

Cooperative Collection Development: Wellesley College and Williams College

As members of the Boston Library Consortium [BLC], an association of 20 academic and research libraries located in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, Wellesley College and Williams College have actively participated in a number of cooperative collection development initiatives, including:

- *Cooperative Collection Development in Art and Architecture*, a working group convened to explore possible cooperative collections initiatives. RESULT: the creation of a wiki for art librarians to provide information about their library's collection strengths and to share current collecting priorities.
- *Materials-vendor-supported efforts*
 - *Music Cooperative Collection Development Project* with a goal to “diversify the number of titles acquired in the BLC and to reduce unnecessary duplication where that made sense based on an individual institution’s programmatic and curriculum needs.” RESULT: A shared approval plan profile for M-MT classification was created by participating libraries and is maintained by YBP. Data provides a mixed picture of success in achieving goal: number of unique titles purchased by participating libraries has decreased by 30% compared to FY07; however, over 67% of the titles profiled are purchased by 4 or fewer libraries.
 - *Peer Group title selection decision information*. BLC libraries that are YBP customers have access to title-level selection decision-making information for both firm orders and approval plan titles in the GOBI3 database service. Access to peer group data permits individual libraries and individual collection development librarians to place local added copy decisions within the context of local consortium resource-sharing.
- *Shared Retention/Discard Task Force* charged “to create a memorandum of understanding for BLC libraries for collaborative management of the print format of archival science indexes and abstracts and chemistry journals for the purpose of maximizing information releases while releasing shelf space for all participants. RESULT: An MOU for indexes/abstracts holdings signed by 15 participating institutions; an MOU for chemistry journal titles, focusing on titles of the American Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry, is in process of being finalized, including institutional retention commitments at the title level and for families of journals (parent-child titles will be retained at the same institution).
- *Open Content Alliance*, a consortium-wide self-funded initiative to digitize and make accessible monographic works published prior to 1923 (or works for which the institution holds copyright). A cooperative scanning center has been established at the Boston Public Library, working in partnership with the Internet Archive. RESULT: Nearly 500,000 downloads via the Internet Archive have occurred since the project was launched in January 2008.

In addition to these specific initiatives, our most important activity is sharing our resources, abiding by an agreement to provide priority services to other BLC member libraries. [NOTE: We have for many years had a shared “virtual catalog” for monographic materials and in 2007 we established a BLC RAPID “pod” to aid in the sharing of journal articles.] This strong commitment to resource sharing provides a context for making individual institutional collections decisions on an ongoing basis. While recognizing that each of us must continue to invest in the development of our local collections, we know we can rely on our BLC partners to supply needed materials on an expedited basis.

Based on the examples cited above, the BLC has been most successful when cooperative collection initiatives allow for individual institutional decision making, such as the Open Content Alliance project and the establishment of MOUs for retention/storage. For the OCA project, we invested effort in developing work flow protocols and in sharing strategies for selecting materials, but the title selection decisions for scanning are made at the institutional level and there has been no effort to coordinate this selection at the consortial level. The MOU for retention allowed for institutional decision making as well set within the consortial context. In addition, in the case of the MOU development, the project was undertaken by a group of librarians who had previously participated in cooperative collection development projects and had established trustworthy working relationships.

Massachusetts does not have a strong culture of cooperation. Both Wellesley and Williams are members of their respective regions. Membership provides access to some state-funded databases as well as a service for the delivery of borrowed/lent materials.