

**REPORT TO THE COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PLANNING GROUP (CMPG)  
ON  
DEVELOPING A SHARED COLLECTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Prepared by the CMPG Steering Committee  
May 2003

## 1. Background

Great universities have great libraries. The University of California has built nine campus libraries of distinction (and has launched the development of a tenth) comprising world-class collections that give a competitive edge to UC research and instruction. The UC Libraries have also won an unparalleled reputation for innovation and service. Maintaining the breadth and depth of those collections and services in the face of continuing increases in the volume and cost of scholarly publication is the single greatest challenge confronting university libraries today. To meet this challenge, the UC Libraries have collaborated closely and pooled their resources to ensure that all UC faculty, students and staff, irrespective of their location, have access to library collections befitting an eminent research university.

*Resource Sharing in UC.* Over the last 25 years, the University of California's strategic approach to development of library collections and services has emphasized multi-campus collaboration, application of new technology, and expanded Universitywide sharing of the information resources within UC library collections. These strategies have been successful in applying the leverage available to a multi-campus system of strong and distinguished institutions in order to maintain high-quality research collections and services in the face of rising costs and other challenges to traditional library models. Moreover, each successive restatement of this overall planning strategy has extended the concepts of collaboration, sharing, and systemwide leverage into new domains of library service, from expedited intercampus lending to a shared online library catalog and regional library facilities, a shared digital collection, and beyond.

Universitywide sharing of library resources has been highly successful. As shown in Figure 1, the number of interlibrary loan requests for returnable items has doubled over a ten-year period, with the greatest growth occurring since the introduction of the *Request* service, which allows library users to place requests for material held at another campus using the Melvyl union catalog, without having to go through the campus interlibrary lending office. Further upward progress

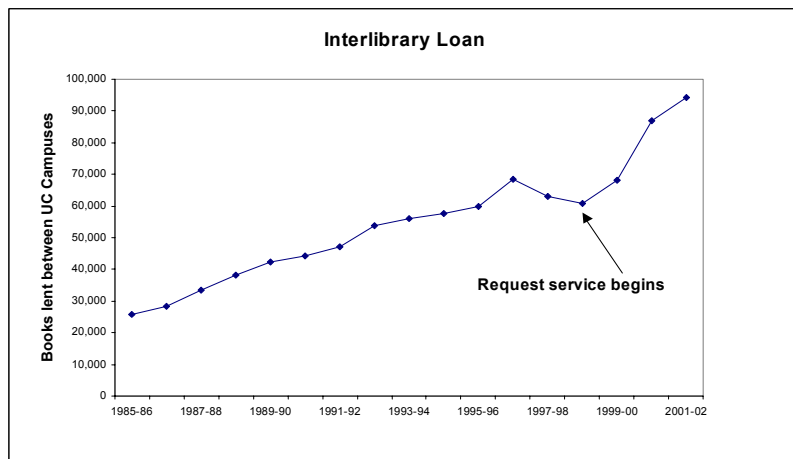


Figure 1: Use of the Systemwide Collections

is expected with the introduction of an electronic document delivery service in the 2002-03 academic year, through which requests for short items that are normally satisfied by photocopies (e.g., journal articles, book chapters) will be digitized and delivered to the requesting user's computer desktop.

*The Concept of Shared Collections.* The establishment of the California Digital Library in 1997 extended the concept of "resource sharing" from access to and delivery of materials between campus collections to the development and deployment of an explicitly shared Universitywide collection, the shared digital collection. The CDL facilitates access to a wealth of shared electronic information for all campuses. At the end of 2002-03, the collection will include 130,000 online books, 8,000 online scholarly journals, 4,500 online statistical files, 250 reference databases, and one of the largest collections in the world of online art historical images (some 300,000 digital surrogates for works in architecture and the visual arts).

The further development of shared Universitywide library collections, in all formats, is coming to be viewed as an essential strategy to enhance the collections and services that each UC campus library makes available to its faculty and students, and to maintain the breadth and depth of collections needed to support the University's distinguished teaching and research programs, in the face of ongoing growth in the amount and cost of scholarly information and the limited State resources available to meet the need. In its October 21, 2002 report to the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC),<sup>1</sup> the SLASIAC Scholarly Information Program Task Force observed that "the [UC] shared digital collection has been remarkably effective, and the Task Force recommends that the shared collection concept be expanded beyond the digital realm to include, on a selective basis, print collections. This overall strategy offers the best possibility to capture and leverage the benefits that lie in the interrelationship between digital and print collections, presents an opportunity to improve service by better integrating access to information regardless of format, and builds upon the collaborative relationships among the campus libraries that have been established to guide the development of the shared digital collection."

