

"OCLC and Collection Development"
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Joe A. Hewitt

My topic, as listed in the program, is "OCLC and Collection Development" and I assume also that this topic should be addressed within the context of the general theme of this conference -- "New Services: Meeting More Demands in an Economic Crunch."

It seems to me that librarianship is one of the few professions that look at things in this way. When faced with an economic crunch, others tend to look for ways to cut back on services or to get more funding.

Indeed, I found both the specific topic and the general theme a little hard to deal with, because each consist of a pair of subjects that have little relation to each other, and which may, in fact, be mutually exclusive.

With respect to the specific topic, I have noted before in a similar presentation that the effects of the OCLC online database on collection development has been very slight in most libraries, and for that reason the connection between OCLC and collection

development is rather tenuous for most of us. This observation was based on a study I did of the OCLC charter member libraries in 1974 and 1975, and nothing has come to my attention since that would radically change that assessment.

Perhaps the most interesting new development having to do with OCLC and collection development is the programs developed by the SUNY Network for the comparative analysis of collections through the use of OCLC archive tapes. I view this as simply the creation of another tool, a potentially very useful tool, but one which so far has not been put to creative use in the operation of coordinating collection development programs, as far as I know.

This topic then -- "OCLC and Collection Development" -- is not one that lends itself to a factual treatment, except to state what certainly appears to be the fact, that OCLC has not as yet had any profound impact on collection development in academic libraries, at least not on anything like a broad scale.

Since it is possible to discuss the subject only in a somewhat speculative way, I think it is important first to point out several assumptions that will underly these observations. What I am doing, in reality, is redefining my assigned topic so that I can deal with it in a coherent way and fill in the generous time allotted to this presentation on the program. I hope mainly just to deal with the issue in a way that will provoke some questions and discussion.

First of all, I assume that by OCLC the planners of the program did not necessarily mean that the presentation should be limited to OCLC, Inc. -- the organization which we all know and love -- but were using OCLC as a generic term to stand for any bibliographic utility. As we all know, there is more than one bibliographic utility now, and of these, it is not OCLC, but RLIN, that has expressed objectives related to collection development.

As part of RLIN's appeal to the nation's research libraries, it has stated the goal of developing and supporting coordinated collection development programs among its membership, which RLIN hopes will someday include the majority of the nation's research libraries. Perhaps, then, these comments, insofar as they address the question of whether or not a bibliographic utility can realistically expect to be a major influence on collection development in academic libraries, will be more relevant to RLIN than to OCLC, since RLIN has the stated goal of exerting such an influence.

A second assumption is that the topic is not restricted to the OCLC system or the systems of the other bibliographic utilities as they now exist, but that it also encompasses these systems as they may exist in the future. Although OCLC is one of the most successful organizations in the history of librarianship, it stills seems that librarians spend a great deal of time discussing the unrealized potential of OCLC's systems.

My personal view, based upon observations in close to sixty libraries over the past several years, is that the unrealized potential of OCLC's systems resides more at the local level than at the network level. Perhaps the most significant opportunity offered by OCLC is the opportunity it affords to build a machine readable database of bibliographic records representing the holdings of an individual library, or a small group of libraries. Very few libraries, it seems to me, have made use of this opportunity to build truly functional local systems to support bibliographic access, collection development, and other services.

So, by the phrase -- "OCLC's systems of the future" -- I am thinking more in terms of the systems developed by individual libraries and local networks, which are derived from OCLC in the sense that they are based on OCLC archive tapes, but systems which are not themselves direct services of the network. I am also thinking specifically of online catalogs for public use.

It is true that OCLC could still do a lot to improve its ability to support such local systems, such as providing authority control and the capacity to transfer authority records immediately to local databases, and it may not be too optimistic to hope that these developments will soon come about. If they do, along with the improvements in the display of union holdings data, OCLC may in fact have fully reached its appropriate potential as a network in terms of providing technical support to the collection development function.

