This paper examines the issues and challenges affecting the successful implementation of cooperative collection management programs in academic research libraries. The copious body of literature concerning cooperative collection development and management is summarized, and criteria for the evaluation of cooperative programs are identified.

Three models of cooperative collection management programs are compared and evaluated, according to the defined criteria—the Consortium of University Research Libraries (UK), the Triangle Research Libraries Network, and the Boston Library Consortium. It is suggested that academic research libraries interested in proposing and establishing cooperative collection management programs examine the missions, objectives, characteristics and activities of successful cooperative programs, such as those identified in this paper.

Headings:

- College and university libraries—Collection development
- Cooperation—College and university libraries
- Boston Library Consortium
- Consortium of University Research Libraries
- Triangle Research Libraries Network
MODELS OF COOPERATIVE COLLECTION MANAGEMENT 
IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH LIBRARIES: 
A CRITICAL COMPARISON 

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................2
SCOPE .....................................................................................................................5
LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................................7
METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA ..............................................22
RESULTS ..............................................................................................................28
CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................40
WORKS CITED ....................................................................................................42
INTRODUCTION

Collection management has become an increasing concern for academic libraries in the past 20 years. Advances in new technologies are rapidly expanding accessibility to the global “information commons.” Universities are witnessing a trend toward more interdisciplinary curricula coupled with ever-changing research specializations. The incidence of a decline in fiscal resources at the same time as increasing costs of library materials, a proliferation of new formats, and the use of new technologies to deliver information, has forced libraries to reconsider and evaluate their traditional collecting priorities. The juxtaposition of these conditions has created an atmosphere in which the responsibilities of collection management—the selecting, acquiring, analyzing, evaluating, preserving, storing, and managing of resources—are facing new demands and challenges. Cooperative collection management has evolved as an important strategy for academic libraries struggling to cope with the difficult challenges presented in the last decades.

The academic library environment of today necessitates an inquiry into and exploration of the issues that characterize cooperative collection management. For the purposes of this paper, cooperative collection management is defined as an aspect of resource sharing in which libraries jointly enter into formalized agreements to cooperatively share in collection management duties and responsibilities. Cooperative collection management is an intellectually and theoretically sound endeavor. Benefits of cooperative programs are numerous and far-reaching—from creating and improving
access to rich and vital collections, to solidifying working relationships among cooperating libraries. Cooperative collection management has the potential to provide a network of relationships and shared responsibilities on several different levels—philosophically, institutionally, and geographically. The greatest promise of cooperative collection management is the belief that expanded and well-organized access to a greater range of information than any library can independently support will help guarantee the availability of an increasingly diverse body of information to meet users needs.

Despite the seemingly overwhelming call for greater formalized plans for all levels of resource sharing between and among academic libraries, the topic of cooperative collection management is often met with a decidedly pessimistic reception from the many individuals that will be most affected by its implementation—from library administrators, to librarians, staff and faculty. It is important to emphasize that cooperative collection management is not meant and should not be presented as a substitute for adequate local collections. Cooperative collection management should be viewed rather as a necessary endeavor, in which concepts of ownership are not abandoned but rather the range of resources available is expanded through cooperation.

Successful cooperative collection management anticipates a new culture of libraries. For centuries, libraries have operated on the premise of self-sufficiency. A change toward incorporating cooperative methods of collecting management along with local traditions of autonomy will require new sets of skills, ways of thinking about collection management, and modes of behavior for libraries and library professionals. This paper intends to examine how cooperative collection management can successfully
be integrated into today’s academic research libraries in order to address and meet the ever-changing research needs of tomorrow’s scholars and researchers.
SCOPE

As there is quite a large body of literature already dedicated to the needs and potential benefits for cooperative collection management programs in today’s academic research libraries, this paper first aims to highlight these texts in order to develop a solid framework by which to consider the issues surrounding cooperative collection management. Added to this introduction and overview will be an examination and analysis of existing guides and procedurals for establishing and implementing cooperative collection management programs. This body of literature will be used to identify a set of criteria for evaluating three active and thriving programs of cooperative collection management between academic libraries. These programs are: the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL), in the British Isles; the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN), in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and the Boston Library Consortium (BLC), in Boston, Massachusetts.

The basis for the evaluative criteria drawn from the literature can be neatly organized under the larger umbrella of resource sharing, which has three principal elements. These elements are bibliographic access, physical access, and cooperative collection building. It is important to note that these three categories envelop a broad range of more specific cooperative collection management activities which will be identified and examined during the study of the three cooperative programs.

Paul Mosher makes an interesting observation on the “organic interrelationships between the mechanics of bibliographic access, physical delivery and both institutional
and cooperative collection building” (Dorst 97). Thomas J. Dorst continues this thought by writing that “it is the strength of the bonds between the three elements of the resource sharing model and the overall equilibrium created by those bonds that is of primary concern” (97). The basis of this paper will be an identification and exploration of these interrelationships as they manifest themselves in the three aforementioned programs of cooperative collection management.

In the evaluation of these cooperative programs, several questions will be considered:

- What characteristics do successful models of cooperative collection management share?
- What variables/differences affect the functionality of these cooperative collection management models?
- What are the inherent assumptions of cooperative collection management in an academic library?
- How can academic libraries successfully incorporate cooperative collection management into traditions of local autonomy?
LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will provide the background necessary to establish justification for an inquiry into and exploration of cooperative collection management issues for academic research libraries.

All aspects of society today seem to be struggling with a literal bombardment of information in a variety of mediums, formats, degrees of specialization, and indeed, importance. Academic research libraries are unquestionably not immune to this struggle. Rapidly advancing technologies, coupled with the growth of a technologically savvy patron base, are requiring libraries to face a variety of new challenges and make critical decisions that will have a lasting impact on the ultimate strength, health, and stability of our nation’s research collections.

