Chapter VII

Can the "Promise of Access" Be Fulfilled?

The paradigm shift from ownership to access was the great collection development debate of the mid-decade 1985-1995. By the approach of the 21st century it was obvious that libraries would have to balance both means of service -- ownership and access. This applies especially to monographs as the journal literature increasingly migrates to electronic format. The question for monographs became, "Can the 'Promise of Access' be fulfilled"?

"The Decline in Ownership," traced through the analysis of six variables in the *ARL Statistics, 1998-99* (Figure I-1), [i] set the context for this study in chapter one. Throughout the 14 year period from 1986-1999, academic research libraries struggled to keep up with serial and monograph costs and increases in publication volume. In the 1998-99 *ARL Statistics,* another graph, "Supply and Demand" (Figure VII-1) shows that during this time period, the total number of students at ARL institutions increased 11%, graduate students 32%, and faculty 16 percent. While serials purchased declined 6% and monographs purchased declined 26%, interlibrary lending rose 65% and borrowing rose 169 percent.[ii]

In terms of monograph titles per student, in 1986 the median for ARL libraries was 2,170 monographs per student. In 1999 that median had shrunk to 1,410 titles per student. The nadir for the 1980s was in 1988 when there were 1.65 monographs purchased per student. This measurement rose and fell throughout the 1990s, trending downward the entire decade. In the 14 years, the annual average percentage change in monographs purchased per student declined by 3.3 percent. But by 1998, interlibrary borrowing per student was twice as much as it had been in 1986.[iii]

Throughout the 1990s, bibliographic access continued to increase through the bibliographic utilities, online catalogs, proliferating electronic indexing databases and networked consortia. The ready availability of increased bibliographic access has naturally led to increased demand for those materials the existence of which users so easily discover. These demands are reflected in the upward trend in the interlibrary loan/document delivery statistics.

Henderson asserts that the access not ownership paradigm has resulted in decreased service to academic library users.[iv] He postulates the "collection failure quotient" (CFQ) as a measure of that service failure. The ratio of interlibrary borrowings to collection size constitutes the CFQ. A higher ratio indicates more borrowings per volumes in the collection, presumably implementation of "access not ownership."[v] Henderson calculated that from 1974 to 1998, the CFQ peaked in 1987, but had dropped by 1991, "indicating temporary relief of the crisis." The mean again continued to rise after 1997 and the standard deviation rose eight points past its 1987 high.[vi] These findings are another indication of the stresses of the serials crisis. As Henderson points out, 1987 was also the year that all higher education institutions collectively spent $110 million less on libraries than the year before.[vii]

Henderson's findings corroborate the results of studies of monograph collecting reviewed in the present research and the *ARL Statistics*, showing that monograph collecting decreased drastically in the latter 1980s, recovered somewhat in the early 1990s, and then appeared to have undergone another downturn in the latter half of the 1990s. Henderson substantiates through the study of interlibrary borrowing in ARL libraries that "The promise of information technology to reduce dependence on print materials has failed to turn around the climb of interlibrary borrowing reported by ARL statistics. Every year the volume of borrowing increases, while purchases decline."[viii] The gap between what is published and what can be supplied locally presumably underlies the interlibrary borrowing.[ix]

There are other reports of increases in borrowing. As consortia have opened up access for users beyond their home institutions and enabled users to request materials directly, the numbers of loans have skyrocketed. The first user-initiated requests were processed among nine OhioLINK institutions in 1994. That year there were 100,000 requests. Six years later, in 1999/2000, there were 600,000 requests filled.[x] These are for returnable materials, not document delivery of journal articles.

Studies by the ARL have shown that in order to justify the cost of purchasing, a serial subscription needs to be used more than 16-17 times in a year and a monograph at least five times.[xi] Thus, libraries are placing more emphasis on access, as the cost of access appears to be more affordable than the cost of ownership. Not only are state consortia which license database packages funded by state legislatures becoming more common, but new consortia which cross state boundaries have been formed. In the future, the challenge for collection development librarians will be to achieve a balance between access and purchase, while serving the needs of their primary users.[xii]

As individual institutions and consortia concentrate more and more on fulfilling immediate user demands, materials which are not mainstream may increasingly not be purchased at all. The danger is that ownership and access will both be based upon current use demands. Geoff Smith of the British Library cautions, "There is likely to be a conflict between usage as a key driver of collecting policy in all institutions and the need to ensure systematic overall availability of lower use materials as institutions move from a holding to an access strategy." (250)

Driven by increased user demands and decreased ability to acquire an exploding universe of publication, academic librarians began to seek new models of resource sharing and access mechanisms.

