

Cooperative Collection Development in the Bridge Consortium
Summary Report for October Conference
Sam Demas August 5, 2008

Building on the establishment of a joint catalog in 2003, for the past two and a half years the Bridge Consortium, comprising the libraries of Carleton and St Olaf Colleges, have been working intensively to achieve the aim of “two collections that operate as one. With support from the Andrew Mellon Foundation we have focused on the following key project goals:

1. Foster a climate of trust and understanding on our two campuses that will support long-term cooperative collection development.

2. Analyze the Carleton and St. Olaf collections to: a. determine the extent of overlap and specific areas of overlap, b. better coordinate holdings in journals and government documents, c. compare our collections with those of other peer institutions, d. benchmark our collections against standard lists and publication tools to determine individual and collective collection strengths and weaknesses.

3. Conduct an environmental scan to study relevant models and experience in cooperative collection development and workflow redesign.

4. Develop and implement cooperative collection development policies and agreements in 3-6 areas, including a. overlap reduction if and as feasible, b. government documents, c. journal selection and review processes, d. database selection and review processes, and possibly e. media.

While there is much more to do, we have made great progress in a number of areas. Following is a very brief summary of progress to date:

1. Workflow analysis

- a. We hired R2 Consulting to conduct a review and make recommendations in both libraries of workflow in all operations from selection and acquisitions through access services (not including reference and instruction services). As a consequence we harmonized a range of workflows between the two libraries in acquisitions and cataloging to achieve greater efficiency and formalized a division of labor in two major areas: government documents and e-journals management through SFX.
- b. Carleton’s focus in the workflow analysis was to create staff capacity: 1. For more direct support for learning and teaching, and 2. To develop more robust workflows for both licensed e-resources and Carleton’s own digital resources. In addition Carleton aimed to enhance communication and teamwork, address succession planning by providing leadership and growth opportunities for younger staff, and develop greater responsiveness to issues as they arise. In addition to changes in workflows and job descriptions resulting from the workflow analysis, Carleton employed a range of strategies to develop maximum opportunities for change, including: keeping several positions vacant in anticipation of staffing and organizational changes, entertaining proposals from staff for voluntary reductions

in FTE (with the hours saved to be re-allocated elsewhere in the organization), and increased use of student labor to do work formerly done by staff. Through this combination of strategies, staffing was reduced in ILL, Technical Services and Administration; and staffing was increased in Reference and Instruction (by 1FTE). In addition, several organizational changes were made, including: 1. moving Systems and IT support to Technical Services; 2. the creation of four operational teams (chaired by some of our younger librarians): Digitizing Team, E-Resources Team, Data Services Team, and a User Needs and Assessment Team; 3. the establishment of a Library Leadership Group made up of department heads and the team leaders; and 4. Department heads will consciously delegate more managerial duties to younger staff. In addition, Carleton conducted an organizational audit of areas in which there was a lack of clarity in library operations and developed an ongoing plan for improved communications.

- c. St Olaf focused on organizational development. R2 recommended and St. Olaf adopted some major changes to the organizational structure of the library. The most significant was the addition of three mid-level managers: a head of systems and technical services (a department formed by merging three separate units: acquisitions, cataloging, and systems), a head of reference and instruction, and a head of circulation and interlibrary loan. These three heads join the college librarian on an “administrative council.” The library also eliminated all but two inter-departmental committees and clarified decision-making procedures and responsibilities. St.Olaf adopted R2’s recommendation to reconfigure an open cataloging position as a “meta-data” position with responsibility for developing the library’s digitization program. The new technical services department is looking seriously at R2’s proposals for automating workflow in technical services and acquisitions, and will likely adopt many of the key recommendations. We hope increased automation will make staff available for other priorities.

2. Collection analysis

The key result of extensive collection analysis work was that we determined the existing level of overlap in the book collections (19.9% overall) was very low and did not warrant any major change in policies or practices. However, we formally implemented a default policy of "intentional duplication only" by not ordering a title for one college library if it is already on order for the other. This eliminates duplication of monographs, unless, of course, the faculty member or librarian placing the order wishes to over-ride the default policy, which is done without questioning the need. This policy change, which was accepted more readily by the faculty than we had anticipated, is probably the single most important change we could have made to reduce duplication of books.

We intensively studied four specific subject areas with high levels of overlap (Music, Business and Economics, and Philosophy, with overlap rates ranging from 25-35%) and determined with faculty consultations that the amount of money spent on duplicate materials annually was not worth the effort to try to reduce and that duplication seemed justified by curricular need.

We discussed with our colleagues in the Minnesota Oberlin Group libraries (Macalester, Gustavus Adolphus, and St. John’s University and College of St. Benedict) our findings

concerning the overlap of their collections with those of Carleton and St. Olaf, but have not as yet found any clear way of addressing this overlap.