Since the focus of this paper is cooperative collection management between and among academic libraries, it is necessary to consider first the general issues concerning collection management for academic research libraries. John M. Budd’s The Academic Library: Its Context, Its Purpose, and Its Operation and G. Edward Evans’ Developing Library and Information Center Collections were consulted for general information on the collection management issues, principles, and policies facing today’s academic libraries.

Considerations for collection management are greatly affected by the missions of the institutions they represent. Budd notes that the needs of the institutions, their faculties, and their students, will vary; what is most essential is attention to the
curriculum and research of the individual institution (233). This “diversity of needs” makes generalization of all academic libraries extremely difficult. Because each institution has varying goals, objectives, and approaches to research and curriculum development, so too will individual institutions approach collection management with a unique set of needs and priorities.

Evans writes of the many complexities that academic libraries must face in issues of collection management. For academic libraries, the sheer size of research collections, the numbers of their staff, and the amount of monies spent on operations “far surpass the combined totals for other types of libraries” (129). Rather than a formal universal approach, a combination of local needs and historical precedents often determines how academic libraries approach collection management (Evans 130).

Budd notes that the distinctive nature of academic libraries and the particular constraints placed on them—specifically, demands on the collection, the dynamic nature of the institution, and perpetual budgetary concerns, present new challenges and responsibilities for collection management. The breadth and depth of user needs are simply becoming too great, and it is this inability to be fully self-sufficient that naturally implies the need for cooperation (Budd 239).

In *Developing Library and Information Center Collections*, Evans addresses the topics of cooperative collection development and resource sharing and provides a thorough overview of the perceived benefits of cooperation as well as potential barriers to successful cooperation. These barriers include institutional issues, legal, political, and administrative barriers, technological issues, people issues and knowledge issues. While taking a decidedly pessimistic view of the viability of cooperative collection management
programs, Evans contends that although local needs often seem to be at odds with broader, global needs, these problems can be overcome with diligent work towards carefully planned cooperative ventures (456).


An examination of the literature reveals that one of the most often cited reasons for a proposed move toward more formal cooperation between libraries is the growing realization that the goal of self-sufficient collections has never been truly attainable. Joseph Branin notes that there is little evidence to support the idea that librarians ever achieved, or ever really believed in, the self-sufficiency of their own collections, but that “any delusions in that direction vanished with the onset of World War II and the information explosion of the second half of the twentieth century” (1991, 83). Further complicating matters, Anna Perrault adds that academic librarians first had to admit that no library can collect completely and then convince faculty of the impossibility (1999, 11-12).
The astounding growth of information resources made it increasingly difficult for libraries to acquire and store materials in the manner to which they had become accustomed. Not only were libraries overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of new publications, but they also had to adjust to a decline in their purchasing power. These influential events had a particular impact on those concerned with scholarly information, such as academic librarians. As further evidence, Branin cites a 1979 Board of National Enquiry report, titled *Scholarly Communications*. The Board, composed of publishers, librarians, and university faculty and administrators, describes how librarians in major research centers were “facing the difficult task of allocating increasingly scarce dollars among the vast and steadily growing number of books, journals, microforms, and other materials of scholarship” (1991, 85). The cost inflation of serials and monographs coupled with a decline in purchasing power forced libraries to make their acquisitions decisions much more selectively. The myth of self-sufficiency was becoming increasingly apparent to libraries.

A second factor that stimulated interest in cooperative plans was the professionalization of collection management within the field of librarianship (Branin 1991, 85). Branin, Groen, and Thorin explain that as this development began in the 1960s, librarians were given more collection responsibilities and practice began to shift from an emphasis on acquisitions to one of overall collection management. Libraries started to move away from a traditional collection development perspective, which emphasized only acquisition, selection, and collection building, toward a new vision of collection management, which encompasses a much broader range of policy, planning, analysis, and cooperative activities (Branin, Groen, and Thorin, 3). As these librarians
studied their collection use and user needs, the drive for cooperative efforts took on added strength. New patterns of library use called for a more service-oriented model, where currency, responsiveness, and the focused needs of users were specified (Branin 1991, 86). This model stood in stark contrast to the more traditional humanities model of collection development which emphasized a well-rounded and complete record of scholarship, i.e., self-sufficient. Rather than continuing in the hopeless pursuit of self-sufficiency, libraries were considering the real benefits of local, client-centered collection development paired with comprehensive, collection-centered planning at the regional and national levels.

These early concerns for the ability of librarians to shoulder the burdens of the information explosion, coupled with budgetary reductions, have evolved more recently into concerns about the overall soundness of our nation’s collections. If individual libraries are struggling to maintain viable collections, what does this say about the health of the “national collection”? Perrault writes that there is an “implication in this phrase that there is some common ownership—that these resources in the bibliographic utility databases are national resources” (1999, 11). Perrault has completed substantial research over the past decade that indicates the national collection is indeed in crisis. She cites as an early example a Mellon Foundation study, begun in 1989, that expressed concern that research libraries are “now able to respond less comprehensively than ever before to general trends in book production” and that “access to scholarly information may be narrowing.” The report goes on to state:

A related concern is that pressure on acquisitions budgets will cause various research libraries to look more alike over time, as each ceases to purchase as many of the more esoteric publications and chooses rather to be sure that essential volumes are acquired. The consequences could be a decline in the richness of
collections overall, not merely a decline in the range of holdings of any one library (Perrault 1994, 4).

