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**2016 – 2017 CARLI Collection Management Committee Annual Project:  
Collaborative Collection Development: A Case Study with  
Emerging Best Practices**

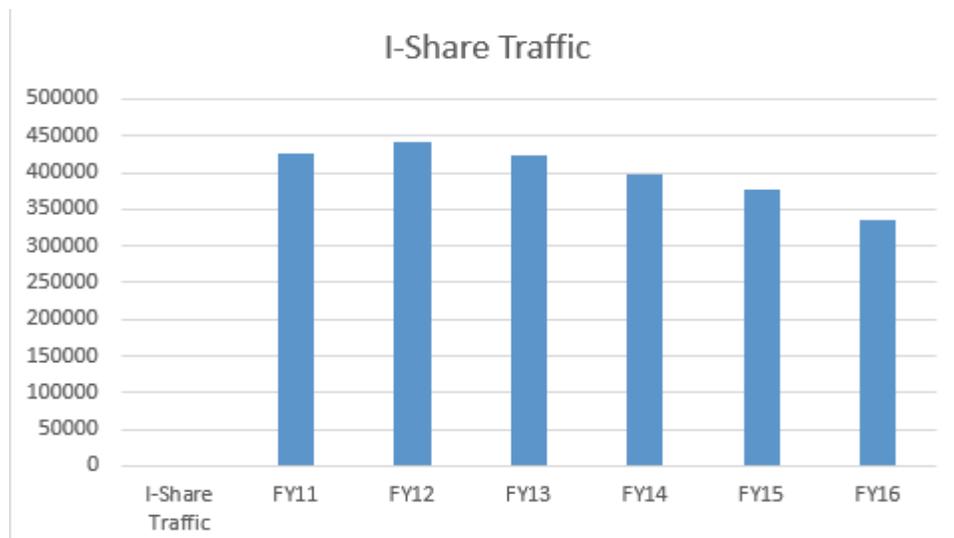
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**Introduction**

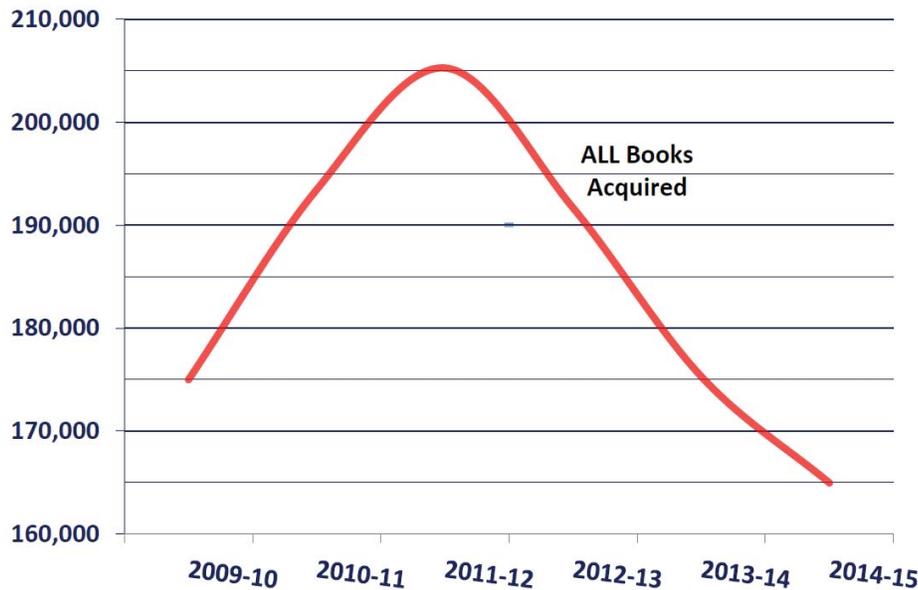
CARLI members build rich collections with a variety of foci depending on the institution. I-Share direct patron borrowing and interlibrary loan allow the easy sharing of those print books among members. However, in recent years, there is evidence that print book collections are not as robust as they were five years ago, most likely due to reduced budgets, an increasing variety of databases available for purchase, and the relentless pace of library materials inflation, though there are CARLI libraries who have not experienced budget cuts or reduced book buying. Overall, within I-Share libraries, lending statistics have declined from FY12, with 441,841 borrowed items, to 335,267 items in FY16.



