The Place of Urban Main Libraries in Larger Library Networks

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THE TERMS "network" and "system" are used inter-changeably in the vocabulary of most laymen and librarians. Webster defines network as "an interconnected or interrelated chain, group or system." The same authority defines system as "an organization or net-work for the collection and distribution of information, news or enter-tainment." These words have been used for many years when describing a host of informal service arrangements between libraries, a manifesta-tion of the deep commitment that librarians display for cooperative effort. Joseph Becker sums up this commitment succinctly in these words:

> Librarians are eager to improve their local systems and services. This aim is expressed in a series of objectives: to serve more people, to make information more uniformly available, to supplement local collections by drawing more effectively on external sources, to integrate multimedia materials into the mainstream of library activity, to individualize library service, and to change the library's image from that of a place "where the books are kept" to that of an active information center. Networks imply a degree of democratization of information, a steady increase in the ability to serve at all points of service, and cooperative sharing without con-straints of time, distance, or form of data. Librarians are thus motivated to pursue the network idea because of its potential service advantages.[1]

During the last few years, fiscal, organizational, jurisdictional and similar constraints have necessitated the increasing need for more for-mal working and service agreements between libraries. The two terms are still very much in evidence although a more realistic approach in the development and support of networks and systems must be and is being taken. Robert Rohlf takes note of the situation when he states: "This new form of library organization serving more than one city,

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town, township or county, or any combination, or even portions thereof, has given rise not only to new opportunities for library service, but also to new problems of administration and communication between library personnel and the governmental units and boards which pay for this library service."[2]

The large urban public library is itself a library system. In most instances, a public library began with the establishment of a central or main library and later opened branch libraries in various neighborhoods of the city, when they could be justified, based on such factors as population growth, relative immobility of children, distance from other library outlets and the existence of natural and man-made barriers. In the past decade, rapid development of community college, college, university and school library service has taken place. A better educated society is making a larger number and more sophisticated demands on the resources and services of all types of libraries. At the other end of the spectrum, the unserved population, those who do not use libraries and those who are culturally and educationally isolated are in need of and could benefit from basic elementary information about the complex society in which we live. To meet these increasing needs and demands, libraries have devised cooperative schemes, using the term network or system to identify the particular arrangement. While we have already acknowledged the fact that both of these terms are used loosely, the term system is more often applied to formal and structured organizations involving one type of library with some provision made for funding the plan of service, and the term network is frequently used to describe a federation of different types of libraries, sometimes including information agencies, and usually with some form of communications machinery.

Henriette Avram agrees that a clearer definition of the term network is needed:

> The literature in the past few years is rich in discussions of future international networks, national networks, state networks, regional networks, etc. Many network plans have been put forward. Nevertheless, the lack of a generally accepted definition of a library network causes confusion. Becker and Olsen defined a network as "an interconnection of things, systems, or organizations. Adding the adjective *information* to network allows the concept to be defined with greater precision. In an information network, more than two participants are engaged in a common pattern of information exchange through communications for some functional purpose." Within this definition, the authors described the ideal information network as exhibiting the following characteristics: formal organization, a

communications system, bidirectional operation, a directory look-up system to identify the unit that must be able to respond to a query, and a switching capability to determine optimum routes.[3]

The place of the urban main library, serving traditionally as the resource center in its own public library system and now emerging as a force in larger library networks, some with the elements described in the quote above, continues to constitute an evolutionary process. Its role has been and should be under constant review and revision. Dramatic social, economic, political and cultural changes have taken place during the 100 years or so since public libraries were established in the urban centers of the country. Prior to this organization of city library service, usually authorized by state statute or similar permissive legislation, community or public libraries for the use of the people were established by benefaction or philanthropy. An altruistic entrepreneur often provided a library for his workers, most of whom lived in the immediate neighborhood. It was only coincidental if such a library served an area administered by local government. This practice resulted in a number of independent community libraries existing within a civil jurisdiction, but not joined together or formally organized in any system or network of libraries. Indeed, these several libraries rarely maintained any working or service relationships even when local jurisdictions appropriated public funds for their support. The designation system took on significance as a pattern of city library service developed with a main or central library serving as headquarters and housing staff and collections to direct and support a city-wide program. Clearly defined administrative and service relationships exist between the main and branch libraries. The relationship of the main library in a system of libraries of a single type is much more readily defined than the emerging role of the urban main library in a network of libraries.