## 2. Definition and Environment

The University Librarians have adopted the following as a working definition of the Shared Collection of the University of California:

The University of California **shared collection** consists of information resources jointly purchased or electively contributed by the UC libraries. Such resources are collectively governed and managed for the purpose of maximizing access to the widest audience of both current and future members of the UC community.

(NOTE: the manner of counting shared collections for statistical reporting purposes is under discussion).

The shared collection will be one of a portfolio of strategies for enhanced and expanded resource sharing and collection coordination employed by the UC Libraries to provide faculty and staff

---

<sup>1</sup> <[http://www.slp.ucop.edu/consultation/slasiac/102902/SIP\\_Report\\_with\\_comments.doc](http://www.slp.ucop.edu/consultation/slasiac/102902/SIP_Report_with_comments.doc)>, <[http://www.slp.ucop.edu/consultation/slasiac/102902/SIP\\_Report\\_with\\_comments.pdf](http://www.slp.ucop.edu/consultation/slasiac/102902/SIP_Report_with_comments.pdf)>.

with access to a collection of breadth and depth appropriate to a world-class research and teaching institution.

There are many factors supporting the development of the shared collection within UC, along with many operational, financial, cultural, and political challenges to be addressed in realizing the concept. Among the forces or factors that advance or support the development of a shared University of California collection are:

- Continued individual campus contributions to developing enriched library collections, accompanied by continued campus financial support for those collections
- Availability of technological tools that support rapid identification, requesting, and delivery of materials included in the shared collection (the Melvyl union catalog, Request, Tricor overnight courier service, Web-based delivery of document requests)
- Lack of space in campus libraries; increased range of options for management of campus collections
- Limited funds for campuses to acquire the material locally, especially in duplicative print and digital formats
- Cost savings in reducing the number of duplicate print copies, plus the costs of their cataloging, binding and shelving.
- Opportunities to leverage the shared processing of greater amounts of material, freeing campus acquisitions and processing staff to pursue other campus priorities
- Ready access by all campuses to unique research collections
- Opportunities to ensure the completeness, preservation, and persistence of research collections, including existing materials that are at risk or content that is not fully replicated or replicable in digital form
- Opportunities to increase the breadth, depth, and distinction of both core and unique collections at the campus level and Universitywide
- Opportunity to be responsive to the expressed concerns of University administrators and State officers about efficient and effective use of funds and facilities

Among the challenges that must be addressed in the development of a shared University of California collection are:

- Varying campus receptivity (both among faculty and librarians) to the shared collection concept, including:
  - Perceived diminution of local control and flexibility
  - Concerns about homogeneous and undistinguished local collections
- Possible effect on campus and State financial support; possible excuse to reduce funding commitments
- Uncertainties about accounting for a shared collection in library statistical reports, and possible negative impacts on institutional rankings, evaluation, and accreditation
- Variety of campus academic programs, and campus independence in academic program planning
- Absence of proven organizational and funding models
- Changing economics of scholarly publishing
- Differing communication patterns within the disciplines

A number of University groups have discussed the concept of shared collections and recommended that planning move forward, while advising of the importance of remaining mindful of these factors as planning proceeds.

### 3. Intent

In defining and developing the shared collection, the UC Libraries are seeking opportunities to enhance the ability of every UC library to provide service to its campus community by:

- Acquiring or providing access to **new research collections** that enhance or complement existing holdings
- **Optimizing management** of local collections, for example by forgoing acquisition or retention of print journals when digital is reliably available
- Improving **systemwide access to critical resources**
- Planning for and implementing trusted and cost-effective **preservation** of digital and non-digital collections
- Continuing to develop **shared services** in support of instruction and research
- Identifying and refining **best practices** for effective collaborative management of research library resources in the mixed print and digital environment

In pursuing these opportunities, it is the intent of the UC Libraries that:

- Development of the shared collection will complement and reinforce, not diminish, the ongoing commitment to support existing resource-sharing programs and pursue new resource-sharing opportunities. Development of the shared collection will be conducted through broad consultation with the University community, using existing consultative mechanisms.
- Selection and development of shared collection components will be sensitive to the unique characteristics of each component and to the fundamental differences in perspective and practice entailed in prospective acquisition of new collections versus retrospective management of existing collections.
- The choice to contribute material in an existing campus collection to the shared collection will be an elective decision of the contributing campus.
- The selection and development of shared collection components is intended to provide benefits to the University as a whole and to individual campuses in a manner that does not impose unreasonable disadvantages on any single campus.