This is likely due to various factors:

- CARLI Libraries buying fewer books according to YBP: from ~ 205,000 in fy12 to ~165,000 in fy15. Michael Zeoli of YBP shared the following slide at the CARLI e-book symposium on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

## TOTAL UNITS ACQUIRED



- Libraries are buying more e-books that are not lend-able, rather than print books that can be loaned.
- Due to budget constraints, libraries may not be purchasing as diverse a collection beyond core titles as they have in the past. This has decreased the amount of unique titles that are loan-able in the shared catalog. While not a perfect measure, I-Share statistics suggest this trend. In FY11, 220,080 unique print records were added to the I-Share catalog, and by FY16 that number dropped to 180,617.

Open access monographs have also increased in recent years, but the cataloging of them may be sporadic, resulting in lost opportunities for access among CARLI members. The CARLI Collection Management Committee also hopes to investigate opportunities for increasing access to OA monographs for all via I-Share.

### Literature Review on Collaborative Collection Development

Libraries have traditionally cooperated in order to increase access to materials owned at other institutions. These methods of cooperation have developed as an attempt to help libraries survive and cope with rising costs and falling budgets. A book titled *Collaborative Collection Development: A Practical Guide for Your Library* which discusses many of the benefits of such cooperative projects:

- Access to a richer collection
- Increased value for money spent
- Reduced duplication
- Fostering a culture of cooperation that can expand to other library services

Despite these positive benefits, the authors acknowledge that there are drawbacks and roadblocks to collaborative collection development projects, including:

- Sacrificing autonomy
- Aversion to risk
- Organizational complexities

- Minimal financial gain (Fong 20)

A further review of the professional library literature indicates that the majority of cooperative collection development projects have focused on interlibrary loan, journal database subscriptions, and other electronic resources, “in contrast, cooperating in developing print collections is... a challenge, and there are few successful models out there (Fong 21).”

However, there are examples of successful or promising collaboration projects. The libraries at the University of California schools undertook a plan to “develop a shared collection of highly redundant, low use print holdings that do not have distinct equivalents.” (Lawrence 121) Through this and other collaborative projects the UC Libraries have “moved from nine collection silos, loosely linked by a thin thread of interlibrary lending, to a combined collection of 33 million volumes that is equally accessible to users at any UC campus (Lawrence 122).”

Another example of a successful collaborative collection development project happens at the Orbis Cascade Alliance (OCA). OCA is a consortium of over 35 libraries in Washington and Oregon. Libraries in OCA, while building local collections, may skip some purchases if the title is owned at many member libraries and selectors may instead opt for a unique title purchase. The consortium’s executive director, John Helmer, says this “allows participant libraries to use collection funding in a more efficient way. The huge benefit is the increase in access to materials an institution can have at its fingertips (Wills).” Helmer also says that those in the consortium agree to continue building their core collection to support their academic missions and use the consortium to add depth.

Consortial access and cooperation is also beginning to be a way that libraries are being evaluated. With the explosion in the amount of resources available it is not possible for one library to collect everything. The Association of College and Research Libraries no longer issues collection size guidelines or benchmarks. It is increasingly being acknowledged that as libraries we are increasingly dependent upon access to materials as opposed to ownership of materials (Allen 86).

Even though collaborative collection projects can be time consuming and filled with challenges, one author notes that "working together and reaching out to appropriate and willing partners not only strengthens us, but gives us a competitive advantage (Allen 90)."

Upon preparation for starting this project, various books and articles were reviewed and used to develop an outline of things to consider for each group. This outline and bibliography are appended at the end of the document.

## **Methods for Recruiting Participants**

### **1. CARLI Survey**

The CMC conducted a survey of CARLI members in December 2015 to gauge interest in collaborative collection development and to learn about potential obstacles and limitations. Eighty-seven librarians responded from 51 CARLI member libraries. Of those 51 libraries, eleven that were very or highly interested in collaborative collection development were able to commit both time and money to a pilot project. Respondents had been asked to indicate which subject area they were interested in pursuing for a pilot project, and if they were interested in collaboration for print or e-books. Based on the results of a subject area analysis of the survey, the Collection Management Committee identified four key subject areas for collaborative collection development:

- Education
- Literature
- Nursing
- Business

However, the Collection Management Committee did not want to leave out anyone who was interested in collaborating either. The survey also revealed that there was interest in both print and e-book collaboration, so two options were developed that did not involve working with a subject group: One time purchase of print books, and purchasing e-books for the consortium using CARLI's existing EBL non-linear lending contract.

Librarians who indicated interest in one of the four key-subject areas were contacted about participation in a subject group. All CARLI members were invited to participate in the one-time purchase option or the e-book option via CARLI newsletters.

