
INTRODUCTION

Libraries are very good at collaborating or cooperating with other libraries, organizations, or service providers. In times of budget and staff reductions in all types of libraries, collaboration takes on a more urgent and necessary role. This research essay explores technical services collaborations reported in articles published between 2011 and 2015.

Sharing resources of staff and funds allows libraries to share the burdens of collection management and maintenance, access and services, while enabling libraries to embark on special projects that might not ever come to fruition without cooperation. A recent source of information on collaboration in cataloging can be found in the special issue of volume 51 of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*. Rebecca Mugridge (2013) spearheaded this issue which contains 20 articles focusing on five broad sections: Collaborations in Cooperative Cataloging and Authority Initiatives, Collaborative Cataloging Initiatives, Collaborations in Merging and Migrating Online Catalogs, Collaborative Development of Training and Documentation, and Collaborative Approaches to Special Projects.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES

2CUL Technical Services Integration was conceived as a project to integrate the central technical services operations of Columbia University and Cornell University libraries. Harcourt and LeBlanc (2014) describe the process, progress and obstacles in attempting to merge two technical services units. The first phase used the “middle-out approach” to support organizational improvement and staff support for the integration. Ten functional working groups researched, documented and provided information to the TSI Steering Committee concerning each library’s technical services operations. The second phase of the partnership included complex challenges that were faced in trying to unite these two operations. The authors explain how they used the concept of “the pivot” to make a change to the components of the process. The project’s pivot “slowed the pace of the work, recalibrating the hypothesis to match reality and embracing the possible, [thus] aims to better position the project participants to reframe their institutions’ aspirations for a collaborative alliance.”

Demonstrating how similar workflows can be adapted by different libraries with student assistants performing brief cataloging with quality checks by the staff, Ward, Glasson and Roeder (2014) describe a project at the Purdue University Libraries to provide catalog records for the individual documents contained within the Congressional Serials Set as part of the Google Books digitization project. The article describes the project’s workflows, challenges and eventual collaborative cataloging project with the University of Iowa Libraries. The Congressional Serials Set consists of thousands of volumes, and each volume in return may contain from several to hundreds of individuals documents that were issued by the United States Congress. The University of Iowa Libraries staff pulled their copies of CSS, provided the cataloging records and sent the information to Purdue University. Purdue University pulled their copies of CSS, matched the catalog records to the actual item and shipped the volumes to Google.

Collaborative cataloging between two academic libraries, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania is discussed by Harris (2015). In this unique project, Mansfield University Library had severe reductions in the materials budget and thus was not acquiring materials but had cataloging staff. Bloomsburg University had the opposite situation where the staff resources had been reduced but still had a materials budget. The two libraries worked together to pilot a contract cataloging
project for a four week period during the summer. Mansfield University provided cataloging records for materials owned by Bloomsburg University. At the successful conclusion of the project Bloomsburg was pleased with the results, Mansfield was able to continue cataloging and eventually developed a business plan for contract cataloging service to other institutions.

COLLABORATION IN TECHNICAL SERVICES

Abbott & Laskowski (2014) demonstrate how the application of project management within technical services provides an environment where multiple fundamental objectives are met through large scale projects involving various units. Technical services activities (classification, enhancing catalog access, digital access, environmental stabilization, physical stabilization, stacks organization and catalog inventory) can intersect and overlap within a project. By placing an emphasis on handling items one time through multiple hands, looking at project scopes and approaching projects through the concept of inventory control, large amounts of materials can be moved, cataloged, re-classified and stabilized.

COLLABORATION WITHIN CONSORTIA

The development and implementation of a state-wide delivery system through collaboration between libraries is detailed by Ayre, Pronevitz & Utt (2011). Libraries in Massachusetts joined forces to provide improved delivery services for resources sharing. The increased number of delivery stops, improved accuracy in sorting, and improved turnaround time for deliveries plus the elimination of thousands of hours of processing led to reduced delivery costs. The new state-wide system allows for sorting through the use of barcodes or through the use of labels and routing slips when barcodes are not available or not scannable. The new system provides a single contact for delivery communications, billing and a single set of policies thus simplifying communications and paperwork for participants.

ConnectNY is an academic consortium in New York that has participated in various consortial projects for sharing e-books among its members. Harloe (2015) describes one project, its funding model and different means to determine Return On Investment. Consortial projects have several advantages such as greater buying power, larger title selection pool, waived fees and overall reduction of staff time. The authors explore different models using budget contribution, usage, title value, and FTE to determine ROI for the project.