The role of the urban main library in a larger library network, therefore, may be better understood if a brief statement of the role of the main library in its own system or jurisdiction is described. The central or main library provides the guiding influence for library improvement and service in the urban community. It is the principal resource in terms of size and scope of collections, it supports branch libraries by constantly lending materials to borrowers and it provides in-depth reference and information services in remote parts of the city by telephone. The main library usually houses all major administrative and planning functions of the library system such as finance, personnel management, purchasing, building maintenance, public relations, ma-

terials acquisition and processing, as well as collection preservation. In addition, the staffing of the main library includes administrative personnel who coordinate through advice on a system-wide basis service to children, youth and adults. These services may involve audiovisual resources; aid to researchers; and special programs for those educationally and culturally deprived, for reading improvement, and for schools and other community institutions and organizations. It is important that the main library assume responsibility for equalizing library service throughout its jurisdiction.

The sophisticated development of urban main libraries places them in a position to assume roles in larger library networks. It is often stated that a large public library contains a more balanced collection of materials than college and university libraries whose collections are built to support a curriculum and faculty research rather than the general needs and interests of a broad representation of the general public. The success and growth of the urban main library, therefore, paves the way for its active participation in the provision of services involving media and information for larger geographic areas. Attention is now being given to the diversity of population and the special needs of various groups who make up the population of the cities. John Frantz proposes in a plan for Brooklyn "the selective decentralization of library policies and procedures to recognize and accommodate radical differences between specific neighborhoods."[4] Experimentation along these lines is taking place also in Pittsburgh under the leadership of the Carnegie Library and in a number of other cities. The greater flexibility of programs being developed in urban libraries makes provision of the resources and services of their main libraries even more adaptable to a wider audience.

The resources and services that the urban main library provides continue to gain recognition and appreciation. It is apparent that strong libraries in terms of resources and services attract users from considerable distances. The vast collections of the New York Public Library, for example, are consulted continuously by scholars from all parts of the world. Other large public libraries also serve as regional resources but without adequate financial support from sources other than local government. Some additional reimbursement has been forthcoming for these libraries as their local support dwindles because of deteriorating tax bases in our cities, but much more realistic funding must be found and sustained. One bright spot and a step in the right direction as far as funding is concerned was the authorization by the New York State

Legislature for an additional $2.3 million for the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library in the austerity year of 1971.

Another recognition of the role of the urban main library and its potential for broader service is included within a section of the 1970 amendment of the federal Library Services and Construction Act. Public Law 91-600, section 102, states that under approved state plans, funds may be used for "strengthening metropolitan public libraries which serve as national or regional resource centers." Unfortunately, although the need is recognized, no funds are appropriated for such categorical aid to implement it. Further recognition of the problem has come from the American Library Trustee Association which has formed a section on urban public libraries to marshall support among laymen and political leaders for realistic funding from a variety of sources for these institutions. The increasing intensity of the fiscal crisis in the cities, as well as our changing society, dictates new directions in terms of funding. These two factors—fiscal problems and society's needs—must be studied and evaluated carefully in any consideration of the urban main library's role in a network of libraries.

Political leaders and experts in government continue to sound warnings that the American city faces fiscal problems of critical proportions. Newspaper headlines repeatedly carry stories about housing shortages, crime, drug abuse, critical school problems, pollution and sharp curtailment of funds for all services including those provided by libraries. Still, the United States is becoming more and more an urban society. Solutions to the fiscal problems of our cities will require Herculean efforts on the part of every level of government, business, industry, labor and education, including our colleges and universities.

One of the imaginative ways through which the library profession is seeking solutions to the problem of providing quality library service to all citizens in the face of the fiscal crisis has been the development of library systems and networks. These library units are made possible through some financial assistance from other levels of government and private sources to provide service beyond the geographic limits of their political jurisdictions.

