The Collaborative Shift Has Happened!

Valerie Horton (vhorton@umn.edu)

Director, Minitex, and Co-General Editor, *Collaborative Librarianship*

What a difference five years can make. *Collaborative Librarianship* launched in January 2009 and we are about to start our fifth volume. We have built a strong literature base with over 135 articles, reviews, columns, and editorials examining many aspects of collaboration in libraries. Looking over the last five years of journal content, it is clear that our profession's view of collaboration has been evolving.

When this journal started, our profession was open to developing new forms of collaboration. As Adrian Alexander has said, "the history of library cooperation is as long as the history of professional librarianship in America…"[1] Looking over the past five years, some truly remarkable collaborative projects have become established, including:

- large scale digitization efforts like Hathi Trust or the soon to be release Digital Public Library of America, (See v1, n4 Conner and v4, n2 Prilop for articles on digitization)
- creation of statewide e-book sharing collections in states like Wisconsin and Kansas, (See v3, n4 Heather L. Wicht)
- or the widespread adoption of open source, consortia-based, union catalogs using Koha or Evergreen (See v1, n2 Dykhuis)

In fact, Marshall Breeding in *Library Journal*'s 2011 Automated Marketplace article predicts, "greater participation in larger-scale shared automation systems of consortia or statewide systems" in the coming years.

What is driving all these new collaborations? We are recognizing and accepting the new realities of library life in the 21st century. First we saw that students and other researchers weren't using library catalogs and websites as the "go to" place to find information. According to OCLC's groundbreaking "Perceptions of Libraries 2010,"[2] information consumers choose Google two-thirds of the time as their top choice for starting a search, a startling growth of 84% in five years. Second, the Great Recession changed our belief that we could maintain the financial models that worked in the past. (See v1, n4 Bullington's "Tough Economic Times Call for More Library Cooperation"), or look at the number of consortia that have closed, merged, or transformed in the past five years. Third, like expanding ripples in a pond, our frustrations with lack of true interoperability among a host of software platforms we used reached a wider and deeper boiling point. (See v4, n3 Ayre's "Holding Your Vendor's Feet to the Fire").

SHIFT HAPPENED

Our profession has become willing to look at much more profound and fundamentally ground-breaking collaborations. We are now demanding our vendors provide us with the collaborative functionality we need to succeed. The shift can be seen in the development of Kuali Ole and their choice of "intentional collaboration" as a "strategic" decision. From their web site, "Kuali OLE … features a governance model in which the entire library community can collaborate to own the resulting intellectual property."[3] This shift can also be seen in the 2012 announcement[4] discussing Orbis Cascade's decision to move 37 libraries to a union-catalog, cloud-based next generation library service platform (see the John Helmer interview in this issue of *CL*). In the article by Michael Kelley in *The Digital Shift*, William Jordan, the Associate Dean of the University of Washington Libraries is cited as saying, "Academic libraries have a choice: we can collaborate, or we can die."

Libraries living or dying based on the depth of collaboration is shocking, but this kind of shift is happening throughout the profession. It is no longer a matter of whether we will adapt, now it is a question of how soon, and this journal will continue to track changes in our profession and the growth of collaboration.

Endnotes

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[1] Adrian W. Alexander, 1999, "Toward 'The Perfection of Work': Library Consortia in the Digital Age," *Journal of Library Administration* 28(2):1-14.

[2] http://www.oclc.org/reports/2010perceptions/2010perceptions_all.pdf

[3] http://kuali.org/ole

[4] Michael Kelley, 2012, "Consortium Makes Radical Shift Away from ILS," http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2012/12/software/academic-consortium-makes-radical-shift-away-from-ils/