
Cooperation Among Libraries of Different Types

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THE VARIOUS LIBRARIES in a given community differ in many of their objectives but they share responsibility for providing the general and specialized information needs of the local citizenry. The physical proximity of the libraries and the mutual business and social contacts that a professional group is likely to enjoy in a given community would seem to provide libraries with the potential for a variety of practical cooperative experiments in the building and use of library resources.

This paper describes some of the kinds of collaboration in the acquisition and use of library resources which libraries in a local area have attempted. Only those instances of cooperation among libraries of different types, i.e., academic, special, and public, are included since other papers discuss other types of cooperation. Cooperation among different types of libraries but which is unrelated to their being within the same local area has not been included in the discussion. The relationship of state libraries with school and public libraries and state university library extension services to local school and public libraries are kinds of cooperation which are not within the scope of this paper.

The majority of the examples of library cooperation described were obtained in response to a letter of inquiry sent to thirty-three metropolitan libraries, including seventeen public libraries and sixteen university libraries. The areas selected are not a scientific sample although an effort was made to get information from all sections of the country. Libraries in larger metropolitan areas were chosen on the assumption that cities having a variety of types of libraries were likely to have experimented more with cooperative activities than smaller communities. This assumption may be questioned, and there may be some kinds of local cooperation that are not represented by this group of libraries.

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The original inquiry was directed to only one library in the community. Later inquiries were made of libraries cited by the original respondents as having pertinent data. Librarians were asked to describe and evaluate any cooperative projects in which they had engaged in their area or with which they were familiar. Twenty-nine librarians responded and their information furnished the data for this survey. These data are summarized in the following pages according to the type of cooperative activity, the administrative machinery used, and the problems encountered in planning and operation.

The exchange of information about holdings and acquisitions is one of the more common examples of local cooperation. Methods of exchange range from union catalogs to telephone calls. Libraries in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Houston, Baltimore, St. Louis, and Kansas City reported past or present efforts at some form of union catalog, the most ambitious being the Philadelphia Union Library Catalogue, set up between 1935 and 1939, which formed the nucleus of the Philadelphia Bibliographical Center. Although this catalog has gone beyond that of a local area project, it began as a joint effort by local libraries. In 1942, the Detroit Public Library, the Wayne State University Library, and the University of Detroit Library joined with the "outstate" libraries—the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and the Michigan State Library—to set up a union catalog, with copies of the proposed catalog to be located at the Detroit Public Library and the University of Michigan. The participants abandoned the catalog in 1949, however, because of the cost of maintenance, the prospect of the National Union Catalog, and the relatively infrequent use in light of the expense. These cases are cited because they represent an important kind of cooperation among libraries in a local area. The union catalog as a venture in library cooperation is treated more fully in another paper.

After World War II, the libraries in the Twin City area of St. Paul and Minneapolis set up a union catalog of selective current acquisitions. The University of Minnesota housed the catalog and bore the cost of maintenance. The cooperating libraries discontinued the project in 1953 because they decided that its use did not justify its cost. The libraries saw no prospect of being able to finance the inclusion of back holdings, and telephone communications became cheaper with the installation of non-toll service between the two cities.

Several libraries reported maintaining catalogs of other libraries' holdings in a particular subject. The Enoch Pratt Free Library in

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Baltimore maintains a union catalog of art books in four Baltimore libraries—Goucher College, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Walters Art Gallery, and the Peabody Institute. Originally nine libraries in the area cooperated in this project, but five have dropped out. Enoch Pratt also includes cards in its catalog for all materials which have been added to Peabody Institute since the publication of its printed catalogs in 1882 and 1905. The Kansas City Public Library gets author cards for monographs in the Linda Hall Library of Science and Technology for its Department of Business and Technology. It duplicates these cards as well as cards on special subjects from such libraries as the University of Kansas Medical Library and the Air Force Academy Library for the Bibliographical Center at Denver. In Omaha, a joint committee was set up in the early fifties to begin work on the *Omaha Union Catalog of Chemistry Material* but the project folded in 1955.