New Models of Resource Sharing

While consortia have existed in the library world for the better part of the 20th century, there was increased activity and new forms of cooperation which began in the 1990s. The prevalence of networks and consortia was recognized when the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) met for the first time in 1996. ICOLC is composed of over 140 library consortia from North America, Europe, Australia, Israel, China, and South America. The purpose of ICOLC is to keep members informed about new electronic information resources, pricing practices of electronic providers and vendors, and other issues of importance to consortia directors and governing boards. An early concern of the group was the development of guidelines for statistical measures for electronic information products.[xiii]

In November 1999, the Center for Research Libraries celebrated its 50th anniversary by hosting a conference at Aberdeen Woods Conference Center near Atlanta, Georgia. "Creating New Strategies for Cooperative Collection Development" was co-sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries, the Council on Library and Information Resources, the International

Consortium of Library Consortia, and the Research Libraries Group. The objectives of the conference were obvious from its title. Discussions were held on eighteen papers written for the conference. There were several papers on newly formed consortial approval plans and other new forms of cooperation among academic institutions such as the development of electronic publication projects. With respect to collection of foreign language and area studies materials, there were descriptions of several ongoing cooperative projects involving U.S. research libraries and foreign libraries. Papers from two participants urged that cooperation be expanded on an international scale for foreign language publications. An outgrowth of the conference was the formation of three working groups to begin moving toward implementation of greater coordinated cooperative collection development.

The rise in prices which continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s did not affect just the acquisition of new publications. A red hot U.S. stock market and expanding global economy put the acquisition of rare books, manuscripts, and artifacts out of the reach of even the richest of library collections. In 1994, the Newberry Library, an independent research library in Chicago and the University of Notre Dame made a joint acquisition and became co-owners of a medieval manuscript. In 1995, the Newberry again entered into a cooperative agreement, this time with Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, to acquire a rare liturgical codex that contained an early medieval mode of transcribing Gregorian chant that predates the usual medieval notation on a five-line staff. Other midwestern libraries began participating in the joint acquisitions, including the University of Illinois-Chicago and DePaul University.[xiv] These were precedent setting arrangements for the ownership of unique materials.

By the end of the 20th century, the rhetoric of cooperative acquisitions was beginning to become more than just lip service. Academic and research libraries had begun to share all manner of resources, including the expertise of staff. Consortial purchasing of electronic resources packaging had become so common that working groups began drafting guidelines to be followed by both vendors and consortia in the licensing of the “aggregated databases.”

In the 1990s, several resource sharing projects which include non-U.S. libraries were initiated under the auspices of the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program. The German Resources Project, the Japan Journal Access Project, and the Latin Americanist Research

Resources Project were each designed to test whether North American libraries can provide their users with rapid and reliable access to materials from other libraries and suppliers, including those that are located in the country of publication.[xv]

These projects were designed to test the feasibility of increased reliance upon non-U.S. libraries for access to foreign materials not found in North America. Mary Jackson of the ARL stated: "The preferred trading partners of most North American academic libraries are other North American libraries. Are there reasons why North American participants should not order first from efficient foreign suppliers, rather than exhausting North American resources before approaching a foreign library?"[xvi] One of the goals of the Global Resources Project is to evaluate the extent to which collection interdependence with overseas libraries is a viable strategy for strengthening North American access to global resources. While loans are a component of the projects, the main focus is document delivery.

Humanists and historians are alarmed that the collecting of foreign language monographs and cultural studies materials from abroad will continue to decline. Yet the level of use of foreign language materials in research libraries has never approached that of English language materials. A number of interlibrary loan/document delivery studies have been conducted by the ARL. Findings from the 1997 ARL ILL/DD Performance Measures Study suggest that international ILL represents less than one percent of a library's total ILL/DD traffic. Although virtually all of the 119 participants in the Performance Measures Study engage in international ILL, no participant indicated that libraries in Latin America, Asia, or Africa were their most common international trading partners. [xvii] As Jackson says, "The potential number of users, and therefore usage, may grow with improved accessibility and awareness of resources, but it is unrealistic to expect dramatic increases. This relatively low use is, in fact, one of the reasons these materials are vulnerable to elimination from so many library collections in North America. Yet, they represent an essential component of a comprehensive research level collection." Digital access has been postulated as one of the solutions for providing access to monographic as well as journal resources. But digital access has not been embraced by humanists and historians, the primary users of monographic publications.

