



June 18, 2021

NOTE: Many of the following points were originally described by our colleagues at the CCH Collaboration (CDL/CRL/Hathi). We borrowed heavily from their work in drafting this text, with our thanks for their leadership on these matters.

Talking Points: How can library service and infrastructure providers support shared print?

With the recent call for increased community feedback, library service providers, and OCLC in particular, have signalled an interest in better understanding the needs of specific library communities. It is an opportune time for the Shared Print community to offer such feedback. The following outlines specific ways that both the Partnership for Shared Book Collections and the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance believe OCLC and other library service and infrastructure providers could positively impact our community.

We believe that Shared Print represents an important strategy for the future of academic libraries. The growth in this area over the last five years, as represented by the proliferation of Shared Print programs and the establishment of national collaborations, is a clear indication of this new reality. However, to realize the promise of these collaborations, we need improved tools that will focus on the specific needs of this enterprise, including collective collection analysis, acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, collection management, discovery, and resource sharing. Each of these areas is closely interrelated -- the same functionality is necessary for multiple areas -- but for the sake of discussion, these are separated out below.

Acquisitions

In the area of acquisitions, Shared Print offers the potential to reduce duplication of purchases and contribute to the collective collection. However, for this potential to be realized, it is necessary to have tools that 1) allow for collectively acquiring resources, 2) include and expose the terms of licensing that enables access for participating Shared Print programs, and 3) include workflows that facilitate gap filling and replacement purchases. Other functionalities such as the ability to indicate an item for retention at the time of acquisition would be useful, too.

Cataloging

For cataloging and processing, it is important to make Shared Print commitments readily discoverable and to support metadata discovery across platforms. Providing a means of publicly exposing and reporting retention commitments and participation in Shared Print programs in WorldCat is also of paramount importance to assist researchers looking for items that may be

lost or missing from a local collection, to allay concerns about local weeding projects, and to promote Shared Print collections generally.

Circulation

Improving the ability to record circulation data, such as usage and lost, damaged, or missing parts, would be valuable in making decisions about where to locate an item, when to seek a replacement, or when to seek a retention commitment from another source. Connecting this data to collection management tools would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the state of the collection and return on library investments.

Collection Management

In the area of collection management, it is vital to ensure that shared print commitments display to librarians to assist with the selection/deselection process. This will help to reduce duplication of purchases, and also guide users to identify items that are not currently under retention. It is also important to provide a means of comparing collections across groups of libraries. Again, this provides an opportunity to identify both retained and unretained items, with the goal of increasing retention. There is an opportunity for developing better collection analytics as well -- e.g., the ability to identify rare or unique items, to track retention commitments by format, or by geographic region; the length of the retention commitments, or the ability to track circulation / usage of items held under retention commitment.

Discovery

Implementing the capability to view shared print retentions raises awareness of this initiative to all librarians, faculty, students, and other users. This could be useful when discussions about deselection occur on campus. Ensuring that users are aware of these agreements and providing access to those commitments may help to alleviate concerns related to loss of access.

Resource Sharing

Ensuring that shared print commitments are clearly viewable in resource sharing tools would improve library resource sharing by providing another source for fulfilling ILL obligations, particularly if those include reciprocal borrowing agreements. This offers the potential to reduce fulfillment costs for ILL and provide a possible means for controlled digital lending. It is also important that libraries have the ability to scope or filter OCLC resource sharing reports to analyze use of shared print commitments. This will help the community accurately predict the number of copies needed to support use in the future.

Summary

Existing tools could be re-worked to incorporate many of these needed functions. Specifically, GreenGlass, WorldCat, the Shared Print Registry, and others have functionality that -- if expanded and made interoperable -- would answer many of these needs. It is our hope that further consideration of these areas of concern will lead to developments that allow shared print operations to become routine tasks within libraries.