Introduction

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Libraries in all sectors are coming under increasing pressure from governments and other policymakers to cooperate. Various factors might drive this call, including funding constraints in both the library and education sectors; calls for schools to improve links with their local communities; and the trend for public libraries to offer other community services to help attract nontraditional users. Although cooperation might take many forms, including resource sharing, reciprocal access arrangements, joint promotions, and collaborative learning activities, joint use libraries serving two or more client groups in the same building are, as Bundy (2002) has put it, "the ultimate form of co-operation."

Although the concept of joint use libraries dates back to the nineteenth century, their popularity has fluctuated over time and from region to region. There was political support for the concept in South Australia in the early 1970s and in Florida in the 1990s, for instance (see Bundy, 1998; Aaron, 1992). Despite continued reservations from some within the library profession, the current emphasis on collaboration means that joint use libraries have, probably, never been more relevant to public policy. In the UK, for example, the number of joint use libraries appears to have increased significantly over the last five years; they are seen as a politically attractive option in response to current government initiatives and were advocated in the 2002 Audit Commission report, *Building Better Library Services* (2002). Elsewhere, growing interest in this area is indicated by the fact that in the United States, the ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children), AASL (American Association of School Librarians), and YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) have recently established a Joint Task Force on School/Public Library Cooperative Activities.

This issue of *Library Trends* brings together articles by both researchers and library professionals to examine recent developments in joint use

libraries. The first three articles provide an overview of joint use libraries. Haycock's article draws on more than thirty years of research into joint use libraries to determine predictors of success. Bundy and Amey focus on evaluation, outlining a methodology suited to the unique nature of joint use libraries. McNicol's article considers the effect of joint use libraries on the local community, something that is normally seen as more problematic than the effective provision of library services to educational users. The remaining contributors present case studies from different perspectives and regions of the world. These emphasize the fact that, although joint use libraries are most frequently thought of as shared school-public facilities, there are many other possible combinations.

Even on a small scale, implementing a joint use library can be an extremely complex undertaking. The challenge can be even greater when the project is on a large scale such as a joint university-public library. Dalton Elkin and Hannaford, and Hansson explore these issues. Dalton et al. describes the proposed development in Worcester in the UK, where a joint university-public library is being planned with input from the local further education college as well as the regional chamber of commerce. Hansson looks at joint use library provision in Sweden. Using two examples of joint public-university libraries, he considers whether joint use libraries are "a new form of library" or simply a convenient administrative arrangement.

Sullivan, Taylor, Barrick, and Stelk are, or have previously been, employed at the College Hill Library in Westminster, Colorado, a joint college-public library that has been open since 1998. Their article presents a case study from the perspective of practitioners, describing the background to this development and the main challenges the library has faced as well as the successes it has experienced.

Bauer's article also involves a joint college-public library; she focuses on personnel issues experienced in a joint use library in transition. Building on research carried out in 1995, she considers the implications of moving an existing joint use (middle) school-public library to a college setting.

Medical or healthcare libraries in universities or health provider organizations offer services to both students and healthcare professionals. They are, therefore, effectively joint use libraries although they are often not recognized as such. Dorrington describes recent developments in medical and nursing education and the National Health Service in the UK and considers what these have meant for funding, services, and resources in this type of joint use library.

An interesting variation on the usual form of joint use library as shared physical premises is presented by Lacroix and Backus. The U.S. National Library of Medicine serves both health scientists and consumers through online information provision. Their article suggests how such an electronic library can act as a joint use library.

Le Roux and Hendrik also offer a twist on the usual form of joint use library in describing developments in South Africa. The model of a joint school-public library that had been adopted in many other countries is not suited to local conditions; this has led to the development of a public library-based community-school library.

Hopefully, this edition of *Library Trends* will stimulate further discussion about the merits and problems of joint use libraries and the factors that can ensure their success. By demonstrating that the concept of a joint use library can be viewed much more broadly than simply a shared school-public facility, it aims to encourage wider recognition of joint use libraries in all their forms.

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Sarah McNicol is a researcher at evidence base Research & Evaluation Services at the University of Central England in Birmingham, UK. She has worked as lead researcher on a variety of research projects, mainly in the areas of school libraries, learning and young people's use of libraries and information. This led her to develop a particular interest in joint use libraries. She carried out one of the first research projects into this topic for a number of years in 2003 and has since been on a study visit to joint use libraries in Norway; organised a UK conference on joint use and co-located libraries; and established an online community of practice intended for library staff, policymakers and researchers involved in joint use libraries.