Research by Wiberley and Jones into the use of electronic information technologies by humanists has clarified a number of aspects of humanists' attitudes and information seeking behavior.[xviii] The researchers define the humanities as "those fields of scholarship that strive to reconstruct, describe, and interpret the activities and accomplishments of men and women by establishing and studying documents and artifacts created by those men and women. ..Humanists use primary sources of information that have been created by other people, whereas social scientists and scientists use sources they have helped to create, whether by fieldwork, surveys, or laboratory experiment. Furthermore, the quantitative nature of research in those fields make them ideal for the use of information technologies which manage quantitative data. Use of such technology can continue to grow in the sciences and social sciences with little or no change in the practices of scholars themselves because these scholars can delegate its use to assistants. But, in the humanities, the behavior of humanists themselves must change to increase the use of technology."[xix]

The researchers describe the findings of their interviews with a cohort of humanists over ten years. The humanists are extremely conscious of managing time for maximum accomplishment and only use a new information technology if they can see the benefit. They are not technophobic, but they just do not want to spend time learning a program or technology unless they clearly see the benefits. The researchers also clarify the role of digitization of text as it benefits humanists:

> Because the crucial activity of the humanists is reading original sources, for the individual scholar, there is, with one major exception, little advantage to digitizing them. Digitizing takes time and then, unless printed out, digital sources must be read on screen. And, currently, screen display is normally far inferior in readability to almost any print or handwriting on paper on which it is based. Humanists would not be making good use of their time if they spent it digitizing sources so that they could read the digitized versions with more difficulty than they read the originals.[xx]

Accordingly, Wiberley and Jones recommend that "...library support for humanists must give priority to paper sources."[xxi]

Electronic text that is original is still printed out, whereas original text on paper is already in readable format. In other words, as Clifford Lynch has said, "Paper has become a user interface. If a text is electronic people print it out to read it. If the text is already on paper, there is no need to print it out."[xxii] Tennant also emphasizes the continued importance of print: "Our print resources cannot be left behind, which means integrating access to print and digital materials as well as making print materials more desirable (for example by providing tables of contents and indexes online.)[xxiii]

In 1995, the Modern Language Association issued a "Statement on the Significance of Primary Records."[xxiv] The statement was drafted by a committee on the Future of the Print Record which included representation from the scholarly community and the library profession. The statement affirmed the continued importance of the printed book as a venue for scholarly inquiry and reporting even though other formats will continue to be developed. The focus of the statement was the need for the preservation of the print record. This focus underscores the belief of humanists that the printed monograph will continue to be the main scholarly format in the humanities for the foreseeable future.

Digitization is still the answer for many original materials which cannot be examined by any other means. Archival resources and many foreign publications fall in this category. For these resources both digitization and increased international cooperation seem to be the only solutions.

Even with international resources sharing agreements in place, for all resources there is still the problem of identifying which library or repository owns materials sought for borrowing. OCLC has made developing and maintaining a definitive international database one of its primary goals. In 1999, the OCLC Users Council adopted a resolution on "Shared Commitments to the Principles of Cooperation." The thrust of the resolution was to re-affirm and strengthen OCLC's commitment to cooperation and resource sharing. A letter was sent to all member libraries and networks urging compliance with the responsibility to contribute all current, Roman-alphabet cataloging records and holdings to OCLC. The letter stated that "these actions, fully supported by Users Council, are intended to safeguard and strengthen WorldCAT as the pre-eminent, international union catalog and the foundation for global library collaboration."[xxv] In an article on the international growth of OCLC in 1998, Phyllis Spies, vice president of Worldwide sales said, "OCLC offers the opportunity to facilitate the identification and location of materials on a global basis. OCLC and its member libraries are building the global information infrastructure. This collaborative effort allows people around the world to gain access to the rich scholarly resources of libraries that heretofore may have been inaccessible due to the lack of automation and/or isolation of a country. In the 21st century, OCLC and its member libraries have the opportunity to achieve the long established library goals of universal bibliographic control and universal access to publications.[xxvi]" WorldCAT as the pre-eminent international bibliographic database has a role to play in providing the means for formulating cooperative agreements in this global effort.