Perrault’s early research examined what was happening to the collective resources base of academic libraries by examining the changes in collecting patterns between 1985 and 1989 in 72 ARL libraries (1994, 15). Findings revealed an overall 27.76% rate of decline in nonserial imprints for the collective resources base, and a proportional decline in the number of unique titles. As Perrault argues, a shrinking resource base for U.S. research libraries has serious implications for the future support of research and academic curricula. Perrault states that “the nation’s libraries and institutions of higher education have a vital stake in the maintenance of both strong individual research collections and in the collective resources base of academic research libraries” (1994, 6). More recent research by Perrault reveals that from the “devastating years in the late 1980s”, there seems to be some recovery in that the number of unique titles in the ARL libraries does rise in the early 1990s (Perrault 1999, 6). Yet despite this slight apparent reprieve, research libraries continue to see a decline in the availability of unique titles in the social sciences and sciences, and most alarmingly, in the availability of foreign monographs.

The message seems clear enough. Collection development is no longer simply the process of libraries selecting and acquiring materials to create a self-sustaining collection for local users. The academic environment that fosters research and scholarly communication is dependent upon access to the wide variety of materials that are published for its support. Academic research libraries make collection decisions under the assumption that someone, somewhere is collecting all of the resources that they are not able to collect themselves. Yet Perrault’s research reveals that this is not an assumption to
be trusted. The fact that the nation’s collections have also seen a decline in the acquisition of unique resources speaks to the need for some form of systematic cooperative management plans.

A third and final influence that is currently motivating librarians to look more closely at cooperative collection management strategies is the overwhelming impact of electronic formats on today’s resource collections. The emergence of information in a digital format is revolutionizing the way scholarly information is published, organized and maintained. Advances in technology have opened up a world of possibilities for library users. Access to electronic indexes, databases, and information on the World Wide Web has enabled users to discover a wealth of information that was previously available only to the academic elite or to those with advanced research skills. This newfound awareness of resources has drastically changed users’ expectations and demands of their libraries. Dorst notes that “technology alternately offers glimpses of the information promised land and raises institutional and patron expectations beyond all hope of fulfillment” (98). The technological developments coupled with the demands of today’s users simply serve to emphasize the myth of the self-sufficient library.

Additionally, libraries are now forced to not only balance the demands of print and electronic materials, but to also integrate these electronic materials into the larger collection. Although the proliferation of new technologies has enabled these electronic formats to be accepted by a larger and more diverse audience, Branin, Groen, and Thorin note that tensions still exist over priorities, allocations, and the desires of different constituencies of library users (5). Many scholars believe that the unknown demands and implications of the digital revolution are areas in which cooperation can play a dynamic
role. Johanna Sherrer believes that too often, “collection development librarians struggle
to adapt to the implications of technology instead of implementing technological
advancements as tools to enhance the services they provide” (33). Today’s technology
has the ability to make it easier than ever before to effectively manage and therefore
effectively share collection responsibilities. Technology continues to provide
opportunities to link, share, facilitate, and track transactions, supplying the data that can
facilitate the formation of cooperative collection development plans.

Despite the multiple strong arguments in favor of cooperative collection
management strategies, the same literature that expounds the need for systematic
cooperative collection management is equally concerned with identifying potential
barriers to the development and implementation of cooperative collection management
programs.

Philosophically, cooperative collection management among academic libraries
makes perfect sense—libraries cooperating with each other to collectively serve the
research needs of all patrons seems an unquestionably reasonable endeavor. Yet the topic
of cooperative collection development inevitably elicits a variety of concerns from those
who will be involved in the process. It has been stated that the literature of cooperative
collection development has by and large taken a skeptical if not cynical perspective
(Armstrong and Nardini, 2). If cooperative collection development is such a wonderful
and necessary enterprise, why is there a decided lack of support behind instituting
cooperative plans? What are the hurdles to successful cooperation that make many
libraries so opposed to its undertaking? The answers to these questions, although perhaps
not as persuasive as arguments in favor of cooperation, are just as strong and deeply ingrained in the politics and culture of the library.

One of the more influential concerns about initiating a cooperative program is the seeming lack of quantifiable practical accomplishments of current cooperative collection management programs. With only a handful of well-known, longstanding programs in existence, only modest cooperative successes can be identified. Branin argues that this perceived lack of significant, ongoing achievement is a strong force blocking the development of more cooperative programs, for momentum has never been established (1991, 87).

Undeniably, the most damaging factor that hinders cooperative efforts is the long-standing tradition of local library autonomy. The traditional mission of the majority of academic libraries is to serve their individual users’ educational and research needs. All other programs, including cooperative efforts, are often seen as peripheral to the main goals and objectives of the institution. Not surprisingly, when reductions in services must be made, these peripheral programs are the first to go. By not providing solid support for cooperative programs, the administration makes it very difficult for librarians and staff to fully nurture and support cooperative programs. Branin argues that this oft-repeated scenario need not take place. He maintains that meeting the needs of local users and insuring that the record of scholarship is collected and preserved are complementary, not competitive efforts (1991, 87-8). The majority of users’ needs should met by the local collection. But particularly for infrequently used and highly specialized materials, a broader cooperative approach to collection management is recommended. Unfortunately,
cooperative programs are still seen as a secondary activity for most libraries—both in funding and administrative support.

Another longstanding expectation of libraries that interferes with cooperative programs is the notion of immediate access. A large part of this need for immediacy is tied to factors of convenience. Research has shown that convenience is one of the primary deciding factors for resource selection. Users would rather consult a second choice resource than wait for their first choice item to be delivered from a remote location. In addition, faculty have particularly become accustomed to immediate access to research materials. Faculty expect these materials to be complete, local, and therefore, browsable. For reasons in addition to convenience, library users demand on-site collections in a "browsable array." Research practice relies on browsing as a means of sifting through resources for relevant information. Cooperative collection management, by its nature, cannot provide this level of uninterrupted service. There will always be some delay as items are transferred from one location to another. Cooperative program supporters must be prepared to answer those who believe the research process will be drastically hindered in an environment in which materials are not immediately available.

To overcome this obstacle to cooperative programs, libraries will need to work toward changing not only institutional expectations and perceptions of access, but the deeply ingrained personal expectations of users as well.