2. Designate Leaders for subject or format-based groups:

One-time purchase (Kimberly Shotick and Deb Blecic), Literature (Niamh McGuigan and Gretchen Schneider), Nursing (Deb Blecic), E-books (Deb Blecic and Elizabeth Clarage), Education (Kimberly Shotick), Business (Connie James-Jenkins). The committee lost five members in AY17, and so many members volunteered to talk on additional subject areas or step into a continuing project.

3. Communication via events, conferences, and lusters/newsletters to recruit participants

Initial planning meetings via phone conferencing were scheduled with the relevant survey participants, and were advertised to the CARLI community via the CARLI newsletter. Participants were also recruited at the CARLI Annual Meeting. Talking points for recruitment included the following:

- I-Share and ILL are beloved by Faculty, so as librarians we need to think about how to maximize the number of titles available for borrowing.
- Restricted budgets increase the need for more availability of consortium-wide titles and openness for new ways to obtain access to resources.

4. Project Implementation Strategies

- Host conference calls with interested parties
- Setting collection scope/parameters
- Use Google Docs as a collaborative space

**One-time purchase group:**

This group had its first conference call on October 19, 2016. The focus of the project is to purchase print books that are not held by CARLI and/or I-Share Libraries at least six months after the publication date. It is assumed that after six months the any purchases made when the book was initially published will have been added to OCLC and I-Share. As of April 2017 eleven librarians from four libraries have made pledges to purchase unique print materials and have ordered at least one print book. Seven of the participating librarians are from the University of Illinois at Chicago, where it is known that the Dean provided additional money to support this project.

As of May 2017, 164 books had been purchased under the pilot program. At UIC, waiting for six months to see if another I-Share library purchased the item was not emphasized enough, so some of the purchases were for materials were duplicated in I-Share at the time of purchase or were subsequently purchased by

another I-Share library. If this continues beyond the pilot stage, it was learned that the six month waiting period needs to be emphasized.

The list of titles purchased can be found at

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CaHUv11HKJ9OYuFyf6eegNIqRmYuUirl9ge\\_Rv9FGM/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CaHUv11HKJ9OYuFyf6eegNIqRmYuUirl9ge_Rv9FGM/edit#gid=0). It should be noted that the focus of this project is not to have participants purchase titles of low value. Rather, it is assumed that due to budget pressures, there are titles that libraries want but are not purchasing. Those are the titles participants are encouraged to buy one copy of for the good of the CARLI consortium.

### **Literature Group:**

A conference call for collaborative collections related to literature was held in February 2017, and attended by 8 librarians from 7 CARLI libraries. Following a discussion of different models for collaborative collecting, the group decided to focus on two methods: one-time purchase commitments for individual print titles and a shared list of open access monographs that can be cataloged and made available in the ISHARE catalog. Interestingly, there were several libraries in this group that do not make ebooks available to their users or were otherwise not interested in collecting ebooks of any kind.

The group met again in May of 2017 to establish subject areas for the one-time purchase commitments, and to approve basic criteria for evaluating open access monographs before adding them to a list of titles to add to the ISHARE catalog. The group records purchase commitments and open access titles on a shared Google spreadsheet:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wlTCphKbPcxxaxT5cXaNWcdzw2\\_FI\\_7ycSTJsvqYOXM/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wlTCphKbPcxxaxT5cXaNWcdzw2_FI_7ycSTJsvqYOXM/edit#gid=0)

### **Education Group:**

The group held a conference call with interested CARLI members by the previous chair of the Collection Management Committee. During the call the group decided to focus on print K-12 textbooks. The group gathered textbook adoption information and then coordinated purchases among interested library participants. To gather textbook adoption information, the chair interviewed National Lewis University's education faculty as well as curriculum coordinators at nearby school districts in order to identify titles, publishers, and series that were being used in CPS and surrounding areas classrooms. A title list was generated and titles not held by CARLI libraries were added to a Google spreadsheet with series and pricing information. Participating libraries simply signed up to purchase individual sets/series by adding their name to the spreadsheet. Also, participating libraries were asked to allow circulation of the items via I-Share, as some institutions did not circulate their curriculum collections. Nine total sets were identified for purchase by six different CARLI member institutions. A project summary can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1myv9722Qj7YDXyBZAQxq1wywwtbTSjdyPagCvjo45w8/edit#gid=0> .