In the early months of 1971 in preparation of this paper, the author invited directors of public library systems in seventy-five of the largest cities of the United States to respond to a questionnaire concerning the role of urban main libraries in larger library networks. The returns include descriptions of developing patterns of interinstitutional and interjurisdictional service programs and a conviction that networks are

leading to solutions of meeting mounting user needs in the face of shrinking financial resources. Responses have demonstrated the commitment of the progressive public library to seeking imaginative new ways of meeting the book and information needs of all the people, regardless of where they live. While it is impossible to do justice to all the information generously supplied, emphases and trends will be described.

The many programs either in operation or in the developmental stages among the public library systems of this country include the following: (1) services provided directly to the public which supplement local effort, such as interlibrary loan of a wide variety of print and non-print materials, reciprocal borrowing privileges, reference and research service, delivery to the homebound, blind and other handicapped persons, bookmobile service; and (2) services to libraries designed to strengthen their programs and reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and expense, such as centralized cataloging and other processing functions including consultation and advice in this specialized area; shared storage of lesser-used materials; delivery services among participating libraries; preparation of union lists and other bibliographic support activities for interloan and reference service; book selection discussions and assistance; collection development guidance in selected disciplines and by types of materials; automated and computerized services, on a selective basis, of library procedures and functions; maintenance of communications devices and systems; consultant help involving basic library operations including public relations effort; assistance in conducting inservice training and continuing education programs; and initiating cooperative planning activities.

New York and California have two of the most highly structured plans, although Hawaii has been developing a program of total library service through the network concept.[5] Application of system and network concepts to library service characterizes library development in New York State. A few words about this development provide a point of departure in describing the role of the urban main library in a network of libraries.

The New York State Library comprises two major units, an operating library of an academic and research character, and the Division of Library Development. The division comprises, among other services, a Bureau of Public Libraries and a Bureau of Academic and Research Libraries. The division, through its Bureau of Public Libraries administers the state funds which support the public library systems. Most of

these systems are cooperative or federated rather than consolidated and are typically multi-county, serving three or more counties and at least 300,000 people.

The consolidated public library systems such as those in New York and other large cities in the state are also eligible for state aid, since the funding program is based on providing assistance to public library systems. Plans of service for the systems are prepared at the regional level where there is greater knowledge of local needs and requirements.

The division provides a number of consulting and advisory services. Twenty-two systems serve 99 percent of a population of about 18 million. Most of the financial support for cooperative systems, which in 1971 was approximately $18 million, comes from the state. Several systems receive county support as well. Member libraries receive local support and, in a few instances, county support. The most comprehensive assessment of the program is contained in a 1967 report of the State Education Department entitled *Emerging Library Systems; The 1963-66 Evaluation of the New York State Public Library Systems.*[6]

One of the revisions in the 1966 public library systems legislation and recommended in the above-mentioned report is support for central libraries of systems. The formula provides five cents per capita for each resident of the area served by the central library. Funds provided under this revision in the state aid to public libraries law help strengthen resources of central libraries serving populations who live beyond the political boundaries of the cities in which the central or main libraries are located. This feature of the law, of course, also helps the consolidated systems that are as hard pressed financially as the cooperative systems. Funds are granted upon approval of a plan submitted to the state library's Division of Library Development. Grants have been used in imaginative ways to strengthen resources in terms of materials, personnel and services. Revisions in formulas in support of other provisions of the state aid program continue to be requested as demands from the public increase and inflation erodes the grants. This legislative action is tangible recognition of the fact that the large public libraries serve those who live beyond the geographic limits of the cities in which they are located.

When the public library system program was about ten years old, the commissioner of education appointed a state-wide committee to make recommendations for the improvement of reference and research library resources in New York State. The report of the committee was

released in 1961.[7] The principal objective of the proposed program was to attempt to meet the more sophisticated and advanced needs of scholarly research: college and university faculty members and students, members of the professions, unaffiliated research personnel, business, industry and government. It was concluded that the needs of these users require collections and services more advanced in content than those which exist in most public libraries. Nonetheless, the reference and research library program is built on the existing strengths of the public library systems but includes college, university, special and other research libraries. Thus, to serve the needs of these users it is necessary to identify, locate and provide access to advanced research-type materials.