Branin identifies a number of other obstacles that have blocked cooperative collection development. He notes that progress in achieving the goals of cooperative collection development has been hindered by difficulties arising from the organizational complexity and cost of cooperative ventures, from a lack of consensus among librarians
about the most effective methods of cooperation, from the opposition of some publishers and information brokers to cooperative acquisition schemes, and from collection managers who cannot describe or evaluate their collections in an accurate manner (1991, 89). Yet he concedes that the most serious impediment to cooperative efforts has been the top priority given to building on-site, local collections, often at the expense of regional or national collecting practices. A 1983 survey conducted by Joe Hewitt and John Shipman revealed that ARL libraries most often cited problems with funding, communication between cooperative partners, and physical access as obstacles to cooperative collection development. These organizational or procedural issues, Branin argues, are really symptoms of the more serious, underlying problem of the low priority such cooperative efforts are given in relationship to other library programs” (1991, 89).

Many authors agree that despite the often difficult obstacles and challenges to successful cooperation between libraries, there are enough potential benefits of cooperation to compel libraries to seriously examine and consider some form of systematic cooperative collection management program. Evans provides an excellent summarization of the six broad categories of benefits that libraries may expect to gain when they address challenges and carefully plan and implement cooperative policies. These benefits are: improving access, in the sense of making available a greater range of materials or better depth in a subject area; stretching limited resources by dividing the work and sharing the results; the sharing of work, which leads to greater staff specialization, which in turn leads to better overall performance, better service, and greater customer satisfaction; reducing unnecessary duplication, in either work performed or materials purchased; reducing the number of places a patron will need to go for
service; and finally, improvement in the working relationships among cooperating libraries (Evans 432-433).

The final group of texts to examine, and those that are most cogent for our discussion, are those resources that aim to reconcile the multi-layered issues of cooperative collection management into strategic plans and guidelines for developing and implementing cooperative collection management programs. These resources include Paul H. Mosher and Marcia Pankake’s “A Guide to Cooperative Collection Development” (1983), the ALA’s Guide to Cooperative Collection Development (1994), Thomas J. Dorst’s “Cooperative Collection Management at the Crossroads: Is There a New Social Paradigm for Resources Sharing?” (1994), Georgine N. Olson and Barbara McFadden Allen’s Cooperative Collection Management: The Conspectus Approach (1994), and Collaborative Collections Management Programs in ARL Libraries, SPEC Kit 235 (1998).

Mosher and Pankake’s article is by all accounts the seminal guide to cooperative collection development. The American Library Association revised Mosher and Pankake’s article and prepared it for publication as number 6 in the series Collection Management and Development Guides. Mosher and Pankake state that the purpose of their guide is to “suggest possible contexts, goals, methods, organizations, effects, and processes which should be investigated for their advantages and disadvantages while planning and establishing” coordinated or cooperative development and management arrangements (417). The ALA Guide adds that the guide is “intended to help librarians, administrators, governing bodies and political entities understand the benefits and
challenges facing libraries that are coordinating collection development activities across local, state, national, and international boundaries” (1).

Both texts discuss the need, scope, and audience of the guide, as well as a detailed list of assumptions that must be acknowledged before an institution makes a formal commitment to participate in a cooperative program. The two guides provide a detailed list of cooperation benefits which cooperative collection management should provide. Also included are lists of challenges to cooperation which Mosher and Pankake divide into three categories—policy failures, procedural failures, and technical failures. They urge that cooperative collection management efforts must develop policies, structures, or systems to avoid as many of these reasons for failure as possible (423). The ALA Guide provides a nice overview of the varieties of activities that form the core of the diverse patterns of cooperative collection development. These activities include shared purchase of particular kinds of items, distributed collection development responsibilities, cooperative retention, cooperation to complete a single project, and cooperation in areas associated with collection development (7).

Both guides provide a detailed checklist of issues, both procedural and policy-related, to consider when planning the cooperative agreement. Recommendations include: assessing the need for the project, preparing a concept paper and obtaining support, investigating collective resources, assessing staff skills available for the program, developing and circulating a draft agreement for review before final completion of the cooperative agreement (Guide to Cooperative Collection Development 8). While Mosher and Pankake closed their article in 1983 with suggested steps for setting up cooperative agreements for collections, the ALA Guide expands on this topic by
addressing specific elements to be included in the agreement and formal implementation of the final cooperative agreement. The *Guide to Cooperative Collection Development* closes with an informative discussion on strengthening collective resources and improving access among participants, which will be explored later in this paper.

Another valuable resource for libraries in the planning phase of cooperative collection management programs is *Cooperative Collection Management: The Conspectus Approach*. This text offers a cursory review of the Research Libraries Group (RLG) conspectus and the North American Collections Inventory Project (NCIP). The conspectus, based on a set number of subject descriptors derived from Library of Congress subject classifications, provided a framework within which RLG members could report on subject intensity of their collections. The goal of the NCIP, begun in 1983, was to establish an online inventory of North America’s research library collections, using the RLG conspectus as the basis. The authors of the articles included in the text offer a variety of perspectives on the “use of conspectus methodology in the assessment of library collections and the use of such assessments in the development of collection management or cooperative collection management policies” (5).