In addition to union catalogs, some libraries have tried to enlarge access to community resources by exchanging catalog cards. Some such exchanges have been limited to certain subjects while others have included all current acquisitions. The University of Pittsburgh Library and the Carnegie Institute of Technology Library agreed in 1948 to exchange cards for all new accessions, with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh participating for those fields in which it purchased heavily. The exchange, however, broke down under the weight of filing costs although Carnegie Institute still gets cards for certain subjects from the University of Pittsburgh. Since 1951 the Art and Architecture Library of Washington University in St. Louis has exchanged cards with the St. Louis City Art Museum. In 1952, four Houston libraries—Rice Institute, Houston Public Library, the University of Houston, and Texas Southwestern University—experimented with exchanging cards for current imprints but later decided that the operation took more time and money than the libraries could afford. Related, though not identical efforts would include the Detroit Public Library's granting Wayne the privilege of duplicating the cards for the labor collection the Detroit Public purchased from John Crerar. Minneapolis reported that the Minnesota Historical Society and the Archives Division of the University of Minnesota Library freely exchange information about the contents of their respective collections so that scholars will know what they may expect to find in either collection.

Libraries in a number of areas have compiled union lists of serials to disseminate information about holdings. Such guides are invaluable for interlibrary loan purposes and useful for eliminating duplication

of expensive journal holdings. Local chapters of the Special Libraries Association have sponsored these union lists in Detroit, Kansas City, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh. Sometimes, as in the case of Detroit, the project was co-sponsored by the public library. In Pittsburgh, the University of Pittsburgh Library, the Carnegie Institute of Technology Library, and the Carnegie Library took over the task of completing the union list from the Special Libraries chapter. In both Pittsburgh and Milwaukee, the "list" is in card form and housed in the public library. The *Worcester Union List of Serials* (1949, new edition, 1957) stemmed from the joint efforts of some fourteen special, college, public, and private libraries in the area. Seven libraries, five academic and two public, in the Dallas-Fort Worth area cooperated to publish the *North Texas Union List of Serials* (1944; supplement, 1945; new edition, 1948). More limited in scope are lists such as *A Union List of Serials in the Washington University Libraries and in the Henry Shaw Botanical Garden Library and the Library of the Monsanto Chemical Company*.

Exchanging information about holdings has been paralleled, possibly less extensively and certainly less systematically, by the pooling of information about new and proposed acquisitions. Libraries have tried to minimize duplication of expensive and little used materials through local cooperation. Several years ago, the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the libraries of Johns Hopkins University, the Peabody Institute, Goucher College, and the Walters Art Gallery attempted to set up procedures for cooperative book selection for expensive and specialized works. The libraries worked out routines for checking with other libraries about "intent to purchase" such items. The plan, according to one participant, was not notably successful and is no longer in operation except in rare and unusual cases. Four Houston libraries have worked out a form whereby the purchasing library automatically notifies the other libraries of its intention to buy a given item. The fairly recent increase of large-scale microtext publishing projects has stimulated libraries in several areas to pool acquisition information. Washington University and the St. Louis Public Library exchange detailed information about the contents of the various microtext projects which each subscribes to. Detroit reports a similar exchange between Detroit Public Library and Wayne State University, as does the University of Utah with the Salt Lake City Public Library. The Worcester, Massachusetts, correspondent wrote that most libraries in that area check with each other before purchasing important and expensive

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publications. Wayne State University and the Detroit Public Library occasionally review their periodical subscription lists in order to eliminate unnecessary duplication, and each library forwards to the other records of new subscriptions.

Librarians have long recognized that one of the basic elements in any cooperative planning for enlargement of resources on a local or national scale is agreement as to who will collect what. The more discrete the areas of acquisition, the greater the opportunity for increasing the total resources of the community. Large public libraries with diverse clientele and metropolitan universities with a wide variety of instructional and research programs to support have found defining areas of specialization to be a thorny problem.

One of the earliest general agreements about subject specialization was drawn up by the Chicago Public Library, the John Crerar Library, and the Newberry Library in 1896. Although brief and stated in general terms with no formal procedures established for its implementation, it has doubtlessly been effective in determining the characteristics of these collections and has helped to give Chicago stronger resources than it would have had without it. Boston, rich in libraries, reported no formal cooperative arrangements for specialized acquisitions, but depends rather "on unwritten relationships in which common sense has been allowed a dominant role." Informal consultations frequently take place where the purchase price is fifty dollars or more.