One of the advantages of belonging to a consortia is the ability to share resources through cooperative collection development. Kairis (2012) provides a model for a consortial approval plan for print titles from U.S. university press books. He argues that since libraries are moving large amounts of their print collection to storage facilities to make room for public areas, that the argument that it might take 2-3 days to receive a book through Interlibrary loan in no longer a valid argument. He demonstrates how a consortial approval plan can reduce the duplication of titles thus saving money, provide adequate access and provide broader coverage of topics.

Mallery and Theus (2012) discuss cooperative collection management activities as members of the New Jersey VALE library consortium. Their article provides a historical look at cooperative collection development and provides updates on several VALE committees under the auspices of the Cooperative Collection Management Committee. This includes the VALE e-book Collections Task Force, WorldCat Collections Analysis Group, VALE Collections Assessment Group, Circulation Analysis Project, and VALE Open-source Library System.

COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION ON THE ACADEMIC CAMPUS
Cooperation between public services, systems, campus IT and technical services led to the development of real-time lists of newly acquired resources easily accessible on the Baron-Forness Library’s web pages. “Once the relevant records are identified via Z39.50 connection, the authors, titles and call numbers for each record are returned as XML, formatted by the PHP script, and output to the library’s web pages.” McMullen (2012) outlines the process and techniques used to generate these lists used by faculty, students and academic liaisons, and librarians at the Baron-Forness Library, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.

BYUGLE is a device created by the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University to stream videos for library users. Schroeder (2011) provides a description of the development process through collaboration with staff from the acquisitions and cataloging departments, subject selectors, the library’s Information Technology Department, the university’s Office of Information Technology and various vendors. Streaming videos provide unique copyright, licensing, access and technology challenges in delivering quality videos to library users.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN TECHNCIAL SERVICES AND OTHERS

Technical Services librarians as exhibit curators? Why of course. Chan and Kwok (2013) describe how Hong Kong Baptist University technical services librarians collaborated with an artist, history professor, and publisher to stage an exhibit of 100 sketches of Hong Kong held on their campus. The planning committee also created a digital album and organized three talks focused on different aspects of the images. The authors state that the exhibit “enhanced the relationship between the library and the university community and drew in even more members of target audiences such as artists, students and a wide range of visitors from the general public.”

Collaborating with high-school students to conduct research for an archives is part of a project undertaken by the Ferdinand Hamburger Archives at Johns Hopkins University described by Addonizio & Case (2015). The archives team received a grant to develop a set of EAC-CPF Best Practices as a collaboration between the Archives and Technical Services. Part of the project was to also work with local high school students who would research and identify biographical information and related archival holdings for the project. The local high school students had been identified through conversations with the history teacher and the high school librarians. The project was challenging and rewarding to those involved, complexities of translating EAC-CPF record requirements were overcome and the learning experience for the students was unique and meaningful. While the records created by the students indicated varying levels of success, the project leaders learned valuable lessons for future collaborations.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The BARA program in Nova Scotia allows participants the ability to borrow and return materials to and from any participating library at no charge. BARA (Borrow Anywhere, Return Anywhere) is a collaboration of multi-type libraries addressing patron needs by a partnership between public, academic and college libraries. Van den Hoogen (2012) illustrates the history and development of collaboration between the libraries to provide greater access to library resources across Nova Scotia. One of three surveys conducted after the pilot project showed that over 80% of the public respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with BARA.

COLLABORATION IN DIGITAL PROJECTS

The National Digital Newspaper Project provides access to United States newspapers as primary resource materials through the Library of Congress database, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Through the combined efforts of the University of Vermont, the Vermont Department of
Public Libraries, the Isley Public Library in Middlebury and the Vermont Historical Society, VDNP is the recipient of NEH grants to digitize newspapers documenting Vermont history. The project’s history and the development and progress of the Vermont Digital Newspaper Project is described by McMurdo (2012).

**FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN CATALOGERS, VENDORS AND PUBLISHERS**

Exploring the role of catalogers, vendors and publishers in the creation of OA metadata, Flynn (2013) defines OA metadata as “bibliographic information describing library content that is openly licensed and freely accessible”. Flynn sees OA metadata as an opportunity for collaboration between catalogers, vendors and publishers and as a means to prepare new catalogers for the future. Will vendors and publishers hire catalogers to provide high quality records for OA? Will catalogers work with metadata in the cloud? Time will tell.

Libraries and librarians will continue to explore new ways to collaborate and cooperate with each other, with related organizations and groups to solve problems old and new.
References


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