

Orbis Cascade Alliance
Guidelines for the
Three Copy Threshold

In 2011 the Collection Development and Management Committee implemented a voluntary pilot project which encouraged all participating institutions to utilize a threshold of three (3) monographic copies when purchasing material. One of the direct benefits cited by this practice was the savings it would provide which would then allow each institution to create a consortial collection with more depth and breadth than would be realized without a threshold in place. The intent of this practice was also recently reflected in the Guiding Principles associated with the [Statement of Collection Development Best Practices](#) which notes that the “Alliance and its member libraries will: increase the breadth of materials by weighing the need for local access against the benefit of a diverse collection.”

The three copy threshold was selected in 2011 based on information associated with the OhioLink member libraries’ experience, an assessment conducted in WorldCat Collection Analysis as well as separate GOBI analyses (click [here](#) for original documents). Since that time, the Alliance has added members and grown geographically. Due to this expansion, follow-up analyses were run in GOBI in Fall 2016 to determine whether a threshold of three was still relevant.

The 2016 analyses demonstrated that 82% of the 239,025 titles acquired from GOBI over the last 5+ years were for three or fewer copies. Average duplication for all GOBI books purchased by Alliance libraries during this timeframe was 2.3 (click [here](#) for analyses details). Both analyses confirmed that three copies is still an appropriate threshold for the Alliance.

Given the benefits associated with this practice as well as its current use by a significant number of Alliance libraries, the following guidelines for circulating, print material are recommended for OCA institutions with the following considerations:

- Local needs take precedence over these guidelines. Some titles will need to be duplicated beyond three copies to meet local obligations.
- At times, geographic distribution of the existing copies should also be considered in order to minimize courier delivery times.
- Between 2011-2016, Alliance libraries purchased one or two copies of a title 70% of the time. This demonstrates that fewer than 3 copies is often sufficient across the Alliance.

Procedures:

- Search for a title in Alma. Refer to the Network Zone to determine the number of copies held by the Alliance.
- Alternatively, search for a title in GOBI. Refer to the GobiTween link associated with the record to ascertain the number of copies purchased by Alliance libraries. Please note that the NZ provides a comprehensive list of Alliance holdings while GOBI only provides a subset of this information.
- The Network Zone and the GobiTween link also provide an indication of the title’s geographical distribution throughout the Alliance.