Request to the Lilly Endowment for Support of a Shared Print Collection Study to Be Conducted by Academic Libraries in Indiana

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August 9, 2013

Request

The Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) and the Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) consortium request $225,000 to support a Shared Print Collections Study to be conducted by 34 academic libraries in Indiana.

Introduction

Academic libraries are in the midst of great change. Digital technologies have created powerful tools and altered many of the ways libraries operate. The dilemma academic libraries now face is how to preserve what is essential from the past while at the same time redirecting resources to take advantage of possibilities now available. Libraries must accomplish this at a time of constrained resources in higher education. One largely underappreciated asset academic libraries have is the space occupied by print collections. Effectively managing print collections, especially if this is done collaboratively, can redirect fiscal resources and free space for repurposing.

In many academic libraries the book stacks are crowded. The use of print books is declining and space is wanted for other purposes, for different kinds of study space and technologies and to locate academic services such as writing centers, centers for teaching and learning, and research centers. It is generally assumed that there is significant redundancy among the print collections of any group of academic libraries, but traditional means of identifying items for potential withdrawal have been time consuming and expensive.

The challenge has been how to preserve collection integrity and to assure that low-use content is available when it is needed while at the same time limiting the unnecessary cost of storing books that are unlikely ever to be used and thus freeing space for other purposes.

Fortunately the means to accomplish collection overlap and usage studies now exist. Sustainable Collection Services (SCS, see http://sustainablecollections.com),
a library consulting firm, has developed the capacity to analyze bibliographic and circulation records from individual libraries and data from OCLC (Online Computer Library Center), the international database of library holdings. From these resources, SCS can provide libraries with lists of books that have had few or no circulations plus the number of libraries that hold these books locally and nationally. Decisions based on local criteria can be made to withdraw such books so that library space can be repurposed. This type of study will also identify books in a library’s collection that are relatively rare and deserve special attention.

**The Situation in Indiana**

Indiana’s academic libraries have several advantages in dealing with print book collections.

1. There is a proven record of collaboration among Indiana’s academic libraries. The Academic Libraries of Indiana was founded in 2003 to promote and expand cooperation. The past decade has witnessed notable advances in the collaborative acquisition of digital resources that have resulted in a broader scope of quality information available and significant cost reductions. One initiative between ALI and the Indiana State Library has resulted in making many more full-text magazines and journals available to all Indiana citizens through INSPIRE, “Indiana’s Virtual Library.” Resource sharing is an established program within ALI fostering reciprocal interlibrary loan and on-site circulation without fees between ALI member libraries. More recent initiatives include collaborative efforts to improve information literacy across types of libraries and to promote new models for scholarly communication such as Open Access. In 2013, nearly all of Indiana’s not-for-profit colleges and universities are members of ALI, a total of 70 libraries. PALNI, founded in 1992, has a long history of creating significant collaborations among the libraries of 23 of Indiana’s private colleges. It has enjoyed support from the Lilly Endowment at its founding and since.

2. Because of previous collaborations the majority of academic libraries in Indiana are part of a shared library system. For example, 22 PALNI libraries use the same catalog system. There are clusters of libraries in Terre Haute and the South Bend area that also share catalogs. This will make the project easier and more affordable than if all participating libraries used their own system.

3. There are three large research libraries in Indiana: IU Bloomington, Purdue, and Notre Dame. Although these libraries will not directly participate in the study, they have committed to serve as resource libraries, loaning books when needed to the other ALI libraries. Importantly, IU Bloomington already has built and Notre Dame plans to build specialized book storage facilities where books are secure and environmental conditions are optimum for long-term preservation. These facilities will hold millions of volumes each, and
once a book is placed in a storage facility, there is a long-term commitment to keep that book. Because other libraries can rely on these resource collections, the libraries participating in the project can withdraw their copies of a book and still be assured that a copy is securely available in the state.

4. From September 2012 to March 2013 an ALI task force studied best practices for collection survey and analysis and the feasibility of embarking upon such a project among ALI and PALNI libraries. (The report from this Task Force is posted at: http://ali.bsu.edu/archives/OTHDOC.html.)

