboration. Julia Gammon from the University of Akron and one of the foremost champions for cooperative CD in Ohio has told me, "As is normal for OhioLINK everything is voluntary and we just offer it as a suggestion." It's not bad to educate but I believe that by relegating collaborative activities to the "optional," we've largely been talking the talk but not walking the walk. To tell you the truth, it's amazing to me that we get anything done at all!

So, I've been thinking about what decisions Council could make (from the top down ... aghast) that would really propel us beyond business as usual and the status quo and the inertia of autonomy into a new realm where real, substantive collaboration is job one, the norm, the expectation, etc. as opposed to the softer, non-binding, voluntary, etc. approach that we've emphasized from the beginning. The people in this room will not be responsible for changing the myriad workflows, policies and procedures that will go hand in hand with truly sharing and managing one collection, but you are the top decision makers. You can make it happen if you decide this is what we are going to do. You can tell people your expectation that job #1 is the collaborative work at hand.

So I asked my fellow CDMC ST members these two questions: "If you could get the top decision maker in the library to mandate something with regard to collaborative CD, what would it be?" And, "What decisions must our top leaders be willing to make in order to truly bind us together?"

A discussion of the answers to those two questions would be a profitable way to spend the remainder of the time allotted to this subject.

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And here is what we came up with. These are the next steps as proposed by those of us in the trenches of CDMC.

1. We would ask the Council to mandate the adoption of YBP as the principal monograph vendor in every Alliance library. In order for not bought, peer reports, GoBitween, etc. to really work we need 100% participation ... no exceptions. The R2 report makes it sound as if this is already a reality within the consortium, but it's not. As of last October, at least 7 libraries had not adopted YBP as their principal monographic vendor. Many more libraries have a relationship with YBP but relatively few are taking full advantage of GOBI's capabilities. This is not a quick and easy process. Changing vendors requires a lot of work (we've been at for over a year at the UO) and the forces of inertia will not be overcome if this decision is left solely to the druthers of

the staff upon whom this will fall. As the top leaders, one of the single most important things you could do upon getting back home is to ask where are we with the YBP implementation. Failing this, we shouldn't proceed with any of the grander plans proposed in the white paper.

2. We would ask the Council to approve central funding to purchase items from the YBP "not bought" list each year. One or two copies would be purchased on behalf of all the libraries in the Alliance.
3. We would ask the Council to mandate the adoption of a shared monographic purchasing plan through YBP. It would not be opt in if you want to but rather everyone is expected to participate. The white paper suggests that, "all new print monographs in English be selected for the Alliance as a whole, with a consistent distribution pattern for multiple copies." Yes, great idea but the CDMC ST cannot make this happen. There needs to be a top down mandate that acquisition and selection leaders at each library will work on this together.
4. We would ask Council to set the threshold for the maximum number of copies to be purchased by the consortium in order to eliminate any further and unnecessary duplication. As things currently stand, it's routine to run across books in Summit with more than 20 libraries holding a copy. The white paper states that selectors "already consider the holdings and orders of other Alliance members in selecting for their own libraries." Yes and no. This is completely optional and there is no consistency across the consortium.
5. We would ask Council to approve a recommendation from the CDMC to allow for the expansion of the DPR. Any library could add volumes by sending a request to a centrally designated node where documentation could be updated and labels distributed.
6. We would also like to ask Council to mandate a consortial approach to purchasing e-books. Without a consortial approach, we will undermine our consortial investment. Greg has worked on a number of packages but we don't have a model that would allow for resource sharing for titles purchased with a title-by-title approach. We have a relationship with YBP and they have relationships with publishers and e-Book providers. Could we leverage our size and those relationships to move forward? Specific ideas include:
  - Specify subject areas and time frame for ebook collection; perpetual access; ideas for future books purchases
  - Get quotes that would include access for all current members and make arrangements for future record
  - Have a meeting on ebooks and have the RFP and platforms presented
  - Alliance pays for the ebook collection and all have access
  - Ebooks loaded in Summit and maintained by Alliance staff
7. We would like to ask Council to establish a policy to establish reciprocal free borrowing agreements within the Alliance. The backbone of collaborative CD is a robust document delivery system. The Courier demonstrates the power of this. We also need to clear any remaining barriers to sharing.

8. Related to this, we would like to ask Council to lift any remaining restrictions on items available for sharing through Summit. Libraries have steadily made more and different materials available but we should strive for sharing 100% our of collections.

Just for fun:

9. Maybe one of those “bold actions” that the Summit directors can agree to is that member libraries will not print PDFs and then rescan the degraded copies. That contractual stipulation is offensively wasteful. Maybe we could consider it an act of civil disobedience.