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# Hanging Together: Local Cooperation and Role Expectations Among Different Types of North Carolina Libraries

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Cooperation among similar types of libraries (e.g., academic) in North Carolina has been long-established and well-documented. This article discusses local cooperation and role expectations among *different* types of libraries in North Carolina. The first section begins with an overview of research on library cooperation within the state since 1965, a summary of selected current cooperative agreements received from libraries throughout the state, and a brief description of a fledgling cooperative program between a large public library and a state university library. The second section is concerned with a survey of North Carolina libraries, addressing cooperation and service expectations—how well librarians think other types of libraries are serving their local areas. The last part is the authors' conclusions on the present state and future needs for cooperation among different types of libraries within the state.

In 1965 Robert B. Downs, under the sponsorship of the North Carolina Governor's Commission on Library Resources, edited a report which concluded that North Carolina libraries did not have sufficient resources, physical facilities, or staff to provide adequate library services for the state. Based on a survey of all types of libraries in North Carolina, the Downs report also included the Governor's Commission on Library Resources proposed program for improving library services.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1960s, Bruce A. Shurman reported on WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service), the North Carolina venture into library services through a cooperative telephone communication system.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Herbert Poole, director of Guilford College Library, wrote an article explaining the Piedmont University Center of North

Carolina, a program advocating library cooperation in the Greensboro-Guilford County area.<sup>3</sup>

By 1971 the North Carolina State Board of Higher Education had conducted a study which found North Carolina only partially prepared to take maximum advantage of the information explosion in the United States. The study recognized many great and even eminent libraries in the state, but found library resources still largely unrelated in a systematic way. The study recommended recognition of the North Carolina Library Services Network and its expansion to link all information sources in the state with all potential users anywhere in the state.<sup>4</sup> Two years later, directors of ten public libraries in the Piedmont Triad requested that the Council of Governments make a regional library services study so that interlibrary cooperation might lead to better library service among public, academic, and special libraries.<sup>5</sup>

Site visits to North Carolina were part of the strategy that Gerard B. McCabe and Connor D. Tjarks pursued in their efforts to present a plan for library support of off-campus continuing education courses in Richmond, Virginia. This report was based on the cooperation of public and academic libraries, with the suggestions that academic libraries make long term deposits of library materials to host libraries, usually public libraries in the area.<sup>6</sup>

In 1980 Mary Holloway and Valerie Lovett described the Athens Drive Community Library Program, a pilot project of public libraries/school libraries cooperation. Funded by Wake County, the Wake County Public School System, and the city of Raleigh, this project intended to provide a full range of library services to the Athens community as well as to its high school students.<sup>7</sup>

A year later the Association of Research Libraries-Office of Management Studies (Washington, D.C.) offered a SPEC kit on External User

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Services. This kit contained research library policies for providing services to users who were not associated with the institution, including the Duke University and University of North Carolina cooperative library lending agreement.<sup>8</sup>

In 1982 King Research Associates, Inc., under the sponsorship of the North Carolina State Library, issued the North Carolina Library Networking Feasibility Study. Authored by Jose Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King, the report dealt with statewide multitype library networking and emphasized potential network functions, products, services, sources, and costs. The report included background information on libraries' cooperation in North Carolina, made fourteen recommendations on library networking, and delineated implementation activities for the next five years.<sup>9</sup> During the same year, Diana Young compiled the proceedings for the conference of the School and Children's Librarians' Section of the Southeastern Library Association. This meeting which took place in Boone, North Carolina, included papers on cooperative efforts between school and public libraries.<sup>10</sup>

Mary Robinson Sive authored a report on the state of school library media centers and networking in mid-1982. Background on cooperative agreements, student use of public and other libraries, and theoretical justifications appeared in the study. The report included accounts of school library networking in North Carolina.<sup>11</sup>

In 1983 Thornton W. Mitchell's study, *The State Library and Library Development in North Carolina*, was published. As the author relates in his preface, the study was undertaken to develop a chronological summary of the relationship between the development of library service in North Carolina, and the State Library and the North Carolina Library Commission. Particular emphasis was to be given to public libraries. The study not only reviewed traditional programs but also assessed the potential for improving library service through expanded cooperation among North Carolina's public, academic, school, and special libraries.<sup>12</sup> Four years later Gloria Miller authored an article describing the cooperative effort between public and school libraries.<sup>13</sup>

Based upon information received in a survey conducted in conjunction with this article, two examples of current cooperation among different types of libraries in areas of common concern are the Cape Fear Health Science Information Consortium (health sciences resources) and the joint policy of the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (high school student referrals). Some academic

institutions have incorporated cooperation with other types of libraries through their written borrowers policies.