**How the Project Will Work**

1. ALI will contract with SCS.
2. A working group including representative staff from participating libraries will be formed to guide the project.
3. A part-time librarian will be hired to coordinate the project activities among participating libraries and to serve as the point of contact with SCS. Previous collaborative projects have demonstrated the importance of someone serving in this role.
4. Working with SCS, participating libraries will extract bibliographic records and related circulation records from their library catalogs. SCS will process and manipulate the records in a variety of ways to assure that the data is accurate and consistent.
5. The participating libraries will identify target libraries whose holdings will be checked. For the ALI study, these libraries would include at least the three Indiana research libraries (IUB, Purdue and Notre Dame), but would likely include other libraries in the Midwest, for example Ohio State, Illinois, Oberlin, or Louisville.
6. SCS will run a program against the OCLC database and combine this information with circulation data. Other factors can also be considered, such as date of publication, date of acquisition, inclusion on lists of recommended titles or digital availability (for example from the HathiTrust [http://www.hathitrust.org/]). The result is a database for each library or group of libraries that can be manipulated to identify books with little or no use plus holdings in other local or national libraries as well as books that the library holds that are relatively rare.
7. Based upon this information, libraries can identify books that are unlikely to be used and that can be borrowed easily, quickly, and reliably from other libraries and thus are candidates for withdrawal.

For example, the IUPUI University Library has 20 years of circulation data. It might decide that if a book has no recorded use and it is held in the storage facility at IU Bloomington and also at either Purdue or Notre Dame and there are 50 other copies in the U.S., then the University Library can withdraw its copy.
In similar studies conducted by SCS, 15% to 25% of print book collections are found to be good candidates for withdrawal and 1% to 3% are found to be relatively rare.

**Project Time Line**

If funding were in place by November 1, 2013, we anticipate the project can be completed as follows:

November 2013 to January 2014 — PALNI-ALI and SCS will negotiate and finalize a contract. A PALNI-ALI Working Group will be formed consisting of librarians from the participating libraries. A Project Coordinator will be hired. The Working Group will establish a list of “target” libraries.

February 2014 to July 2014 — Bibliographic and circulation data will be extracted from library catalogs and provided to SCS. SCS will manipulate records to assure quality and consistency. SCS will compare data against the OCLC database.

August 2014 to October 2014 — SCS will provide data to individual libraries. Libraries will work with SCS to develop criteria and lists of books for potential withdrawal. Final reports on the project will be completed.

This would conclude the project.

Individual libraries can then withdraw books on schedules that work in their situations. We anticipate this would take one to two years for most of the participating libraries.

Also in the following year, ALI would use the data to assess statewide collecting patterns and begin planning for cooperative purchasing.

**Project Budget**

The largest portion of the project budget will be allocated to the contract with SCS. Their pricing is based on the number of catalogs from which data is extracted at a rate of $5,000 per catalog and a per-item record fee of $.03 plus a charge of 15%. The ALI project will involve seven catalogs and 6,912,916 item records. Consequently, the cost of the SCS contract would be $278,746. In addition, a project coordinator will be hired. The position is anticipated to be a part-time contract position. The estimated cost is $30,000. Finally, $20,000 will be budgeted for miscellaneous expenses and contingencies.
Funds to support the project will come from three sources. First, ALI will commit $50,000. Second, if this proposal were funded, the Lilly Endowment would provide $200,000. Finally, beyond in-kind contributions in the form of staff time, participating libraries will provide cash funding of $53,746. Costs will be allocated based on the number of item records each participating library has in the study.