The committee further concluded that plans must be flexible, should be adaptable to changes in modern technology and should exploit the newest methods in communications devices, data processing and automation. The possibilities of contract arrangements could expedite the implementation of the program. While legislated support was sought for several years and ultimately failed to pass, funds are now appropriated through the New York State Education Department budget. Statutory support through legislation is again being sought, however.

The reference and research library program comprises both state and regional services. At the state level, the Bureau of Academic and Research Libraries in the Division of Library Development was organized with these objectives: (1) to provide guidance and advisory assistance to the developing reference and research library systems; (2) to consult with academic and research librarians; (3) to interpret state and federal assistance programs; and (4) to foster and encourage cooperative and interlibrary programs involving special libraries and those in institutions of higher education, particularly through contract service.

The New York State Library is a research library with a collection numbering more than 1 million volumes and 3 million films, maps, manuscripts, rare books recordings, talking books, official documents and other types of research materials. It is the only state library which meets eligibility requirements and has been admitted to membership in the Association of Research Libraries. The library's first obligation is to meet the book, media and information needs of the state government. It also supports the commitments and programs of the State Education Department and serves all the people of the state as a library's library. Even with the strength of the New York State Library's collections, 30 percent of the requests received for interlibrary loan could not be met.

As a result, an interlibrary loan unit was formed within the reference department of the state library, a unit which now includes the appropriate machines and technology to communicate rapidly with libraries and library systems. Thus, a new dimension to a long-standing traditional service was added—the further referral of requests by the state library to cooperating contract libraries. The search for desired material no longer stops with the collections of the state library, as far as this level of interlibrary loan in New York is concerned.

Three area libraries are under contract with the State Education Department in a system of geographic referral of requests for materials of a general but advanced nature. These are the Brooklyn Public Library, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library and the Monroe County Library System. The Brooklyn Public Library searches the collections of the Queens Borough Public Library and the collections of the branch libraries of the New York Public Library, acting as agent for the state library in serving as a clearance for the three public libraries of New York City. The Research Libraries of the New York Public Library, however, serve in another capacity for the New York State Interlibrary Loan Network. The Monroe County Library System serves also as a regional headquarters in that it refers requests to the University of Rochester for search in a number of strong libraries through the reference and research library system in the Rochester area before forwarding them to the state library for entry into the state-wide network. The same function is performed by the main library of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System which, if it cannot supply the request, refers it to the Lockwood Library of the State University of New York at Buffalo, and requests for material are entered into the state-wide network only after a regional search has been made. Thus, those areas with strong resources are able to meet a substantial number of requests for material, thereby expediting the service and reducing the time factor, a major consideration in developing patterns of interlibrary loan service.

The three area public libraries are reimbursed with state funds for serving in such a capacity. A participation grant provides funds for clerical personnel. Further reimbursement is provided in the form of a fee for each referral made, and an additional fee is paid if the request is filled. To supply requests for materials not met by the three public library systems nor the state library, contracts have been made with nine of the outstanding research libraries in the state, each with a subject referral responsibility. These libraries are those of the American

Museum of Natural History, Columbia University, Cornell University, Engineering Societies, New York Academy of Medicine, New York University, Teachers College of Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, and Research Libraries of the New York Public Library.

Continued automation of the interlibrary loan system, a teletype communications system with computer support, takes in requests from New York State libraries, returns daily reports on the status of requests, and monitors the status of requests referred to other libraries. In 1972, user and referral libraries will be on-line with the education department, computer and referral will be automatic, and design of a circulation system will be initiated. This application increases manyfold the availability of New York State Library materials to libraries and readers throughout the state. Thus the main libraries of public library systems in New York State participate, in many cases by contract with the state, in larger library networks. Contracts at the system level also exist, since the Westchester Library System contracts with public libraries such as Yonkers to serve as resource centers in regional interlibrary loan programs.