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So, in terms of collection development in the context of automated bibliographic systems, it is my assumption that local and sub-regional systems can affect collection development more dramatically than those of a national network, although national networks will serve a necessary and very important role in supporting and providing backup to the local systems. This, at least, is the position we are taking at the University of North Carolina in our own cooperative projects with Duke University. I will explain the rationale for that position in more detail later on.

A third point I would like to make is not an assumption, but a distinction for the purposes of this paper between collection development and selection. In my survey of the OCLC charter member libraries, I found that information in the OCLC database was indeed effecting selection decisions in a number of libraries.

Many libraries had set up established guidelines, based on cost of an item being considered for order, or on the subject area, according to which selectors are to consult the OCLC database to see if certain other libraries own the material. They then allow this information to influence their selection decisions, but only as one of many factors.

What interested me was that in most cases such activities were going on unilaterally. That is, a library would be basing

selection decisions to some extent on the holdings of another library without that library's knowledge and without there being any cooperative agreements between the libraries. In many cases, there would be no reciprocity, for example, holdings in some libraries noted for their excellent interlibrary loan services are checked even by distant libraries from which the holding library rarely borrowed. In many cases, too, libraries relied extensively on the holdings of other libraries with whom they had special agreements on direct borrowing or special priorities in interlibrary loan. It was also noteworthy that the use of the OCLC database in selection frequently resulted in the purchase of a book rather than the decision not to purchase because it was held by other libraries. The fact that a number of libraries held the work was often used to confirm the decision that it was an important title that needed to be added to the collection.

The point is simply that these kinds of activities do not reflect an impact of OCLC on collection development. I try to view collection development as the planned, programmatic process of building collection through systematic selection. (At least I try to view it that way in administering collection development at the University of North Carolina, though I am not always successful at it when it comes to imparting that view to the faculty.)

So I have finally told you what I am going to talk about --

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local automated bibliographic systems (as opposed to OCLC) and collection development (as I have distinguished it from single item selection).

I would like to deal with this topic by describing a long-standing program of coordinated collection development between two research libraries, then by noting some of the lessons we have learned in operating these programs for over 40 years, and then by telling you how we expect these programs to be impacted by the arrival of automated catalogs in the 1980s.

The libraries of Duke University and the University of North Carolina, the two largest research library collections in the southeast, are located only nine miles apart in Durham and Chapel Hill, NC. The libraries support a student population of some 28,000 and a faculty population of over 3,000. Also in the area is the Research Triangle Park, which includes the National Humanities Center and some 40 private and governmental research installations.

In fact, the area described by a triangle with Durham, Chapel Hill, and Raleigh at each point has the highest concentration of doctoral holders per capita than any other area in the world. The libraries together are already viewed by many of these users, many whom are not affiliated with either institution, as a single resource for the support of a research and scholarly activity.

It is, of course, a natural situation for cooperation, and there has been a great deal of cooperative activity between the libraries over the years, going back to 1934. In that year, a grant was received to duplicate the main entry cards at each library so each would have a catalog of holdings of the other. This continued through the exchange of catalog cards until both were members of OCLC, and now continues through the exchange of cards for titles not entered in the OCLC database. This replacement of a manual union catalog technology has been the only effect of OCLC so far on our cooperative collection development programs.

In 1935 a daily courier service was established between the libraries which has continued uninterrupted ever since and now includes stops in the Research Triangle Park, the State Library, and North Carolina State University in Raleigh. Other activities include reciprocal borrowing privileges and, more recently, free photocopy services for faculty. This service, by the way, applies only to periodical articles in journals owned by one library but not the other. Needless to say, it is a very popular service.

Also in 1935 collection development agreements were reached in a wide range of subject areas. These have been continued and expanded through the years and have resulted, for the most part, with collections which compliment each other. This is not to say that these programs have been entirely successful, because they have not been without their problems, but we do believe that this cooperation has considerably expanded the range of research

materials available to the users of the two libraries.