The Research Libraries Group also intensified its international programs, becoming more international in its information resources. More European databases were being loaded, including current cataloging records from the Biblioteca Nacional de España, the Bibliotheque Municipale de Lyon, and the Swiss National Library. The University of Cairo became the first international member in Africa; Bayerische StaatsBibliothek, the Bavarian State Library and the National Archives of Australia also became members. Long recognized for the depth of bibliographic coverage of resources for the humanities and arts, RLG undertook challenging initiatives in the digital representation of artifact collections scattered all over the world in all types of institutions, museums, historical societies, and archives.

To counteract cataloging lag for foreign language monographs both OCLC and RLG have aggressively sought international members to secure cataloging records from major foreign libraries. The loading of these records brings foreign literature under bibliographic control and establishes a universe of publication for selection and research. Given the international scope of the two foremost bibliographic utilities, the participation and contribution of libraries worldwide have become a necessity. Yet, there is documentation that suggests that selection lag and cataloging lag are still major problems to the access paradigm.

Rodriguez conducted a survey via the Internet in 1996. The survey of Latin American collections, selected by size, was conducted on the Latin Americanist Librarians Announcement List (LALA-L). The responses were classified into three groups of libraries according to size of Latin American collection. Findings were that OCLC was used by 14 of the 15 collections from which responses were received. Three of the largest collections used both OCLC and RLIN.

Data indicated that there was a growing backlog which may have been caused by fewer catalogers doing original cataloging. Respondents said they depended heavily upon the utilities for copy cataloging.[xxvii]

Grover has suggested that the goals of cooperative cataloging and collecting widely in unique resources may be antithetical to each other. "The goal of cooperative collection development is that at least one copy of any item of research value must be made available somewhere in the U.S. Implicit in this goal is the value of diversity or the uniqueness of library collections. But shared cataloging is based on the principle of taking advantage of the homogeneity, similarity, or overlap in library collections. One of the primary reasons for belonging to a bibliographic utility is to decrease the cost of original cataloging.[xxviii]

"At a time when institutions of higher education should be finding ways to prepare Americans for globalization, proficiency in foreign languages, and cross-cultural shills, the resources to support these goals have declined."[xxix]   From the findings of this study, it seems that the resources for basic language and literature studies are probably readily available in most institutions. It is the wide and deep collecting that is not occurring or occurring in only a few institutions. If we want diversity and uniqueness, is the uniqueness we find of the right nature? That is, is the uniqueness at least in secondary tier materials? True research resources which may be used infrequently or only consulted after a number of years in historical research of all kinds would appear to be the resources which are not being collected. In other words, the localization, the "immediate constituency," the electronic resources which are widely available to everyone are the resources which are being collected or made accessible. It may be that in the future, the research enterprise in the humanities and historical studies will simply not be conducted. Learning and education will concentrate upon the present, rather than the richness and puzzling nature of the past.

Speaking at the CRL 50th anniversary symposium, Geoff Smith of the British Library defined the problem of collecting for local, current interests without a long-term view:

> Future research needs are unpredictable, given an assumption that research libraries collect materials as much for future generation of research use as for the present. That this assumption has validity can be seen from the evidence of the continuing high levels

> of use of the British Library's historic humanities and social science collections. The diversity of this use suggests that it would have been impossible a hundred or two hundred years ago to identify selectively only that material then being published which would be of interest to the researchers of the end of the twentieth century, and that the greatest legacy of those collectors was in the range and depth of their collecting. Similar considerations are argued in terms of what of current output will be of long-term value to the researchers of the future. For UK material it is accepted that the purposes of current legal deposit collecting are both to support current use and to build and preserve systematically and comprehensively the national published archive for future generations of researchers. However, it can no longer be realistic for an individual national library to carry out this same dual role for the published output of the whole of the rest of the world, particularly when electronic publications are added to the still growing print output. Here it will be essential for libraries to collaborate both nationally and internationally, to ensure that the material needed to support current research is collected and held where current use and demand are likely to be highest, whether in national libraries, specialist collections or academic institutions. Responsibilities for long-term preservation, retention and access provision to support future research also need to be agreed upon, either between the same libraries, or increasingly with institutions abroad, including national libraries and major collections in the country of origin. (252)