A final text which provides valuable information to libraries interested in developing cooperative collection management programs is the Association of Research Libraries’ *Collaborative Collections Management Programs in ARL Libraries*. This survey draws data and information from a variety of successful cooperative collection management programs in American research libraries. This survey sought to discover how extensively ARL libraries are involved in formal, active programs of collaboration for collections management. A formal collaborative collections management program
was defined as “one for which there were written agreements, contracts, or other documents outlining the commitments and responsibilities of the participants” (i). In addition to revealing the results of the survey, the SPEC Kit includes copies of representative documents from survey participants pertaining to issues such as the sharing of primary collecting responsibilities for subjects of formats, the sharing of responsibility for maintaining hard copy back files of journals, the sharing of preservation responsibilities, and the acquisition of electronic resources cooperatively.
EVALUATION CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY

This paper seeks to explore the shared characteristics and variables that have an impact on the success and functionality of three models of cooperative collection management. The criteria for the comparison and evaluation of these programs were derived from a review of the literature on cooperative collection management. Of particular note are Paul H. Mosher and Marcia Pankake’s “A Guide to Coordinated and Cooperative Collection Development” and the American Library Association’s Guide to Cooperative Collection Development. The evaluation criteria are divided into three categories: the provision of bibliographic access, the provision of physical access, and the coordination of collection building.

Bibliographic access is defined as “the means by which participants obtain descriptive information on the content of individual institutional and aggregate consortial collections” (Guide to Cooperative Collection Development, 13). Access to bibliographic data is a necessity of cooperative programs which should exist in a relatively convenient and effective form. Bibliographic access can exist in a variety of formats. Dorst notes that “access can be provided to some universe of information defined topically,” as well as “be provided to a body of material defined by ownership or similar characteristics” (97). Online integrated library systems are the most efficient way to provide access to the most current and immediate bibliographic descriptions of institutional and consortium holdings. For the purposes of this study, the criterion of bibliographic access includes a variety of activities that serve to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of online
integrated library systems. These activities include: the sharing of resources between institutions—cataloging records and as well as staff expertise; retro-conversion projects, which convert old cataloging records into AACR2 compliant MARC records; and the application of Z39.50 standards to enhance electronic interconnectivity between participating institutions.

The second criterion of physical access pertains to the direct availability of the actual item requested by a user. Increased user demand for physical access to materials is often the direct result of improvements in bibliographic access. The *Guide to Cooperative Collection Development* maintains that “the degree to which the user is able to initiate document delivery and the speed with which the participants can deliver the document are important measures of programmatic success” (13). Physical access may include reciprocal borrowing arrangements as well as user-initiated document delivery and interlibrary loan. The definition of physical access is also growing and changing to include new electronic materials and formats. This new trend is also changing how physical access to materials is provided, whether through delivery of a full-text facsimile or electronic presentation of the information.

Evaluation of the criterion of physical access should also consider the need for preservation and conservation of materials. As demand for research materials steadily increases, provision for the ongoing preservation and potential need for conservation of materials is necessary to ensure reliable access to and timely delivery of materials.

The final criterion suggested for evaluation is that of cooperative collection building. The *Guide to Cooperative Collection Development* provides a thorough list of activities that typically form the core of cooperative collection building. The first activity
listed is that of shared purchase of particular kinds of materials, which the ARL SPEC Kit has identified as the most common form of cooperative collection development. Shared purchase generally involves materials such as electronic resources and microform sets, with issues of funding, holding location, and ownership being defined in the cooperative agreement.

A second collection building activity is that of distributed collection development responsibilities, in which members agree to divide responsibility for particular parts of their collection development programs. Examples include the assigning of collecting responsibilities for specific subject areas, formats, languages, or specific serial titles.

The ALA guide lists as a third activity cooperative retention of materials in particular subject areas or titles. These agreements allow libraries with no assigned collecting responsibilities to make discard decisions free from the danger of drastically disturbing a collection of shared resources.

A final activity representative of cooperative collection building is that of cooperation to complete a single project. The Guide to Cooperative Collection Development indicates that such projects usually meet an immediate need and may be planned for completion within a specified period of time. Examples include cooperative weeding projects, serials union lists, and storage projects.

This paper’s evaluation of the three cooperative collection management programs follows these categories of cooperative activities and includes an analysis of all activities that encompass the broader categories of bibliographic access, physical access, and cooperative collection building.
The cooperative programs selected for analysis were the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) in the British Isles, the Triangle Research Library Network (TRLN) in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and the Boston Library Consortium (BLC), in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) is a partnership, established in 1983, between the major research libraries of Great Britain and Ireland. Full members of the consortium include Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, London (Senate House), Manchester, Oxford, Trinity College Dublin, University College London, Birmingham, Imperial College London, London School of Economics, Sheffield, Durham, King’s College London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, Southampton, Warwick, and Aberdeen. The consortium’s mission is to promote, maintain and improve library resources for research, learning and teaching in research-led universities in Great Britain and Ireland, by means of collaborative membership action and through national and international partnerships. CURL’s objectives are “to develop cooperative and consortial solutions to the challenges faced by members, in the acquisition, processing, storage, preservation, exploitation, dissemination and delivery of information and library materials, for the benefit of their institutions” (Consortium of University Research Libraries). Interestingly, an additional objective of CURL is to assist libraries in the consortium to pursue and achieve their own institutional objectives.

The Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) is a collaborative organization of Duke University, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “the purpose of which is to marshal the financial, human, and information resources of their research libraries through
cooperative efforts in order to create a rich and unparalleled knowledge environment that furthers the universities’ teaching, research and service missions” (*Triangle Research Libraries Network*). Established in 1933, the cooperative programs have historically consisted of coordinated collection development and resource sharing. The TRLN name was adopted in 1980, and in 1987 the first memorandum of understanding was issued, defining its purpose as “to develop and maintain a network of online catalogs and other automated library systems” (*Triangle Research Libraries Network*). The purpose statement has recently been broadened to include the traditional programs of cooperative collection development, resource sharing, and technical innovation “with new concepts of collaboration for leveraging institutional resources to improve access to information for our users in a technologically advanced environment.”