The large public libraries in California are serving as information centers for areas beyond those of the cities in which they are located. Information can be secured either by phone or in person by inquiring at the most convenient community library. For example, the main library of the Los Angeles Public Library serves as headquarters for the Southern California Answering Network (SCAN), a service designed to provide advanced reference and research assistance in cooperation with three cooperative library systems to the residents of more than twenty-five cities and counties in Southern California. The plan is part of the comprehensive plan developed by the California State Library, partially funded by the Library Services and Construction Act. By means of a teletype communications network linking these libraries to the main library of the Los Angeles Public Library, the resources, both in terms of materials and the expertise of personnel, of a large urban main library are available to the citizens of much of Southern California. A vast referral system based on an urban main library's resources is providing improved service to residents of the entire state.

The San Francisco Public Library serves a similar function in connection with a project called the Bay Area Reference Center (BARC). As in the case of Los Angeles, the San Francisco Public Library is designated by the California State Library as a reference and research re-

ferral center to serve eight library systems and twenty-two counties in the northern part of the state. Communications are maintained with these systems through strategically located centers in each with the San Francisco Public Library, using TWX (teletypewriter exchange) and telefacsimile. Fifteen people serve as staff for the program and are based at San Francisco's main library. Delivery services are maintained on a regularly scheduled basis for interlibrary loan of materials.

The state of Washington operates a State Controlled Area Network known as SCAN. The state librarian requested and has been granted inclusion of libraries in the network. Therefore, this telephone network permits libraries in the state to "facilitate more rapid service to library users requiring specifically designated materials and information."[8] Both the Seattle and Spokane Public Libraries are on the network and serve as area resource libraries in support of the state library. SCAN also serves priority or rush requests for reference service and permits discussion of difficult and complex questions. If librarians need advice or consultation, the telephone network can be used to contact specialists at the Washington State Library. Supporting libraries are reimbursed with federal funds administered by the state library for extending their services.

Four public libraries in Tennessee (Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville) serve as Technical Information Centers to answer requests relayed from other libraries or from industry and business located in the area the center serves. The service is administered by the Tennessee State Library and Archives Commission and financed with both federal and state funds. These four public libraries serve as metropolitan or area reference and information centers.

The Free Library of Philadelphia is under contract with the Pennsylvania State Library to provide the following services: (1) service to the blind and physically handicapped, (2) circulation of educational and documentary films, (3) participation under the state's plan for total library service as a district library, whereby its resources and services are available without charge to all the residents of a designated district, and (4) acquisition of major research materials in certain subject areas under previously agreed-upon plans and to make such materials available to all residents of the commonwealth. Reimbursement for rendering these services is made by Pennsylvania on a formula basis. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, through contractual arrangements with Allegheny County, provides free borrowing privileges to residents at all Carnegie outlets and by three bookmobiles operating in

the county. The Carnegie Library, in its geographic area, serves in a similar capacity as that of the Philadelphia Free Library.

The New Jersey State Library contracts with the Newark Public Library to strengthen and extend public library service in a designated geographic area under the terms of the State Library Aid Act. Area libraries are reimbursed for providing specialized reference service and advanced subject materials. Thus, area residents have access to richer resources without charge in addition to using the resources and the services of their local libraries. The Newark Public Library is also designated as one of the four research libraries in New Jersey to extend its services and resources on a state-wide basis. The New Jersey plan, as most other state plans fostering collection development, builds on existing subject strengths of libraries. In the case of Newark, the subject strengths are technology, business, social science and labor. In addition to these assigned responsibilities, the state library makes an annual grant to the Newark Public Library to serve its role as the Northern New Jersey Metropolitan Regional Library. In this capacity, the Newark Public Library has an additional specific responsibility to the area libraries in Jersey City, Patterson, Passaic, Clifton and metropolitan Newark. Under this metropolitan responsibility, the public library supports interlibrary loan and reference referral services as well as direct consultation service to the area libraries in such fields as art, business, science, technology, documents and New Jersiana. The New Jersey State Library and the Newark Public Library are discussing the possibilities of a unit contract to cover all of the services now included in these several grants. Since it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate completely the various responsibilities the Newark Public Library assumed on behalf of regional and state-wide service, the unit contract is a sensible concept to pursue. The Newark Public Library has established an office for interlibrary cooperation whose personnel coordinate local, regional, state and multi-state efforts. Such administrative organization fosters development of a sound and comprehensive program, the support for which could eventually be divided among federal, state, local and other sources of support. The developing New Jersey library network is not limited to public libraries, since both Rutgers and Princeton University Libraries are participants in this imaginative state-wide plan.