In Baltimore, seven institutions through correspondence and conferences have worked out plans for acquisition of Maryland and Baltimore material. For example, Enoch Pratt Free Library assumes no responsibility for historical manuscripts or the building up of a genealogical collection, leaving these fields to the Maryland Historical Society and, in the case of archives, to the Maryland Hall of Records. Parenthetically, genealogy seems to be one field in which agreement for responsibility is easily reached! New Orleans, Syracuse, Salt Lake City, Seattle, and Detroit all report this as a field where local responsibility is unquestioned. Some twenty years ago, the Detroit Public Library and Wayne State University delineated, in rather vague terms, areas of specialization. Recently, each library drew up a detailed document reaffirming and, in some cases, enlarging the earlier "understanding." The reports annotated present strengths and weaknesses in order to provide a clearer guide for future acquisitions.

Local agreements dividing responsibility for types of material or for major publication projects seem more easily arrived at. Numerous

correspondents cited divisions of responsibility for certain large-scale microtext publications. For example, the Cleveland Public Library subscribes to the Evans microprint project while Western Reserve is taking the microfilm edition of titles in the *Short-Title Catalog*. The Detroit Public Library, the University of Detroit, and Wayne State University take care to avoid duplicating subscriptions to these major publishing projects. In St. Louis, Washington University, the St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis University, and Concordia Seminary have informal agreements with respect to subscribing to the major scholarly micro-reproduction projects. State and local newspapers, maps, and government documents are types of material for which libraries in local areas have frequently agreed to allocate the responsibility for collection and preservation.

Several respondents described informal arrangements for the exchange and disposal of duplicates or unwanted materials. Such practice may be more widespread than this brief survey indicates since some librarians may not have considered it important enough to mention. The most highly organized "exchange and disposal" program reported is the project sponsored by the Milwaukee Public Library and the local Special Libraries chapter. Member libraries send all duplicate or unwanted periodicals to the public library which selects items to add to its collection, to replace mutilated issues, or acts as an exchange center for filling the needs of other local libraries. What is left is sold to magazine dealers or disposed of as waste paper. The proceeds of the sales are divided evenly between the public library and the local Special Libraries chapter. The project is reported as successful not only from the standpoint of improving local periodical collections but also in providing financial support for other projects of the Special Libraries chapter.

An informal arrangement involving the St. Louis Public Library, Concordia Seminary Library, and Washington University Library makes duplicate books in any one of the three libraries available to the other two before they are disposed of through other channels. Worcester libraries check their discards as to "uniqueness" and send the book to the appropriate library if it is the last copy in the area. The Detroit Public Library and the Wayne State University Library regularly donate to one another materials that are pertinent to their collection.

The transfer of materials from one library to another to increase their usefulness is one of the earliest examples of library cooperation

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among different types of libraries. The transfer in some instances has been the direct result of formal agreements for specialization in acquisition. The 1896 cooperative acquisitions agreement among the John Crerar, the Newberry, and the Chicago Public Libraries resulted in Newberry's selling to Crerar at a modest figure its collections in science and technology and later, the transfer of its excellent medical library. In Boston, the Public Library has twice transferred materials to newly formed libraries that were logical repositories for them—in the latter decades of the nineteenth century its medical material to the Boston Medical Library and in the 1920's much of its material in the field of business history to the Harvard Business Library, then in its formative stage.

More recently, the University of Pittsburgh, the Carnegie Institute of Technology, and the Carnegie Library as a part of their program of coordination report combining incomplete sets of periodicals in the library in which they will have the greatest use. Similar exchanges of periodicals were also reported between the Kansas City Public Library and the Linda Hall Library and between the Detroit Public Library and Wayne State University Library. In Philadelphia, the Academy of Natural Sciences transferred appropriate materials to the American Philosophical Society, and the Rare Book Department of the University of Pennsylvania gave its collection of horology to Franklin Institute. The Archival Division of the University of Minnesota Library and the Minnesota Historical Society occasionally transfer items to strengthen their respective holdings.

Cooperation among libraries in building community library resources must be supplemented by devices for making these resources available to the community. Interlibrary loan has been a time-honored procedure for doing this. Libraries in some areas have liberalized their loan procedures to increase availability of materials. Enoch Pratt Free Library has worked out an arrangement whereby patrons may borrow Peabody materials listed in Pratt's catalog through interlibrary loan. (Since Peabody is a reference library only, such arrangements are necessary for users to have loan privileges for Peabody material.) In 1951, the Special Libraries Council of Philadelphia devised an interlibrary loan code to conform with the local practices of a group of college and university libraries. As a corollary to the cooperative acquisition agreement cited earlier, the Pittsburgh libraries instituted a more liberal policy of interlibrary loans. Interlibrary loan service among three libraries in Detroit—the Detroit Public, the University of De-

troit, and Wayne State University—has been speeded up by the University of Detroit's supplying a pick-up and delivery service for these loans. Both Detroit Public and Wayne issue "company cards" to special librarians or, in some cases, to individuals which permits direct borrowing and reduces the red-tape of interlibrary loans. Syracuse reports reciprocal use of materials in the University and special libraries by staff members and faculty.