The Boston Library Consortium (BLC), founded in 1970, is a cooperative association of sixteen academic and research libraries. Consortium members are: Boston College, Boston Public Library, Boston University, Brandeis University, Brown University, Marine Biological Laboratory & Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, State Library of Massachusetts, Tufts University, University of Massachusetts Amherst, University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, University of Massachusetts Lowell, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, and Wellesley College. The consortium’s purpose is to “share human and information resources so that the collective strengths of the group advance the research and learning of the members’ constituents” (*Boston Library Consortium*). The consortium supports resource sharing and enhancement of services to users through programs in cooperative collecting, access
to electronic resources, access to physical collections, and enhanced interlibrary loan and document delivery.

The data for this analysis was collected from a variety of sources. The official documents and web sites of the programs were examined in conjunction with the research literature for information regarding each cooperative program’s history, mission, objectives, formal policies and procedures, and ongoing projects. The representative literature was studied to determine how each cooperative collection management program addresses each of the criteria set forth earlier in this chapter.
RESULTS

Before examining how CURL, TRLN and BLC address the defined evaluation criteria, it would be beneficial to study the self-defined missions and organizational goals of each of the model programs. The stated missions and objectives of the cooperative collection management programs will have a fundamental impact on the projects and programs that are pursued and eventually established.

CURL identifies itself as a group of research libraries in the British Isles whose mission is to promote, maintain and improve library resources for research, learning and teaching in research-led universities. CURL's objectives are: “to develop cooperative and consortial solutions to the challenges faced by members, in the acquisition, processing, storage, preservation, exploitation, dissemination and delivery of information and library materials, for the benefit of their institutions; and to assist libraries in the Consortium to pursue and achieve their own institutional objectives” (Consortium of University Research Libraries). Because of its status as a national cooperative, CURL ultimately stands apart from the other two cooperative model programs addressed in this paper. In order to gain membership into CURL, institutions must be formally invited into the consortium by CURL’s Board of Directors. Only institution’s which have the potential to make a substantial contribution towards the work of CURL are considered for membership, which is further subdivided into three distinct levels of participation.

Another point of interest that clearly separates CURL from both TRLN and BLC is the fact that CURL was incorporated in 1992 as a private company. This was done so
that CURL might make legally binding agreements and also receive and disburse funds as an entity in its own right. Reg Carr notes that establishing CURL as a company allowed the consortium to begin “more systematically to address the strategic issues which underpinned [the] more holistic conception of its role,” specifically, to promote, maintain and improve library resources and to encourage, foster, and maintain the interest and support of the public in the objects and activities of CURL (278). While CURL’s decision to seek formal company status clearly delineates its operating style from that of TRLN and BLC, it is important to recognize that all three cooperative programs studies hold a commitment to the shared allocation of resources.

The Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) asserts that its mission is to “marshal the financial, human, and information resources of their research libraries through cooperative efforts in order to create a rich and unparalleled knowledge environment that furthers the universities' teaching, research, and service missions” (Triangle Research Libraries Network). The consortium’s beginnings date to 1930s when Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill issued a “program of cooperation,” which would serve as a model for building coordinated collections at the two universities. North Carolina State University joined the group in 1977, followed by North Carolina Central University in 1994. Kim Armstrong and Bob Nardini note that the consortium operates, historically and currently, under the principle of using available library resources in a coordinated approach to increase the research material available to library users at a participating institution (3). Because of this fact, TRLN’s cooperative collection management programs have not surprisingly tended to focus on the established criterion of cooperative collection building.
The Boston Library Consortium shares many of the same organizational objectives and philosophical designs as TRLN. Although established much more recently, in 1970, BLC states that its purpose is to “share human and information resources so that the collective strengths of the group advance the research and learning of the members’ constituents” (*Boston Library Consortium*). BLC is a consortium of 16 academic and research libraries, including Boston Public Library and the State Library of Massachusetts. Whereas TRLN focuses on the literal creation of a “knowledge environment,” BLC’s emphasis is clearly on the sharing of already existing resources. Ann C. Schaffner, Marianne Burke and Jutta Reed-Scott note that BLC has always considered cooperative collection building as a long-term goal. They note that successes in the past have been in sharing the existing collections rather than sharing in the building of collections (36). They continue by stating that this tradition stems from concerns about the difficulty of such a goal given the differences in size, clientele, and mission of the various member institutions.

A study of the organizational missions of these three cooperative programs reveals a common emphasis on the sharing of resources in order to advance and strengthen the goals and objectives of all participating institutions. These statements of purpose also reveal which of the three established cooperative collection management criteria will be privileged through formalized practices and policies.

All three of the cooperative collection management models studied make provisions for some form of inclusive, effective, and current bibliographic access for the patrons of participating member institutions. CURL has developed perhaps the largest and most impressive example of a shared bibliographic database. It is important to note
that CURL began initially as a way by which members could share machine-readable cataloging records. This foundation paved the way for the establishment of the CURL database and the Consortium of University Research Libraries Online Public Access Catalogue (COPAC). Through this project, CURL’s efforts typify the cooperative collection management criterion of bibliographic access.

The seven original members of CURL began plans in 1985 to establish a CURL bibliographic database of records, with the intention of sharing (and reducing) cataloging costs, and as a tool for collection management to inform decisions on acquisitions, access and preservation (Field 3). This central database contained copies of all records held by the member libraries in UKMARC, AACR2 format. Originally, the CURL database was available only to library staff. In April 1993, CURL made a formal proposal for funding to support and develop the database as “an information delivery resource for the whole of United Kingdom higher education, most especially as regards transformation into an online public access catalogue” (Field 5). This lead to a conversion of the CURL database into CURL’s Online Public Access Catalog, COPAC.

COPAC includes all of the online cataloging records from the main catalogs of the contributing libraries—currently over 8 million records from 18 libraries. COPAC is a traditional library catalog in that it gives details about documents and their location. Some COPAC records include a link to the document text where this is made available by another service. The database contains a range of different material types, although most of the records represent monographs.