An example of a fledgling cooperative program began when representatives from technical and public services at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the two largest libraries in the Charlotte area, began meeting three times per year to discuss common interests. Areas of special emphasis are business reference, children's services, documents, and interlibrary loan. Future plans include installing terminals for the online catalog of each institution in the reference areas of both libraries for staff use. This working group is formulating a mission statement and standing rules to formalize the arrangement. The group has the support of the administration of both institutions, a necessity for the success of this type of cooperative effort. These meetings have been especially beneficial since the PLCMC has been in the process of constructing a new main library in downtown Charlotte, and the building's progress and the plans for new services once it is completed are of interest to UNCC librarians.

### Survey

In order to ascertain the amount and types of local cooperation and role expectations among different types of libraries in North Carolina communities, questionnaires were constructed and sent to 126 libraries. Each questionnaire asked a total of fourteen questions in the following areas:

1. Library privileges (to non-affiliated patrons)
2. Interlibrary loan practices
3. Cooperative agreements
4. Role expectations

Additional comments were also requested.

Four questionnaires were constructed for replies from the following types of libraries: academic, public, secondary school, and special. Libraries included in the survey were selected from the fortieth edition of the *American Library Directory*.<sup>14</sup> Communities with a campus of the University of North Carolina system were identified, and questionnaires were sent to all four types of libraries in each geographic area. The number of libraries surveyed is broken down as follows:

Academic libraries (4-year colleges, community colleges, universities)	47
Public libraries	18
Secondary school media services	41
Special libraries	20

Of the 126 questionnaires mailed, a total of 92 were returned for an overall return rate of 73.6 percent. An additional questionnaire was returned too late to be included. The return rate by type of library is summarized as follows:

Type of Library	No. of Questionnaires Returned	Percentage Returned
Academic	35	74.4
Public	17	94.4
Secondary school	26	63.4
Special	14	70.0

Responses were sorted by question for overall results. Responses were also sorted by type of library. Responses from university libraries were sorted separately from other academic libraries for several questions.

In the area of library privileges, the first question asked respondents if they provided reference service (either in person or by telephone) to patrons not affiliated with their institutions. All ninety-two respondents answered this question. Only four libraries (three special, one secondary school) answered no.

In Question 2 the respondents who answered yes to the previous question were asked to esti-

mate the percentage of reference transactions that were from patrons not affiliated with their institutions. Of the eighty-eight respondents who answered, the results were as follows:

Percentage of questions from non-affiliated patrons	Number of Replies
Less than 10	56
Between 10 and 25	11
Between 26 and 50	3
More than 50	2
Cannot estimate	16

Only four academic (non-university libraries) reported that more than ten percent of their reference transactions were from non-affiliated patrons; six university libraries reported more than ten percent. Only one public library and one secondary school media center reported more than ten percent. Four special libraries reported more than ten percent.

Question 3 asked respondents who answered yes to Question 1 to identify the largest category of patrons not affiliated with their institutions. Eighty-four respondents answered this question. The types of patrons and number of replies are summarized below:

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Type of Patron	Number of Replies
Local residents (adults)	20
College students	12
Businesses/agencies	7
Secondary school students	5
Residents of other communities	5
Local residents and college students	4
Local residents and businesses/agencies	4
Local residents and secondary school students	2
Other	7
All categories	1
Cannot specify	17

Question 4 asked if patrons not affiliated with their institutions were able to check out library materials. Ninety-one respondents answered this question. Sixty-five replied yes; twenty-six replied no. Responses are summarized by type of library below:

Type of Library	Can Check Out	Cannot Check Out
Academic	12	7
Public	17	0
Secondary school	18	8
Special	4	10
University	14	1

Question 5 asked if there were any restrictions on borrowing privileges for non-affiliated patrons. Forty-seven respondents answered this question with thirty-one replying yes and sixteen replying no. Responses are summarized by type of library below:

Type of Library	Have Restrictions	Do Not Have Restrictions
Academic	5	5
Public	12	5
Secondary school	4	4
Special	2	0
University	8	2

Question 6 asked if the respondents had joint borrowers cards with other types of libraries. Eighty-nine respondents answered this question.