The problem of increasing the accessibility of research and reference collections has been solved in several metropolitan areas by contractual agreements between the public library and professional or industrial organizations that need to maintain libraries for their membership. In Denver, under a long-standing agreement with the Colorado State Board of Examiners for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors and the Colorado State Board of Examiners for Architects, the Public Library receives annually from each group substantial sums for research materials in their field of specialization. When the contracts were drawn, both organizations transferred their holdings to the Denver Public Library where they are available for public use. The agreements have resulted in the development of strong collections in both fields.

The Boeing Airplane Company in Seattle through a contractual arrangement with the Seattle Public Library has the benefit of a fine collection in the field of aeronautics administered by the Public Library but partially subsidized by the Boeing Company. The Company also maintains a special library of its own. In Kansas City, the Linda Hall Library has accepted responsibility for the science library resources needed by the University of Kansas City. Contractual arrangements such as those cited here not only increase the accessibility of research collections but also eliminate unnecessary duplication of specialized material.

Many of the cooperative projects and activities carried on by libraries have been conducted with a minimum of administrative machinery. Generally speaking, local cooperation is primarily managed by an *ad hoc* committee or through informal contact of librarians in the area—a technique which ease and frequency of communication make feasible. "Friendly understanding" rather than formal agreements support many types of local cooperation.

Such machinery as has been employed usually consists of joint committees responsible for planning and carrying out specific projects and in only a few cases have more elaborate techniques been used.

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For its *Union List of Periodicals* the cooperating Pittsburgh libraries have a governing committee made up of the directors of the three libraries and an operating committee composed of staff members and several special librarians. The operating committee is responsible for developing technical procedures for the project. In 1941, Philadelphia librarians formed the Philadelphia Metropolitan Library Council to provide a channel of voluntary cooperation for the libraries in the area. The Council set up subcommittees to be responsible for developing plans for cooperation in certain areas, including specialization in libraries, cooperative routines, cooperative cataloging, storage of little-used materials, and privileges for users. Each committee explored ways and means of increasing cooperation in its area and several reported on possible plans of action, but tangible results were minimal. The Council itself dissolved in 1950.

Several reports indicate that cooperative projects were the result of the deliberations of a committee formulated for the express purpose of exploring possible methods for cooperation. Pittsburgh's cooperative projects are the outgrowth of a series of meetings by the directors of the three libraries for the purpose of coordinating library services and acquisitions. In Detroit, representatives from the Public Library and Wayne State University Library meet regularly to consider ways to improve service and resources through cooperation.

Librarians were cautious in estimating success or failure of local cooperation. Some thought certain projects were working well; others expressed disappointment with what they deemed minor achievements. With such a small sample of enterprises, no generalizations can be drawn from successes or failures. Among the major projects mentioned, union catalogs and large-scale exchanges of information about holdings have had a fairly high mortality rate. Such efforts in Pittsburgh, Detroit, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Houston, for example, were begun but are now discontinued. On the other hand, union lists of serials were usually successfully completed and frequently brought up to date with supplements or new editions. Some libraries have worked out relatively satisfactory allocations of subject specialization; others have accomplished little or nothing in this area. Certain cooperative acquisition programs have succeeded; others have failed or, at best, are working indifferently. Generally speaking, both subject specialization and cooperative acquisition have worked better in cases where the libraries have readily definable clientele or traditional interests, or where types of material offer easily defined lines of demarca-

tion. Projects which have been successful in one area have failed in another and, doubtless, local conditions and enthusiasms can account for the mixed results of similar projects.

The comments of librarians in explaining their failures underscore some of the handicaps and problems of cooperation among different kinds of libraries in a local area. Each library serves a particular clientele, one whose services and access to material no library desires to restrict by inter-institutional agreements. Libraries are reluctant to turn over responsibility for acquisitions to another library unless they know their patrons will have easy access to the material. One correspondent cited refusal to participate in a cooperative project because it would interfere with service to regular patrons. Librarians must convince their readers that limited or deferred access is justified by increased resources or face up to the problem of new clienteles. A faculty member who enjoys special loan privileges from his university library will want the same privileges from the public library for the same material. The public library user will expect service and loan privileges from academic and special libraries. Cooperative acquisition and subject specialization ought to be accompanied by direct access to materials. One librarian recognized this and wrote *apropos* of a cooperative acquisitions venture that certain categories of readers would have access to materials regardless of what library they might be in.