The dates of the materials included in the COPAC range from c.1100 AD to the present, with approximately 42% of the records representing materials published since
1980. The large research libraries that provide bibliographic records to the COPAC
database have many older documents, specialized collections and particular strengths
which make COPAC a valuable resource for the researcher (Cousins 1997a, 2). As
retrospective conversion projects are tackled, the proportion of older materials is growing
substantially. Cousins notes as an example the Early Printed Books Project being carried
out at the University of Oxford which will incorporate into COPAC the records for all the
books published before 1641 which are held in Oxford libraries other than the Bodleian
(1997a, 3).

Duplication of records in the database is a concern because of the number of
records loaded into the database from different libraries, which may share many of the
same holdings. Consolidation of the database is a necessary endeavor, so that wherever
possible a single document is represented by a single bibliographic record. The COPAC
consolidation process involves the detection of duplicate records and the creation of a
single, consolidated bibliographic record to represent each item in the database.

Clive Fields comments on the success of COPAC by noting that usage is not
confined to the United Kingdom higher education sector, for which COPAC is
principally provided. In the April-June 1999 quarter, two-thirds of all accesses were from
or through international sites. In this way, Fields writes, “COPAC has rapidly established
itself as a global showcase for the resources of United Kingdom academic libraries” (10).

Although not quite at the same operational level as CURL, both TRLN and BLC
offer consolidated bibliographic databases for their member institutions’ users. The
BLC’s consolidated catalog is known as the Boston Library Consortium Gateway. The
Gateway provides access to the online library catalogs of member institutions and to
consortium-wide information resources such as the BLC Union List of Serials. BLC is also currently involved in an Alliance for a Virtual Catalog, which is “committed to empowering library patrons by expanding research and learning opportunities through a virtual union catalog and patron initiated direct distance borrowing system” (Boston Library Consortium). The Virtual Catalog Project is the forerunner of the statewide initiative to build a virtual union catalog. Funding from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has enabled an alliance of the Boston Library Consortium, Minuteman Library Network and the Metro-Boston Library Network, to develop Phase One of the Virtual Catalog Project. The virtual catalog will consist of the holdings of four Boston Library Consortium libraries, the Minuteman Library Network and the MetroBoston Library Network. This virtual union catalog will not only allow the end users to search multiple library catalogs simultaneously and view search results in a common system but they will also be able to initiate interlibrary loan requests based on real-time local circulation status and interlibrary loan policies.

BLC offers an additional service to provide enhanced bibliographic access to the holdings of its cooperative partners. The BLC’s Union List of Serials (ULS) is a catalog of more than 235,000 title records for serials, journals, newspapers, and other serial publications owned by the consortium’s 16 member institutions. There are currently over 340,000 holdings in the ULS, which will soon grow with the addition of the approximately 23,000 titles and 60,000 holdings from the serials collection from Brown University. The primary function of the ULS is to facilitate resource sharing among a group of libraries. Bessie K. Hahn notes that more interdependence among BLC libraries is necessary, especially since the early 1990’s saw the cancellation of 8,600 serial
subscriptions, many of which were unique titles within BLC (94). For this reason, the ULS is seen as a tool to provide the information base for facilitating resource sharing. Hahn continues by arguing that union lists can be much more than management tools. By minimizing duplication of serials holdings and increasing the number of unique titles within a consortium of libraries, union lists have the potential to affect the creation and success of future cooperative endeavors.

The second criterion of cooperative collection management that this paper examined was that of physical access. Again, all three of the programs have policies or procedures set aside for the provision of physical access to materials. A common component of the three programs is that of some form of interlending process, by which remote materials are made available to local users.

TRLN and BLC make available a consortium card that allows the bearer to directly borrow materials from institutions within the consortium. These cards are generally accompanied by various guidelines and restrictions, namely that the cardholder must be currently affiliated with a participating institution and must observe any regulations or restrictions placed on the material by the lending institution. Because CURL has member libraries which are non-lending institutions, their interlending policies differ from the broad and generally all-encompassing programs offered by TRLN and BLC. Conditions of membership in CURL require that full members only be willing to lend appropriate materials to CURL members and to other higher education institutions.

TRLN is also currently exploring additional methods to provide timely and efficient access to materials in its joint collections. TRLN initiated a document delivery
expedited interlibrary loan (ILL) service trial in January 2000. The goal of the trial, which is primarily based on the OCLC interlibrary loan subsystem, is to provide two-day ILL service for TRLN patrons. Eligible items include circulating materials as well as legal photocopies from library holdings. Statistics from this trial were completed in June 2000 with analyses and recommendations to follow.

BLC provides a similar service referred to as facilitated interlibrary loan. As part of this service, members of BLC provide special ILL services to other member libraries. These services include high priority treatment of ILL requests, electronic transmission of articles, and a courier service to deliver books and photocopies.

Another aspect of physical access addressed by a model program is that of preservation of materials. CURL is presently directing a project expressly concerned with the preservation of digital collections—CEDARS. This project aims to "address the strategic, methodological and practical issues and will provide guidance for libraries in best practice for digital preservation" (Consortium of University Research Libraries). The purpose of the CEDARS project is to preserve and secure the long-term viability of any digital resource in the collections. By ensuring continued availability and access to digital resources in their libraries’ collections, CURL is working to extend the boundaries of continual and reliable physical access to all components of its collections.

The final criterion of these model cooperative programs which was evaluated is that of cooperative collection building. While TRLN and BLC have formal policies addressing this criterion, the libraries of CURL face unique circumstances which hinder traditional methods of cooperative collection building. In addition to the fact that several
of CURL’s libraries have non-circulating collections, several members are also “copyright libraries” or “libraries of deposit.” The university libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, the National Library in Edinburgh, the National Library of Wales, Trinity College Dublin, and the British Library in London receive copies of all works published in the United Kingdom through the law of legal deposit. This law has the effect of enforcing a type of mandatory collection building on all affected libraries. As such, formal policies for cooperative collection building are not found as readily nor as explicitly as in the other two model programs examined. Additionally, cooperative collection building clearly falls outside of the defined mission of CURL. Responsibilities of CURL members do include the support of national research through annual expenditures on acquisition, although these need not necessarily be cooperative ventures. Rather than a drive toward a cooperative system of collection development, the principal mission of CURL is the provision of a framework of support and leadership and an effort to facilitate the utilization of members’ existing collections.