### **Nursing Group:**

The nursing group got off to a slow start as the principal organizer left the committee. A conference call was held on Feb 21 with librarians from eight CARLI Libraries. There was not a strong consensus on how to proceed, so two options were made available to participants. The first was to choose e-books to purchase from a list provided by EBL that were covered by the existing CARLI license. One library submitted e-book purchases to CARLI as of May 2017. A second library indicated that an e-book purchase was forthcoming, but then changed its mind, perhaps due to budget pressures. The second option was to purchase unique print books. As of April 2017 nobody had made a pledge yet on the google spreadsheet.

Three librarians talked further at the CARLI Forum on April 28<sup>th</sup> about ways to further collaboration in FY18. All had completed their ordering for FY17 at this point. More e-book publishers were desired, especially Springer (not to be confused with Springer Verilog). For print books, pledging to collect for special populations was seen as a promising route, such as pediatric cancer nursing.

The project site is here, but is not yet populated: [https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en#!topic/carli-collaborative-collections/4JPfiT\\_poBY](https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en#!topic/carli-collaborative-collections/4JPfiT_poBY) .

### **Business Group:**

Members of this committee surveyed CARLI member libraries on interest levels of participating in a collaborative collection development project. Ten libraries responded with an interest in participating in a business collaborative collection project.

Each of these ten libraries was investigated to determine who the selector of business resources was. In October 2016, a survey was sent to these ten business librarians. The purpose of the survey was to determine if there was still an interest by the librarian or institution to participate in the project.

Three librarians responded to the survey. Two were still interested, one dropped out. A follow-up email was sent to the two remaining librarians to set a time for a face-to-face meeting or a conference call. A few preliminary questions about how they might want to develop the project were included.

Unfortunately, only one librarian responded. Multiple emails to the other librarian were unreturned. After approximately a month, a final email was sent to both librarians referring them to the one-time purchase group if they still had an interest in collaborative collection development.

### **Challenges**

When taking on a collaborative project involving various stakeholders, there are several challenges that may arise. Some of these challenges can be anticipated and planned for, others may come as a surprise and require creative problem solving.

One challenge that threatens any collaborative group project is changes in the group makeup throughout the life of the project. During our pilot project we had many changes to our committee membership due to five committee members moving on to jobs outside of CARLI member libraries. Not only did this alter the leadership and makeup of the Collection Management Committee, but it also mean that the leaders of the individual commitment groups changed. This caused confusion for group members as their point of contact changed. For example, the CMC member who led the Education group left the committee midway through the project, and the member who took it over had a job change that altered her contact information shortly after taking over the Education group. This left group members with email threads from three separate accounts, with only one being accurate.

Despite the confusion, the project moved forward successfully because of good communication. As members left the committee they passed their work onto another member. In the case of the Education group, the founding leader had well-documented his work and progress, and so the transition to another member was less problematic. The lesson to be learned is that members should 1) document and share their work with other group members, and 2) communicate frequently and clearly with their project groups. While changes in leadership may create dead-end email threads, frequent communication from the project leaders can help move those old threads down a crowded email box. Also, the use of a static place for communication, such as a Google Group, should be explored.

A second challenge is one that is likely a common one: getting people involved despite time and financial constraints. Frequently, as budgets go down, so too does staffing. Many libraries in the consortium are not only facing budget cuts but staffing reductions, as empty positions get cut or go unfilled. This is

particularly true during a time when the lack of funding for public education due to a budget stalemate in Illinois has effected many CARLI member: from state universities directly reliant on state funding to private institutions impacted by the lack of MAP grant funding. Although this project seeks to solve some of the issues created by tightened budgets and reduced staff, it does require time and money.

The CMC found two solutions to the time and money constraints. First of all, by making participation in the project as simple as possible we save members time. In some cases it might be appropriate to select a list of resources to have group members choose from. While this creates more work for the leader curating the list, the amount of work on the participants end is greatly minimized. One good example of this was with the Education group. The group's original leader first researched what curriculum materials were being used in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and then compared those with what were available via CARLI libraries. The resulting list contained: set titles that were both used by CPS and were not held by CARLI members, pricing and publisher information, and space for interested CARLI members to pledge to buy the set. In this case, the time commitment to participate was completely absorbed by the group's leader, creating greater participation by CARLI members. However, for Nursing, the list of e-books for purchase was posted by the group's leader, but resulted in little uptake for the project.

### **Assessment**

Although our project has not had a full year's cycle, and would be difficult to assess at this point, it is important to plan for assessment. There are many ways a collaborative collection development project can be assessed. These methods can generally be broken up into two categories: quantitative and qualitative. Some methods require data collection during the project timeline, while others require time. Each method may be better suited to the particulars of the individual project and may carry its own set of limitations.