Libraries cannot always decide what fields they may concentrate in. Their collections and acquisition policies are predetermined by their constituencies. Academic libraries and special libraries must buy what their institutional programs require, duplication or no duplication. Consequently, they are limited in the scope of agreements they can make about fields of specialization. Furthermore, libraries are not autonomous agencies and cannot easily commit themselves to joint action involving commitments apparently beyond the scope of their primary responsibility. As institutions under state, municipal, private, and church control, they are limited to the kinds of cooperative programs they may support. These restrictions can be overcome, but some cooperative projects have foundered because of such complications.

In addition to these "built-in" problems of library cooperation, certain cooperative efforts have suffered other handicaps which lessened chances for success. Some have lacked the administrative organization necessary for careful planning and supervision of the project. They

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placed undue reliance upon voluntary personnel and lacked financial support. Too often one of the larger libraries bore the brunt of the program and when it withdrew its support, the project collapsed. In some cases, the projects were not of sufficient importance or interest to all participants. Some were born from the enthusiasms or needs of one or two libraries who, for a short time, succeeded in convincing their sister institutions that the job ought to be done. Sooner or later some of the participants realized how little they had to gain from it and needed constant prodding to do their part. Libraries differ in the state of their development and some, doubtless, regard certain types of cooperation as restricting their growth and importance. On the other hand, some librarians expressed the opinion that the larger libraries are disinclined to certain joint enterprises since they have less to gain.

Some efforts failed because their success depended upon conditions which did not exist. For example, certain kinds of cooperative acquisition programs presupposed that the participants had delineated areas of subject specialization. Where these were ill-defined, cooperative acquisition stood little chance of success. Occasionally enterprises failed because one or more libraries defaulted in their contribution. The inability to enforce agreements is always a theoretical handicap in voluntary action, and library cooperation is no exception.

Despite the well-known problems and obstacles, the admitted failures and frustrations, different kinds of libraries have succeeded in many kinds of cooperation. Geographical proximity has not only been a goad to such efforts but has enabled much to be done with a minimum of organization. Experience indicates, however, that libraries should carefully consider what might be basic elements of a successful project. Any project should benefit all cooperating libraries, and the benefit should be tangible enough so that each library can identify what it is gaining, or what it would not have to do that it is now doing. The operation of the project should be assigned to a unit or individual whose sole responsibility and function is to see that the job gets done. Cooperation is a full-time job and libraries risk its success when they diffuse it among staffs already busy with other duties. The project should have adequate financing by participating libraries who could charge the assessment to a tangible service or function. Finally, libraries should carefully examine the projects to make sure they really are local in scope and are not isolated fragments of a task which might better be done on a regional or state-wide basis.

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INSTITUTIONS CONTRIBUTING INFORMATION

Atlanta, Georgia Institute of Technology Library; Baltimore, Enoch Pratt Free Library; Boston, Boston Public Library and Boston University Libraries; Brooklyn, Brooklyn College Library; Buffalo, University of Buffalo Library; Chicago, Chicago Public Library; Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati Library; Cleveland, Cleveland Public Library; Dallas, Southern Methodist University Library; Denver, Denver Public Library and the Bibliographical Center for Research; Houston, University of Houston Library; Kansas City, Kansas City Public Library; Los Angeles, Los Angeles Public Library; Louisville, Louisville Free Public Library; Miami, University of Miami Library; Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Library; Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Library; Nashville, Joint University Libraries; New Orleans, New Orleans Public Library; Omaha, Omaha Public Library; Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library and the Philadelphia Bibliographical Center; Pittsburgh, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; Portland, Library Association of Portland; Providence, Providence Public Library; Richmond, Richmond Public Library; Rochester, University of Rochester Library; St. Louis, Washington University Libraries; Salt Lake City, University of Utah Library; San Francisco, San Francisco Public Library; Seattle, University of Washington Library; Syracuse, Syracuse University Library; Washington, D.C., Public Library of the District of Columbia; and Worcester, Clark University Library.