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<tr>
<th>ALI Shared Print Project Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Costs</strong></td>
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<td>SCS Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item Records</td>
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<td>15% Charge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td><strong>Project Coordinator</strong></td>
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<td>Half-time for 50 weeks at $30 per hour</td>
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<td>Travel, Misc., and Contingency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Funding</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>ALI Contribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lilly Endowment Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costs to Participating Libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Funding</td>
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**Participating Libraries**

The libraries at the following institutions will participate in the study: All 23 PALNI institutions, IPFW, Indiana State University, IU Kokomo, IU Northwest, IU Southeast, IUPUI, Purdue Calumet, St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, St. Mary’s College, University of Southern Indiana, and Valparaiso University.

**How Much Space Will the Project Make Available?**

The collections of the participating libraries include 6,912,916 printed books. If we conservatively estimate that 15% of these might be candidates for withdrawal, then as many as 1,036,937 books might be withdrawn.

In standard library shelving a conservative estimate is that there are 20 volumes per square foot. This would mean that 51,847 square feet could be freed by the project in participating libraries. The cost to construct office space on college campuses, according to the most recent industry report, is $225. The cost to
construct academic or library space is about $350.\textsuperscript{1} If we use the lower figure for office space, the value of the space that is potentially made available as a result of the project would be $11,665,546.

Another way to look at the value of the space is to look at the cost of storing a print book. A recent systematic indicates that the fully-loaded cost of storing a single book, including building construction, is $4.26 per year. Even without construction costs, the cost is approximately $.90 per year.\textsuperscript{2} This would suggest that the opportunity cost that could be freed as a result of the study would be as much as $4,417,353 per year across all of the participating libraries, or more realistically, with construction costs removed, $933,244.

No matter how it is viewed, the potential value of the study is significantly larger than the required investment.

What Happens to Books that are Withdrawn?

Each library will need to decide how to handle this, but several good alternatives exist. Many Indiana academic libraries work with Better World Books (http://www.betterworldbooks.com), a South Bend based company that receives books from libraries and others and resells or donates them. They have a social mission to support literacy programs in the U.S. and abroad.

Other Benefits of the Study

The most immediate and tangible benefit of the study will be the reduction in print collections in a manner than will have little, if any, impact on library users, while making significant space available to be repurposed for other activities.

Beyond this, we anticipate several benefits of the study.

1. The study will identify items in the collections of participating libraries that are rarely held. Libraries can then make sure these items are appropriately stored and preserved. This might also be a mechanism to identify books for

\textsuperscript{1} See: “2012 College Construction Report” at: http://www.peterli.com/cpm/pdfs/CollegeConstructionReport2012.pdf Figure 5

digitization, one valuable preservation strategy that also increases accessibility.

2. The study will provide new insights regarding how print book collections are used both in individual libraries and across the state. Libraries individually and collectively can use this data as they develop their collections going forward. How this will change collection development patterns remains to be determined, but it will yield significant, new information that could result in a more balanced number of print books being acquired. This should translate into a more rational, informed use of funds to purchase print books and to minimize the unwarranted duplication of print books. Funds can then be redirected to more heavily-used digital resources. Furthermore, this project lays a foundation for participating libraries to work together to serve user needs better and to extend the reach of resources.

**Sustainable Collection Services**

SCS grew out of a longstanding library consulting group with strong expertise in library technical services operations. The company was founded in 2011 and has conducted a number of studies for individual libraries and consortia. They are currently conducting a collection study at Purdue. They also have projects completed or have projects in progress with library consortia in Michigan, California, New York, and Maine. The majority of these projects have involved academic libraries. The proposed Indiana project would be the largest study of its kind to date, but would not be significantly larger than earlier SCS studies. There are no concerns about SCS’s ability to manage the proposed study.

**Project Management**

PALNI will serve as the fiscal agent for the project. They will hire and oversee the Project Coordinator and account for other project expenses. They will be the formal party to the contract with SCS.

A PALNI-ALI Working Group, consisting of representatives from participating libraries, will guide the project, make operational decisions and guide the work of the Project Coordinator.

The Project Coordinator will regularly provide reports to the Working Group, and the PALNI and ALI Boards.

At the conclusion of the project, participating libraries will be surveyed on their experiences and perceived benefits of the project and an assessment of the project will be made with a commensurate report on the proposed outcomes.