

Cooperative Collection Development Projects in Colorado

Colorado College is engaged in three projects of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries. (Alliance member libraries are the University of Colorado, University of Wyoming, Colorado State University, University of Northern Colorado, University of Denver, Denver Public Library, Colorado College, Colorado School of Mines and Regis University.) The Alliance manages Prospector, an InnReach system that serves 25 academic, public and special libraries in Colorado and Wyoming.

Shared Purchase Plan—More Titles, Fewer Copies

The Shared Purchase Plan came out of a study conducted several years ago that showed a high level of duplication of current academic titles within the Alliance academic libraries. Analysis of data from Prospector suggested that even for high use titles, three or four copies shared through Prospector would meet demand, rather than the seven or eight copies we were collectively buying. This further suggested that we could use our funds to purchase more titles if we bought the optimum number of copies.

The Model

We decided to pilot a shared purchase plan for undergraduate level monographs in four subject areas-- Religion, Economics, Political Science and Mathematics-- to test these assumptions and to see if the logistical details could be worked out. Bibliographers from the eight participating institutions worked with two vendors (Yankee for Religion and Economics, Blackwell for Math and Political Science) to define profiles and work out a protocol for number of copies of titles to be sent. Each institution pledges a certain amount of money for purchases in these disciplines. The copies are then distributed to individual libraries according to the amount of money contributed to the plan for that subject. Example: 3 copies come in and are distributed according to how much money is in the plan. The titles are just accepted and paid for by the destination library--no returns. Colorado College owns the titles it receives and they circulate on Prospector. Two vendors were selected to evaluate how well different vendors can support the program (and because our acquisitions staffs could not agree on a single vendor.)

Evaluation of the Project

The Shared Purchase Plan evaluation task force has been working with Library Dynamics' Spectra Dimension software to analyze the success of the project by identifying actual duplication rates across libraries and by reviewing title-by-title circulation statistics. In addition to data analysis, surveys were sent to bibliographers and acquisitions staff soliciting qualitative feedback on the project. The task force received very mixed responses and several issues emerged. Some bibliographers felt uncomfortable receiving titles they would not have normally

purchased, and others had concerns about what happens to the sharing idea if they weed these titles due to low use. The task force is still working on refining their process for determining the effectiveness of the pilot. It has been a great publication opportunity for those in tenure track positions!

Colorado College's experience

The pilot started in 06/07 but we just completed the first full fiscal year.. We have committed to stay in for one more year at least. Our liaison librarians are not convinced that this plan is worth the enormous investment of time to set it up and monitor the performance across the system. The subject profiles need fine tuning but there is a lack of confidence in the vendors' response. We suspect that for some subjects like Religion, where our faculty place many firm orders, we are probably still duplicating what is being sent to other Alliance libraries. Unlike the larger institutions in the project, we do not have librarians who are fulltime subject bibliographers, nor do we have a fulltime collection development librarian. The librarian who coordinates collection development (formerly our Head of Bibliographic Services, now our Public Services and Collections Librarian) is our representative on the committee but still not dedicated full time to collection development. As a result, we have not spent the time needed to use the Spectra software, which might be of use to us as a collection analysis tool, but is a product still under development and accompanied by a steep learning curve. It is expensive and we will try to test it out in the next year, but would not have purchased it outside the context of this project. Our acquisitions coordinator says the plan is a lot of extra work for her, especially since she is dealing with two different vendors. This comment has been echoed by other pilot project acquisitions staff.

Alliance Government Documents Project

Alliance libraries with Federal Depository Library Program designations have completed an assessment of collection depth and made preliminary retention decisions based on the Conspectus model. Older materials (pre-1976) were sampled by checklist and it was determined that Colorado does not have a comprehensive collection of older print materials. The group streamlined needs and offer processes to increase efficiencies and the University of Colorado-Boulder has eliminated its "needs and offers" backlog. Librarians at the participating institutions have begun withdrawing materials in areas of low or no interest while simultaneously requesting materials for high priority items. Some libraries are sending more of their collections to offsite storage. One interesting aspect of this project is that the documents librarians are volunteering their **labor** to help CU and other libraries work through backlogs. For example, our documents librarian joined a team at a small state institution to evaluate a documents collection they are discarding and claim titles we need to fill in gaps.

Next steps include comparing initial assessments against metrics and adjusting the assessments. The group also plans to begin work on a State Plan that would include all depositories in Colorado. The Plan would ensure permanent public access to government information. They are also working on issues related to cataloging of documents, as many holdings are not represented in member catalogs and therefore cannot be located or shared via Prospector.

The Government Printing Office (GPO) has asked Denver Public Library and CU-Boulder to share any long-term plans that may impact their ability to provide regional services. (Denver Public will probably not be a regional in the future.) The selective libraries drafted a letter to GPO outlining the support needed from the regional library.

Alliance Digital Repository—Sharing Digital Collections

The ADR is a preservation-oriented digital repository service developed through the use of open source software and centralized hardware and personnel. Alliance members and ADR affiliates will use the ADR to build and maintain institution-based digital repository programs. It is currently in production mode, and member institutions have begun to load materials. The ADR has been built using Fedora, Fez, Origami, and XTF open source software. One of the exciting aspects of the ADR is its potential to build a shared collection of materials to support research and promote scholarship in our region. Collections being considered for preservation and access in the ADR include vast historical image collections held by our members, geographic and mining information, botanical slide collections, etc. Colorado College plans to begin an electronic thesis and capstone project collection, and to offer the repository to faculty as a place for preservation and open access to their scholarship.

Collaborative Librarianship – a new journal

Ivan Gaetz, Dean of Libraries at Regis University, is leading an initiative to publish a new journal, which will be sponsored the Colorado Academic Library Consortium, and other library organizations in the state..

It will be open access, peer reviewed, and engage the following types of issues:

- Library to library cooperation
- Sharing resources and expertise
- Library to business partnerships
- Local, regional, national, international collaboration
- Professional, consortium, association partnerships
- History of library collaboration
- Better/best practices.

Contact Ivan Gaetz for more information igaetz@regis.edu

A list serv for the journal has also been set up at

<https://listserv.du.edu/mailman/listinfo/jcollab-l>

Launch is planned for ALA Midwinter, 2009