TRLN’s mission has historically focused on the building of cooperative collections and this tradition results in what is clearly the strongest formalized plan for cooperative collection building of the three cooperative models. Cooperative collection development began in the 1930s when Presidents and Librarians of Duke University and the University of North Carolina, in an attempt to overcome the economic limitations of the Depression, sought, through cooperation, to build the astounding research collections that presently exist in their libraries. Area studies cooperation began in the 1940s with Latin American Studies programs. National programs for cooperative collection growth

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1 See Patricia Buck Dominguez and Luke Swindler’s “Cooperative Collection Development at the Research Triangle University Libraries: A Model for the Nation” for a more in depth historical overview of TRLN.
in the 1960s encouraged several other cooperative area studies programs to evolve during the following decades. During this period librarians also began to cooperate on the acquisition of serials, government documents, newspapers, microform collections, and expensive titles. These programs only increased when North Carolina State University (NCSU) joined the group in 1977, and again when North Carolina Central University (NCCU) joined in 1994.

Presently, the cooperative collection development programs are divided into the general collections and area studies collections. The general collections include unique academic program materials, serials, government documents, newspapers, microforms, expensive items, and Southern Americana. Area studies materials have been divided along geographic and/or subject lines. Each institution collects core materials for the region, as well as specialized research materials for specific countries or areas within a country. The geographic areas covered by the cooperative programs are Africa, British Isles and Commonwealth countries, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, Russia and Eastern Europe, and South Asia. These collection agreements specifically define the institutional responsibilities for a given collection area. For example, Duke holds collecting responsibility for the Anglophone areas of Africa, while UNC takes responsibility for imprints from Francophone and Lusophone Africa.

The successes of the TRLN cooperative collection development policies are highlighted in recent research results. Comparison of nearly two million records in the shared online catalog of Duke, UNC and NCSU reveals that 76% of the titles were found on only one campus, and only 7% were common to all three universities (Dominguez and Swindler, 470).
Although BLC is a much younger cooperative program than TRLN, it has completed an important first step toward its long-range goal of cooperative collection building. BLC has performed a major automated collection analysis of its holdings to determine the collecting strengths of the member libraries individually and in comparison to each other (Schaffner, Burke, Reed-Scott, 35). The analysis process involved sorting cataloging records from recent imprints into more than 4,000 subject areas, counting the titles in each subject area, and comparing the collections for overlap.

Analysis of the results revealed that 62% of the titles examined were held by only one library and that very few titles were held by all member libraries. Schaffner, Burke, and Reed-Scott noted that collection diversity increases with differences in the size of collections and the type of library examined. Also discovered were distinct patterns in the overlap rates, with less homogeneous collections in languages and literature (42). The authors conclude that the collection analysis project provided BLC with four distinct benefits: identification of individual collection strengths; provision of the tools and information needed to reassess institution’s assumptions about strengths and weaknesses; help in rationalizing and systematizing local collection development policies; and creation of a tool for communication with institutional administrators and governing boards (47).

In an additional effort to pursue the long-term goal of cooperative collection building, BLC has established a Cooperative Collections Committee, which “initiates and monitors joint collections efforts aimed at ensuring the most effective use of collections funds and resources of the Consortium libraries” (Boston Library Consortium). These efforts include recommending joint purchases, overseeing networked electronic access
and shared licensing opportunities, coordinating serials purchases, and facilitating communication between collections staff in Consortium libraries. The committee also works with other BLC committees and groups on issues of cooperative collection development, and maintains communications with collections development staff at member libraries concerning Consortium issues. Currently, the BLC includes cooperative agreements on collection responsibilities in Asian Business and Economics, Biology serial titles, Neurosciences journal titles, and Women’s Studies.
CONCLUSION

Despite the difficulties and challenges that academic research libraries will inevitably encounter, the advantages and potential benefits of successful implementation of cooperative collection management programs are astounding. The programs developed and carried out by the Consortium of Research Libraries, the Triangle Research Libraries Network, and the Boston Library Consortium highlight the variety of approaches that academic research libraries may employ in an effort to successfully participate in cooperative collection management activities. This study reveals that the projects and programs established by these three cooperative models all work towards the ultimate goal of building cooperative collections and providing seamless bibliographic and physical access to these materials. These findings also add strength to Paul Mosher’s argument that these activities form “organic interrelationships.” For it is impossible to conceive of cooperative collection building without the provision of bibliographic access, and the provision of bibliographic access without the conditions for physical access.

What is perhaps most interesting about this study is how each model approaches the criteria set forth for evaluation. The organizational history and current condition of each of the models proves vitally important to the exploration, selection, and implementation of cooperative collection management activities. The mission statements, goals, and objectives of each model program provide valuable insights into how each model individually addresses cooperative collection management issues and challenges. CURL provides an exciting example of how an international program, managed quite
unlike any program in North America, can gather and organize resources to develop cooperative and consortial solutions to collection management challenges. TRLN serves as a wonderful model of how a historic cooperative collection development program has gathered its resources to create a cooperative research environment without equal. And finally, BLC serves as an inspiring model of a younger program, focused on sharing its human and information resources, that is well on its way to achieving its goal of successful long-range cooperative collection management.

Academic research libraries that are interested in researching, proposing, and implementing cooperative collection management programs should examine how CURL, TRLN, and BLC have successfully incorporated the varied elements of collection development activities into sound and thriving cooperative collection management programs.
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