Let me describe briefly a few of these collection development agreements. There are basically three types: 1) those covering geographic areas, 2) those covering subjects, and 3) those covering special forms or types of materials.

First I will describe several of the agreements:

1. Since 1938 the countries of Latin America have been divided between the two libraries for collection emphasis. This program was begun with a Rockefeller foundation grant for cooperative acquisitions of Latin America materials, and over the years has been one of our more stable and useful programs. At Chapel Hill we have taken this program one step further by taking responsibility for one of our countries, Venezuela, as part of the SALALM Cooperative Cataloging Project.
2. There is a similar division of our Eastern European collections. For example, Duke is building strong collections in Polish, while UNC concentrates on Czech. With Russian materials there is a subject division, with Duke specializing in the Soviet period and international socialism, while North Carolina concentrates on pre-revolutionary Russian history and literature.

3. Another agreement involves Far Eastern materials, with North Carolina collecting Chinese language materials and Duke Japanese.
4. There is also an agreement involving commonwealth nations. Duke, for example, collects heavily in Canadian materials while North Carolina is assigned responsibility for coverage of Australia.

In addition to the area agreements, there are agreements in a number of subject areas corresponding to the strengths in the instructional and research programs on each campus. North Carolina, for example, collects library science, journalism, music, North Caroliniana. Duke emphasizes research collections in forestry, religion, engineering, and European history since 1870. There are, of course, many subject areas in which both libraries collect heavily, but with the agreement not to duplicate expansive research materials.

The other type of agreement has to do with certain types of publications, government documents are the principal example. While both libraries have strong collections in federal documents, a detailed agreement was reached in 1935 on the collecting of state documents with each library taking responsibility for collecting documents from specific states. This agreement has undergone considerable modification over the years.

For reasons not completely understood, except for the presence of a documents librarian and some political science faculty with a strong interests in state documents, Carolina began taking a very aggressive stance in collecting state documents in the 40s and 50s. Duke, very wisely, began turning over states to Carolina and by the 1960s UNC had almost complete responsibility for state documents and had set up an extensive acquisitions network for collecting these difficult materials. Duke, in the meantime, had taken on primary responsibility for collecting documents for a number of foreign countries, particularly in Western Europe, while both libraries collected heavily in documents of international organizations.

Within the last five years, however, Carolina has found that its extensive state documents collection has become something of a burden, and we have begun to restrict our collecting to southeastern states and certain other states, relying on the Center for Research Libraries for the documents of states of marginal interest to us.

There are similar divisions of responsibility in the collecting of newspapers, with little duplication of coverage except for those indispensable few required by all libraries of any standing.

In addition to these agreements which assign areas of responsibility, the libraries have over the years made many joint

purchases of library materials, mainly of expensive microform sets. These materials are jointly owned, yet housed in one library or the other, depending on the use they are expected to receive. There is an understanding that if use turns out to be greater in the library that does not hold the material the set will be transferred. By combining our resources in this way, we have been able to acquire many more of these important research materials than if each library had acted on its own and without coordination.

We also keep records of expensive orders placed by the other library. I believe the rule at present is single volumes costing more than \$100 and sets over \$250. These records are consulted and sometimes taken into consideration in the selection decision. In serials selection each library has in hand information on whether the other library subscribes, or intends to subscribe, to all titles being considered for subscription.

What I have just outlined is a more or less traditional cooperative collection development program between two academic libraries. They cover many more areas than what I have given as examples. We feel that it is about as successful as such programs can be, yet, in operating these programs over the years, the staffs of both libraries have been aware of many limitations. Some of the limitations arise from the inherent difficulties in any cooperative activity, that is, the inherent conflict between a somewhat idealized concept of the "common good" and the

immediate needs of ones own users. Other limitations arise from the lack of a technology to support the program without consuming excessive staff time, and the lack of a technology to allow use of the two collections as if they were a single, unified resource.