It is not uncommon for a public library to participate in a number of networks. The Denver Public Library, for example, serves as the Headquarters Library for the Central Colorado Public Library System. It is

financed by the Colorado State Library with federal and state funds. The system pays the Denver Public Library to provide reference, audiovisual and interloan services to seventeen public libraries in the eight counties in the Denver metropolitan area. The Denver Public Library also serves by contract with the state library as a state-wide library reference center. The public library also participates in a courier service, an informal cooperative delivery system among public and private institutions of higher learning. It is also a member of the Bibliographic Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region, houses the center and shares its bibliographic tools with the center staff. In addition, the Denver Public Library sells processing services to the Pikes Peak Regional Library in Colorado Springs.

Under the leadership of the Ohio State Library where studies have been conducted and sound planning has taken place, networks and cooperative efforts are making substantial progress. The Cleveland Public Library is a member of the Northern Ohio Library Teletype Network comprised of public and academic libraries in which assistance in audiovisual resources, automation and development of special collections is provided. The Dayton and Montgomery County Public Library (Ohio) is a member of a seven-county area library service system where plans are being made to share the services of a large public library. Another example is the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, the principal resource of the developing Southwestern Ohio area comprising eight counties.

Texas has passed a Library Systems Act but no funding is yet forthcoming. Nevertheless, some of the larger libraries such as the Dallas Public Library are providing services to county residents for which they are being reimbursed with federal funds. The Dallas Area Library Planning Council is recommending contract service.

A wide variety of configurations and organizational structures exist to improve library service. Some state library agencies designate existing public libraries as resource centers or system headquarters libraries to assume responsibilities for planning and providing services on a broader geographic base. Massachusetts has so designated the public libraries in Boston, Worcester and Springfield, the three largest cities in the commonwealth. In addition, each of the three libraries is supported by subregional library centers to bring stronger resource collections and services nearer the consumers. The Boston Public Library receives special reimbursement as a resource library of final search in seeking materials requested by anyone in the commonwealth. An inter-

esting device to include college and university library resources in the plan of service has been established in the Western Massachusetts Public Library System whereby an associate membership is purchased annually in the Hampshire Interlibrary Center, a library cooperative maintained by Amherst, Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts.

In addition to contracts between states and city libraries, several city library directors reported contracts between local jurisdictions. The county of Sacramento (California), contracts with the city of Sacramento for specified library services including administration, thus saving the cost of two executives and providing more uniform service for a larger area. The Sacramento City-County Library is part of the Mountain-Valley Library System, a network established by authority of the California State Library, under the Public Library Services Act. The system provides interlibrary loan and reference service, delivery of materials, central storage facilities, regional union lists, communication through TWX and assistance in special collection development in specified subject areas. The main library of the Sacramento City Library serves as the principal resource and service center for this area, while the Mountain-Valley Library System provides inservice training opportunities for personnel. In Rochester, New York, the city contracts with the Monroe County Library System, which itself contracts with four other county library systems, for free borrowing privileges for all who reside in the counties and for centralized book processing services and interlibrary loan on behalf of their member libraries. These contractual arrangements provide access to the collections and services of the Rochester Public Library. The Gary (Indiana) Public Library has provided contract library service to a smaller community in a neighboring county for fifty years. Similarly, the Atlanta Public Library contracts with public libraries in its county to provide services their tax base cannot support. The Detroit Public Library, by contract, provides the residents of Highland Park reciprocal borrowing privileges, daily delivery services, reference and interloan as well as assistance to the staff of the library. Since 1915 the Milwaukee Public Library has contracted with the County of Milwaukee to provide services to those municipalities in the county desiring to receive specified services, and since 1959 the Milwaukee Public Library has contracted with other metropolitan suburbs outside the county.