The low volume of use of foreign language resources is all the more reason to have international Coordinated Cooperative Collection Development. The agreements will act as "insurance," not substitute for ownership. There will be comfort in knowing that a safety net is in place should these low use materials ever be called for. Cooperation has increased, but there is still no one organization to lead the effort. The major U.S. research and bibliographic organizations each have their own cooperative programs. To achieve an organized international cooperative effort there needs to be an umbrella coordinating agency which brings the major international players into a united, but possibly distributed effort.

Where is the ownership going to be vested? Collectively we need to determine what the goals are: One copy of everything published secured in a library collection somewhere? Then rely on each country for comprehensive coverage and international lending agreements? Only then can the “Promise of Access” be fulfilled.

Conclusion

1985-1995 was a watershed era. In the 1980s academic librarians realized that no library would be able to collect comprehensively because of the worldwide explosion in publication. Moreover, scholars had extended their research well beyond the universe of printed publication. In the 1990s, librarians began to realize that not only was it impossible for even the largest research institutions to acquire the universe of publication, but also that collectively this goal might not be feasible. The shift from building comprehensive local collections to access and ownership focused collection building on local user needs and demands. Collection building came to be a philosophy of a past, more affluent era. Access and ownership focused on collection management, the management of resources that are increasingly licensed or leased, but not owned. Collection building as a philosophy shifted from the local institution to the more complex arena of international resources sharing. Only in this context can the worldwide universe of publication be acquired and retained for future research. These factors have led to a re-conceptualization of collection management. As expressed by Mary Jackson of the ARL, “This is a significant shift from the more traditional approach of building strong and deep local collections and relying on ILL for the occasional item from other North American libraries.”[xxx]

By the end of the century the problems in electronic delivery, digital preservation, and funding of electronic resources had become obvious. How was that much touted alternative, the e-book faring? The last chapter looks to the future of the monograph, printed or electronic?

Notes for Chapter VII

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ii. Ibid., 7.

iii. Ibid., 11.

iv. Albert Henderson. “The Library Collection Failure Quotient: The Ratio of Interlibrary Borrowing to Collection Size.” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 26(May 2000): 159-170.

v. Ibid., 162.

vi. Ibid., 163.

vii. Ibid.

viii. Ibid., 160.

ix. Ibid., 166.

x. Anita Cook. “Separate Systems, Common Cause: How Three Networks Have Fared.” *American Libraries* (November 2000): 38.

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xv. Mary E. Jackson, “Strengthening Access to Overseas Library Collections.” *ARL Bimonthly Report, 206*. <http://www.arl.org/newsltr/206/access.html>

xvi. Ibid.

xvii. <http://www.arl.org/access/illdd/illdd.shtml>

xviii. Stephen E. Wiberley, Jr. and William G. Jones. “Time and Technology: A decade-Long Look at Humanists’ Use of Electronic Information Technology.” *College & Research Libraries 61(September 2000): 421-431.*

xix. Ibid., 424.

xx.Ibid., 429.

xxi. Wiberley and Jones, 430.

xxii. Clifford Lynch, Tech Talks, September 28, 2000. CREN

xxiii. Tennant, 57.

xxiv. "MLA Statement on the Significance of Primary Records." *Profession 95* (New York: Moadern Language Association, 1994): 27-28.

xxv. *OCLC Newsletter*, November/December (1999): p. 7.

xxvi. Phyllis B. Spies. "OCLC Worldwide," *OCLC Newsletter* September/October (1998): p.23.

xxvii. Ketty Rodriguez. "Bibliographic Utilities and Latin American Collections." LRTS 40, no.4(October 1996). 331-32. 327-333

xxviii.Grover, Mark I. "Cooperative cataloging of Latin American books: the Unfulfilled Promise." LRTS 35: 407.

xxix. Rodriguez, p.329.

xxx. Jackson, *ARL Bimonthly Report, 206.*