Our experience in maintaining cooperative acquisitions for so many years has given us some insight, I believe, into the dynamics of these kinds of relationships, and possibly a basis for projecting the impact of automated bibliographic systems on cooperative acquisitions programs in general. First, I will mention some of the more specific points that seem to emerge from our experience.

First, we have found that area programs, or programs based on country of origin, have been maintained more consistently than those based on a subject division. The area programs are even further strengthened when there is a corresponding language division. For example, our agreements on Chinese and Japanese materials and those on Polish and Czech collections are perhaps the strongest in the sense that they have been breached less often and have been adhered to most strictly over the years.

Geographic assignments involving English language materials, however, are somewhat more difficult to keep under control. The agreement on Canadian and Australian materials, it seems, is the most difficult of all of our geographical assignments to maintain with consistency.

One could speculate that this is a function of the level of interest in the material involved. That is, the less interest there is among faculty in an area, the easier it is to set up collection development agreements that actually work. This is another way of saying that these kinds of idealistic enterprises always work best in a vacuum. In fact, however, we have strong research faculties in most of these areas covered by the agreements, for example, Far Eastern studies. It just seems that these faculties are more sensitive to the need to cooperate in collecting the material they need than are faculty in less esoteric areas, particularly when they deal mainly with English language materials.

I make this point -- the point that it is somewhat easier to operate programs based on language or on country of origin than on subject -- for the benefit of those libraries who may just be getting started with this kind of activity and which may wish to take on something easy before they get into more difficult areas.

A second point is that the collection development agreement seem to operate most effectively in areas where our collection development effort is organized and staffed in a similar way. For example, an area such as Slavic studies, where there is a bibliographer in each institution with specific responsibility for this coverage, works out much better than those where there is not a one to one correspondence. The worst case, of course, is when a library does not have a staff bibliographer and the

selection is done mainly by faculty under the general oversight of a chief bibliographer.

It would seem that the operation of tightly controlled coordinated collection development programs between research libraries over a period of years can best be done between libraries with a similar approach to collection development. I find it difficult to conceive of a library in which faculty selection still predominates as being very successful in cooperative collection development.

This is something that we have not entirely achieved with Duke University. UNC tends to depend more heavily on full time bibliographers, while Duke has decentralized the collection development effort to involve staff in cataloging, reference, and throughout the library. From the point of view of coordination of collection development, this puts a very heavy burden on the chief bibliographer at Duke.

With respect to staff, I would not want to underestimate the amount of time it takes to operate these programs. While I am convinced that cooperative acquisitions is worthwhile, it does complicate the process considerably, mainly by enlarging the number of factors that may play a role in selection decisions. This is one reason that I am somewhat cautious about proposals for coordinated acquisitions at the national level, such as those contained in the RLIN statement of objectives.

Another point that I would like to make is that funding for coordinated acquisitions is critical, as it is with everything. It is interesting to note that some of our better programs were originally begun because funds were available specifically for cooperative acquisitions in a given area.

More recently we have received Title II-C funds to purchase unduplicated materials which fit into the context of our existing agreements. We have found that the receipt of these funds in as, more than any other event in recent years, caused us to analyze, evaluate, and ultimately to recommit our libraries to our cooperative acquisitions programs.

In short, we have found that the availability of funding allocated specifically for the purpose of maintaining a library's area of responsibility under a collection development agreement is important in keeping these programs going. It is very difficult to maintain programs of coordinated collection development consistently over a period of many years using only funds which have been allocated to departments, or general funds which are subject to all sorts of demands from a library's immediate constituency.

Here is another point related to funding, and one which some Proponents of resource sharing may find objectionable. Although coordinated collection development is seen as a way of conserving and extending resources, these kinds of programs are often beyond

the scope of those who need them most, the marginally funded library, A library needs some funding, often considerable funding, beyond that needed to maintain basic collections and meet the most pressing needs of its users before it can begin to think seriously about being an adequate partner in such a cooperative collection development relationship.