In 1969 the Berkeley and Oakland Public Libraries established a cooperative system under the state's Public Library Services Act and

the Joint Exercise of Powers agreement between the two cities. Reciprocal borrowing privileges, exchange of materials, daily delivery services and an after hours (until midnight) reference service are some of the jointly provided programs.

The term metropolitan continues to gain prominence in describing regional service. The New York Metropolitan Reference and Research Library Agency (METRO) has its headquarters in the New York Public Library. As described earlier in this paper, studies have been made in New York State concerning the need for cooperation among academic and special libraries to parallel the development of the public library cooperative effort. In 1967, METRO was registered as one of nine reference and research library systems in New York State. An establishment grant of $25,000 and an additional $10,000 appropriation during the fiscal year 1967-68 permitted the beginning of the program. The basic purpose of the organization is to make more effective use of existing materials through publications, inservice training, consultation, a delivery service and promotional materials to acquaint the public with its service potential.

In the St. Paul-Minneapolis area, a seven-county metropolitan network of libraries, loosely federated under the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), has been in operation since 1969. The principal program involves reciprocal borrowing among the libraries in the network and supports several other services. The St. Paul Public Library receives an annual grant of $100,000 from state and federal funds which should rise substantially as the program develops and funding becomes more realistic.

The study of the Chicago Public Library, entitled *Library Response to Urban Change*, by Lowell Martin, includes a recommendation for a specialist to "head a Metropolitan Relations Office, to maintain communications and build joint activities with suburban libraries and suburban library systems, with the Newberry and Crerar Libraries, with college and university libraries, and with public, parochial, and private school systems."[9] The Chicago Public Library is also a research and reference center designated and funded by the state.

Recognition of the many requirements which must be met if networks or systems of libraries are to be successful is increasing. From the foregoing description of the planning and operations to date, it is clear that there is commitment and direction. For many years, there has been sharing of resources, services and even personnel among libraries, but it has not been until relatively recent years that formal ar-

rangements, usually by contract, have defined more clearly the respon-
sibilities that must be assumed by the political leadership, trustees, li-
brarians and the general public in the successful implementation of
these programs. Systems and networks have grown out of the need to
equalize library service, in an effort to provide quality service even
though tax bases in rural or less populated areas cannot support it.
Thus, funding, jurisdictional, management and organizational problems
loom large, as Orin Nolting notes in a speech prepared for a meeting of
the American Library Association in Atlantic City in 1969:

> Cooperation is not limited to one type of library in one particular area.
> It involves all types of libraries on local, regional, state, and national
> levels. It calls for a master plan for sharing resources and the adoption of
> policies which establish freer access for all users. Finally, cooperation
> between types of libraries leads to further joint action in creating a
> structure for cooperation, for contacts and consultation, for overcoming
> institutional barriers, and for planning methods and systems. This is a
> large order but it can be achieved if all librarians maintain an attitude of
> flexibility and willingness to experiment.[10]

Harold Hacker, in a working paper prepared for the Conference on
Interlibrary Communications and Information Networks held at Airlie
House, Virginia in 1970, emphasizes the necessity of adequate advance
planning when he states that "New York State owes much of its library
network progress to sound studies and planning."[11] In support of this
contention, the Division of Library Development and Services of the
Maryland State Department of Education helped fund the design of a
systems and management approach to cooperative library planning in
Baltimore metropolitan area.[12] The Public Library of the District of Co-
lumbia and other libraries in the metropolitan area of Washington,
D.C., engaged the services of a management firm which prepared "a de-
sign study for a research program on the needs for cooperative planning
and action between the District of Columbia Public Library and other
libraries in the Metropolitan Area of Washington, D.C."[13] Both the Bal-
timore and Washington, D.C., proposals are for short- and long-term
comprehensive studies by a variety of professional experts including
librarians, city and regional planners, administrative and systems ana-
lysts, educators, political scientists and fiscal and tax experts. Their
combined expertise will help formulate solutions to regional and metro-
politan library problems.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on the need to define the goal
of the public library in serving a rapidly changing society, since effec-
tive measurement of library service can only be made against defined

goals. Paul Wasserman notes the lack of a definitive statement on the subject in these words: "Until the values, objectives and goals of organizational activity are clearly articulated, evaluation or assessment of performance is impossible. It is generally conceded that clear identification of organizational goals is the most difficult, but also the most crucial element in the evaluation process."[14]

