

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
TRLN COLLECTION ANALYSIS TASK GROUP REPORT TO  
THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION RESOURCES  
JUNE, 2006**

Cooperative collection development within TRLN dates from the Great Depression of the 1930s when notable library collections existed primarily at Ivy League institutions in the northeast and a few major universities in the Midwest and California. Librarians and university administrators in the Triangle united to enhance the collections of their libraries and to provide better service to users by sharing access to specialized and expensive resources.

Since its inception, TRLN has conducted several studies of its members' library collections to identify individual and collective holdings strengths and to measure the effectiveness of long-standing cooperative collection development initiatives. A 1992 study reviewed the catalogues of the eight member libraries at Duke, NCSU and UNC at Chapel Hill and confirmed that the cooperation among the TRLN libraries is very effective in keeping the duplication of materials low, and the level of unique titles high.

In October of 2005, TRLN joined with the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries and the Florida Center for Library Automation to purchase a one-year license from the Online Computer Library Center for their WorldCat Collection Analysis Service (OCLC-WCA). TRLN's Committee on Information Resources then created the TRLN Collection Analysis Task Group, a nine-member committee with representatives from all four university library systems. The task group was charged to investigate overlap, uniqueness, strengths, and gaps in the holdings of the ten TRLN member libraries, individually and as one aggregate collection.

The task group first replicated the 1992 study of the TRLN collections as a whole. The results show that more than 71 percent of the aggregate TRLN collection is unique to a single institution and only 2 percent of the OCLC records analyzed overlap at all four institutions. When NCCU records are removed from the 2006 study, the results indicate that 8 percent of the records overlap at the other three universities, while unique holdings account for 70 percent of the records -- almost the same proportion as the 1992 study. The task group then measured major subject areas of the collections as well as selected non-English language titles across the holdings spectrum that correspond to known cooperative collection development programs.

The subject analysis of OCLC-WCA is based on the OCLC Conspectus which includes 32 broad categories, such as business and economics, biological sciences and history. (Overlap and uniqueness charts for all 32 divisions are available on the TRLN project website: <http://www.trln.org/TaskGroups/CollectionAnalysis/data.htm>). As a general rule, overlap levels were highest for subjects in which all TRLN campuses have research programs. The highest rates of duplication were found in core science fields that generate the greatest level of external funding. The subject areas with the largest

percentage, and often the largest number, of unique titles corresponded to fields in which only one campus had a special collecting commitment, such as supporting a doctoral program or a campus-wide multidisciplinary program.

OCLC-WCA is a new tool for examining and comparing library holdings. At this time, the database primarily contains records for monographs. As a result, the measures of overlap and uniqueness in this report are based upon this portion of the libraries' collections. Duplicate materials in the social sciences and humanities in particular (government documents, certain microfilm and e-book sets, for example) are not reflected in the total overlap figures and may inflate the measure of unique titles. Likewise, materials in any of the libraries' special collections may not be completely accounted for so that the number of unique titles may be under reported, offsetting the inflation measure of unique titles just mentioned.

OCLC-WCA subject area divisions are currently under review by OCLC and will be revised in the future. Hopefully, the new definitions will allow for a more precise "snapshot" of library holdings. In addition, OCLC-WCA is not yet equipped to make comparisons between the aggregate TRLN collection and external libraries or groups of libraries, so it is not possible to investigate potential gaps in the TRLN collection. This future product enhancement will enable the identification of collection gaps by benchmarking the combined TRLN collection against peer institutions and other consortia. Currently, this is only possible within the individual library accounts.

The task group recommends archiving quantitative data at the level of broad OCLC Conspectus subject divisions on the TRLN website along with quantitative data within specific areas of interest. These might include subject areas that are anticipated to change significantly, areas of active cooperation among member libraries, areas of strategic importance or areas in which we could work out cooperative storage strategies. The task group recommends that the Committee on Information Resources identify areas of interest by August 1<sup>st</sup> so that additional analysis may be completed and archived before the current subscription expires on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Like the studies that came before it, this collection analysis confirms that TRLN continues to provide better service to the university communities and their constituents by building interlocked collections that maximize the number of unique research titles and minimize duplication among the member libraries. Due to high costs and limited shelf space, it is virtually impossible for any of the university library systems to duplicate the depth and breadth of TRLN's aggregate collection. The 2006 OCLC-WCA project documents the consortium's continuing effectiveness in building and providing access to some of the richest and most comprehensive library collections found anywhere in the United States.