Not only that, but the adequacy of a library's funding needs to be roughly equivalent to that of the partners in the agreement, and this equivalency needs to be maintained with some consistency over a period of years. This is the source of one of our main problems in our programs with Duke, the ebb and flow of the levels of funding. Over a period of time we have maintained a roughly similar level of funding. But there have been ups and downs in our budgets and these have not always been synchronized.

The strongest tendency to breach an agreement occurs when one library is unable to purchase materials in their area of responsibility and there are scholars on the other campus needing access to these materials. From time to time, both libraries have acquired research materials which, according to the guidelines of our agreement, rightfully belong in the other library.

Finally, I would like to make this point, that in spite of the general success of these programs -- which I feel could almost be taken as a model for the profession -- we still encounter at times an underlying resistance to this kind of

coordination from faculty when it deals with their specific areas of interest. This resistance is not altogether ungrounded. In spite of the fact we have the delivery service, the priorities on interlibrary loan, direct borrowing privileges, and the free photocopy service for periodicals, it is still a fact that it is not as easy or convenient to use the library of the other institution.

We hear a lot of minor complaints on both sides. Parking is always a problem, there are sometimes prolonged waits for delivery of some materials, particularly those from branch libraries, sometimes there are even complaints about impoliteness on the part of staff at the circulation desk of the cooperating institution. But the main complaint by far has to do with the inability to search the bibliographic files of the other library in the same way one can search those of one's home library. In other words, the lack of the way of knowing what is in a collection before taking the trouble to go search for it.

In a general evaluation of these programs several years ago a joint committee reached the conclusion that we had taken cooperative acquisitions about as far as we could go without providing automated catalogs for the two libraries. Automated catalogs and acquisitions files would be necessary to practice truly refined coordination of collection building without spending enormous amounts of time maintaining and checking manual files of the other library's holdings and order records.

Even more important was the point that it seemed unfair to users to build complementary collections without providing the means to use the collections as a single, integrated resource. The committee felt that we would meet increasing resistance to attempts to extend our present coordinated acquisitions agreements if we do not provide full bibliographic access to both collections on both campuses.

It is for this reason that we have now embarked on a joint project, which also includes North Carolina State University, to develop online catalogs for the three libraries. This will be a distributed local network with three separate catalogs operating on in-house computers in each library. We are now approximately nine months into the project, and expect to have the network operational by 1984 or 1985. This-time frame could be shortened as we are now entering negotiations with Solinet, our regional network, for a joint development effort based upon modifications of WLN software, which Solinet has recently purchased. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have about this project after the presentation.

So, this finally brings us back to the original issue -- OCLC and Collection Development -- or, the national bibliographic utility and collection development.

In our planning at Chapel Hill, we have always taken the position that whatever local systems we develop will be designed

to operate in the context of regional and national networks. It is important to have access to the records of the holdings of distant research libraries and to provide them with access to the records of our holdings. This should expedite the interlibrary loan process considerably and improve the success rate of interlibrary loan on those occasions where it is necessary to resort to it.

But, in spite of the recognized importance of interlibrary loan as a supplementary resource to local holdings, it is apparent to us that the local collections are most important to our users -- those are the collections which users have direct access for screening large amounts of material for relevancy to a specific problem -- a process that, in most cases, involves inspection of the text itself, in view of the state of subject analysis in American Librarianship today.

It is also the local collections which are used to shape the focus and scope of research projects, and which may even in some cases determine whether or not a project is ever begun.

In other words, while one must accept the validity of resource sharing on a national scale, it is also necessary, I believe, to reaffirm the primacy of local collections -- a belief which seems clearly to conform to the needs and attitudes of our users.

What we hope to do, basically, is to extend the scope of the

materials that our students and faculty can use almost as if they were in our own collections. This is something one can do only with near neighbors, but it definitely appears to be the best way to use whatever resources you have available for coordinated collection development through networking.

Thank you.