If, however, the public library continues to place emphasis on its information function, that is, basic information for the culturally and educationally isolated as well as information for the student, scholar and researcher, the network concept will support such a direction for public libraries. The mission of the American public library must be more clearly defined in terms of an information and learning center, particularly for those adults who have need of information and are not affiliated with any school, college, business, industry or other organization which maintains a library.

There have not been sufficient cost analyses made of the service programs provided by public libraries, especially those of a network type. Until the costs of providing services traditionally offered by main libraries of public library systems can be better substantiated, it will continue to be difficult to justify and secure the funds needed to permit the most effective participation by urban main libraries in larger library networks. In the replies to the questionnaire which the author sent to public library administrators, it is the general concensus that reimbursement for services provided is completely unrealistic. Instead, in the language of the Library Services and Construction Act Amendment of 1970, funds should be provided for public libraries that serve as regional resources. Funding should be based on proved requirements and met from several sources, rather than on the reimbursal concept. Thus, the beginning of a solution to the problems with respect to recognizing the fiscal, jurisdictional, and political problems faced by public libraries may be found. According to Henry Drennan, "Public libraries rely heavily on local government for their revenues. In 1965, eighty-four percent of the public library's revenue was derived from local tax sources. The remaining 16 percent was composed of State grants, Federal transfers and some income from endowments and miscellaneous revenues."[15] Perhaps the best solution to the problems of financing library service lies in the development of sound programs following a statement of function for the American public library with funding on a fair share basis among the three major levels of government. There is evidence that we are moving in this direction. Until the

time when a fair share formula insures *stabilized* funding to permit longer range planning, there will be a continuation of the fiscal prob- lem for the public library.

Further research should be conducted in order to clarify the follow- ing: (1) the role and the responsibility of a community library, its board and the political leadership in networks of libraries; (2) the role of the major resource libraries within the network; (3) those communi- cations devices that are most effective in retrieving and transmitting information; (4) how much and how effective the staff orientation and training are at critical points in the configuration of the network; and (5) the kinds of collections that should be developed in the local com- munity library and at regional, state and national levels. The point has been reached in the sophistication of library development where li- brary systems and networks must interface with other library systems and networks and include all types of libraries. Respondents to the questionnaire are virtually unanimous in stating that academic and special libraries play a useful and necessary role in networks. Develop- ments have moved beyond the point where library to library working and service relationships are the most efficient. The steps lay in formu- lating common procedures for compatibility reasons and, most impor- tant of all, for the benefit of users so that as they move from library to library there is a reasonable assurance that they can use different li- braries easily and successfully. The terms used must be those of re- gional library development in systems and networks, rather than single state systems. The state library agency, as has been shown in this pa- per, is the key to successful planning and is emerging as the major force in promoting and coordinating library and information services.[16] States also have responsibility for developing compatibility in the new technology and communications devices.

We continue to learn more about the role of the urban main library, particularly of its great value as a resource. We need to give the urban main library a stronger place in the emerging network concept because of its existing strength and its potential value. The urban main library comprises in most instances a strong collection interpreted by a quali- fied staff. It, therefore, warrants a strong voice in terms of planning and funding networks to which it contributes. Much more realistic funding must be provided for urban main libraries. Their collections have been selected and maintained over a period of many years, and much of the material is irreplaceable in its present format. We anticipate that the National Commission on Library and Information Sciences will give

priority to networks of libraries and their challenging potential for service to the growing intellectual needs of a dynamic nation.

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