Quantitative measures include: local circulation statistics, ILL statistics, and item counts. Local circulation statistics depend on individual institutions to track the circulation of a particular subset of their collections in which they have participated in the project. The subset may be identified in a number of different ways: specific call number range, item format, or circulation location, just to name a few.

Institutions could easily run a report that would compare the circulation numbers from that subset before purchases were made with after they've been available for some time. The obvious limitation is that this does not take into consideration the availability of additional items outside of the institution--the whole point of the project. However, if circulation in that subset increased after the addition of items, it could be used as evidence to support such projects against those that are skeptical of the usefulness of items purchased outside of what the collective membership already has access to. In other words, it would be evidence that titles purchased for the project are useful, rather than esoteric titles that would not circulate.

ILL statistics would be the ideal measure for these types of projects. Similar to the methods described above, institutions would need to identify a subset of their collection to measure. In this case, they would measure the borrowing and lending of items in that subset. One limitation of this method is variances in the way that items from other institutions are collected and accessed. If one library collected in a specific call number range for the project but another purchased based on another criteria and included items outside of that call number range, it might be difficult to track circulation without tracking it at a title-by-title basis. For that reason, groups planning on smaller collection projects would benefit from sharing the title list of items purchased for the project. Another limitation is that ILL statistics are a complicated measure since a decline in overall sharing has been noted. The purchase of the small amount of materials for these projects may have no measurable effect on sharing. Also, this measure might be most useful when pinned down to a very specific subgroup, such as a granular call number range or collection type. For example, the loaning of curriculum materials in the coming year compared to last year may be appropriate.

Initially we floated the idea of cataloging all items with a special code that could making statistics gathering easy. We did not pursue this, but it is still an idea worth considering for institutions interested in starting their own projects. However, this takes coordination with cataloging across all institutions.

Qualitative methods can be easily adapted to individual projects. One opportunity that can come from a project is collaboration with teaching faculty. Bibliographers who collaborate with teaching faculty on purchases can interview them to get some qualitative feedback about the collection and benefit of the increased breadth or depth of certain collections. The added bonus of pursuing feedback from teaching faculty is that it markets the collection and librarian's role. It may not always be possible to collaborate with teaching faculty, and institutional culture may affect the availability or willingness of teaching faculty to participate in qualitative assessment measures.

A more accessible qualitative assessment measure could be collecting feedback from project participants. Participants could easily be surveyed throughout and/or at the end of the project. We recommend at least informally assessing the project via participant feedback while it is going on so that adjustments can be made as needed. Simple check-ins via e-mail can accomplish this type of formative assessment. Other stakeholders, such as library deans, could also be surveyed in order to assess the project.

In addition to the methods described above, there are products available that institutions can use for assessment. One example is Worldshare® Management System's Collection Evaluation module (OCLC). Products such as Worldshare allow institutions to evaluate their own collections and compare them with peers. However, these tools are often outside of the budget of many institutions.

### **Future Planning**

The CARLI Collaborative Collection Development projects are still in an early phase. However, as this process has the potential to be ongoing, planning for future fiscal years must start mid-process. In order to plan for the future we hope to: use feedback from current participants to fine tune our process, try to increase participation, develop guidelines for open access title selection by various subject groups, connect with the Technical Services Committee about providing guidelines for cataloging open access titles to make them available for the CARLI consortium at large, fine tune assessment plans, ask the consortium at large to consider purchasing titles from subject lists (consider asking them to purchase 3 titles), and research the possibility of a collaborative exhibit and/or a roving collection to share.

## Appendices

### 1) Collaborative Collection Development Planning Outline

#### Set Up

- Mission Statement
- Goals
- Objectives

#### Leadership

- Who should be in charge?

#### Time/Money Commitment

- Who promises funds?
- Who promises time? What will they commit to do?

#### Collection Analysis

- What statistics should we track?

##### Examples:

- Compare/contrast local and consortium holdings
- Count items purchased
- Circulation stats
- User survey
- Poll faculty in subject area
- Should the group do a weeding project first to prepare the collection?

#### Collection Choices

- What material type?
- What difficulty level?
- What language?

#### Decision Tools

- Publishers to use
- Reviews to use
- Other tools?

#### Cataloging requirements

- How long a turnaround from receiving item to available for ILL?

#### Statistics

- What results do we wish to track?

#### Public Relations

- Who do we notify of our efforts?

## 2) Bibliography of resources used to develop outline:

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