We remain disappointed with some of the limitations of the WorldCat collection analysis tool, in particular its inability to correlate use data with specific titles and its inability to compare the holdings of the joint Bridge catalog (as opposed to the two individual libraries) with the holdings of other individual libraries and/or other consortial holdings (e.g., comparing Bridge holdings with holdings of Tri-College libraries is currently impossible). Apparently this may be possible in a future release. Similarly Bowker's *Resources for College Libraries* was a very disappointing tool for collection analysis.

Our work in analyzing the two collections in terms of language holdings and date (age of collections) did not yield particularly useful information.

3. Environmental scan

Literature reviews and attendance at various meetings was helpful, but sending teams of seven staff each to spend several days at two liberal arts consortia (Ohio Five and Tri-Colleges) was extremely effective to get a sense of the state-of-the-art, to see how far along we are in cooperative collection development, to gather ideas, and to give staff a sense of empowerment.

4. Coordination of serials holdings

We developed a database and procedures to support a joint biennial serials review, which was conducted simultaneously with both faculties in January and February 2008. For the first time we asked faculty to make decisions about cancellation and addition of journal titles with reference to the holdings of both colleges, i.e. to consider the journal collections of the two libraries as a single collection as much as possible. Of the 434 print titles duplicated between the two libraries, 59 were cancelled as a result of this process. Carleton encouraged faculty to cancel print subscriptions in favor of e-subscriptions when available from a trusted vendor and St Olaf mandated a preference for electronic over print subscriptions. 265 subscriptions were switched from print to electronic-only. We formalized a "Library of Record" policy statement to ensure long-term retention of the last copy when duplicates are cancelled with the understanding that one library can rely on access to the other library's copy.

5. Database review and coordination

An analysis of database holdings has set the stage for future coordination of holdings and joint licensing. However, we have found it difficult to negotiate joint license agreements that actually save us money. It appears that absent a legal agreement between the two schools we may not be able to secure substantial savings on databases duplicated between the two schools. Working with the two reference departments, we have coordinated database trials across the two campuses, which is a major accomplishment. We are also working towards a coordinated schedule of renewal for licensed databases.

6. Vendor and approval plan review

After extensive study we decided to use a joint monograph vendor (Blackwell) for our acquisitions and slips. We decided not to utilize an approval plan as a major method of

developing the collections, as we prefer title by title selection as a way of keeping the faculty involved and securing a richer collection overall.

7. Harmonizing government documents collections: retrospective and prospective

We have made tremendous progress in treating the two depository collections as one. St. Olaf has become the center of all processing of print materials for both schools, and Carleton takes responsibility for organizing access to e-documents for both schools. In addition to this agreement on workflow by format, the government document librarians of both colleges conducted a comprehensive review of the collection and made decisions on the existing collection and on future selections. Decisions on which existing print documents to retain at each library were based on curriculum of the schools, with some genre overlays (e.g. Carleton retained more data sets in print form, and St. Olaf retained far more congressional hearings than Carleton). Through this detailed review they sought to minimize overlap between collections both retrospectively and prospectively. As a result, a combined total of 1,589 government documents were withdrawn, 2,317 were transferred from St Olaf to Carleton, and 14,191 were transferred from Carleton to St Olaf. Carleton de-selected 199 item numbers and St Olaf de-selected 65.

8. Interlibrary loan analysis

A review of articles and books borrowed by both libraries over a two year period yielded some data useful in informing serial selection decisions. Both libraries experimented with a pilot project of purchase on demand of titles meeting specific criteria, i.e. buying vs. borrowing. A review of the pilot led to permanent adoption of this policy.

9. Review of media collections

The curators of the media collections at both libraries met several times to exchange information and explore opportunities for further coordination between collections. They wrote a report that profiles each collection by quantity of titles and items, expenditures, and by subject and language holdings. They generally try to avoid duplication except in cases of high demand, canonical titles, and items placed on reserve for classes. They have largely harmonized loan policies.

10. Space savings

In addition to weeding unneeded duplicate government documents (see above), we conducted a joint weeding project aimed at retaining a single run of 301 duplicate journal runs which are not longer actively received at both libraries. Of these, 33 titles were withdrawn from both libraries, 145 were withdrawn at one library (with the best copies kept at one library, which became the Library of Record for the title), and the remaining 123 titles were retained at both libraries. As a result of this project 7,649 Carleton items volumes were weeded, 1,092 were sent to offsite storage, and 606 volumes were sent to St Olaf. In all, 105 shelves were freed up at Carleton and 95 at St Olaf.

11. Collection documentation

To aid in comparing collections we have completed a document comparing how much each library spends in each category of collection expenses and a brief statement outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each collection. Enhancements to integrated library system.