Sixteen replied yes, seventy-three replied no. Responses are summarized by type of library below:

Type of Library	Have Joint Cards	Do Not Have Joint Cards
Academic	5	14
Public	1	16
Secondary school	2	24
Special	1	11
University	7	8

The second section of the questionnaire dealt with interlibrary loan. Eighty-eight respondents replied to Question 7 which asked if their institutions *accepted* interlibrary loan requests from other types of libraries in their area. Responses are summarized by type of library below:

Type of Library	Accept ILL Requests	Do Not Accept ILL Requests
Academic	19	1
Public	15	0
Secondary school	12	12
Special	12	1
University	15	0

N.B. One public library responded "NA."

Question 8 asked if their institutions *sent* interlibrary loan borrowing requests to other types of libraries in their areas. Eighty-nine respondents replied. Sixty-nine replied yes; twenty replied no. Responses are summarized by type of library below:

Type of Library	Send ILL Requests	Do Not Send ILL Requests
Academic	18	1
Public	17	1
Secondary school	9	15
Special	10	3
University	15	0

The next section of the questionnaire dealt with cooperative agreements among different

W  I  N  T  E  R



types of libraries in a local area. Question 9 asked if their institutions had written cooperative agreements. Of the eighty-eight respondents, twenty-six answered yes; sixty-two answered no. Responses by type of library are summarized below:

Type of Library	Have Agreements	Do Not Have Agreements
Academic	10	8
Public	3	14
Secondary school	3	23
Special	3	10
University	7	7

Question 10 asked if the respondents wished to see greater cooperation among different types of libraries in their areas. Eighty-seven respondents replied. Sixty-four replied yes, four replied no, and nineteen had no opinion. Responses are summarized below by type of library:

Type of Library	Wanted More Cooperation	Did Not Want More Cooperation	No Opinion
Academic	13	2	3
Public	10	1	5
Secondary school	20	0	6
Special	9	0	4
University	12	1	1

Question 11 asked those who answered yes to Question 10 to list ways in which they wished to see greater cooperation. Several examples were listed. Sixty-six respondents replied to this question; many checked more than one example. Responses are summarized by type of cooperation below:

Type of Cooperation	Number of Replies
Regular meetings to discuss common concerns	38
Exchange of holdings lists	29
Courier service	28
Exchange of subject guides	13
All of the above	3
Other	10

The last section dealt with role expectations—how the respondents rated the adequacy of collections and services of other types of libraries in their areas. Questions 12 through 14 asked whether other types of libraries were more than adequate, adequate, less than adequate, or no

opinion. Replies were sorted by type of library.

Replies from *academic* (not including university) librarians, rating other types of libraries, are summarized below:

Type of Library	More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	No Opinion
Public	7	7	3	4
Secondary school	3	2	6	9
Special	11	4	0	4

Replies from *public* librarians, rating other types of libraries, are summarized below:

Type of Library	More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	No Opinion
Academic (including university)	6	3	5	2
Secondary school	0	5	9	2
Special	4	4	1	8



**go for it!**  
**use your library**

Replies from *secondary school media specialists*, rating other types of libraries, are summarized below:

Type of Library	More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	No Opinion
Academic (including university)	14	8	3	1
Public	14	11	1	0
Special	10	9	1	5

Replies from *special librarians*, rating other types of libraries, are summarized below:

Type of Library	More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	No Opinion
Academic (including university)	4	9	1	0
Public	1	10	3	0
Secondary school	0	1	3	10

Replies from *university librarians*, rating other types of libraries, are summarized below:

Type of Library	More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	No Opinion
Public	6	5	3	1
Secondary school	0	5	5	4
Special	4	8	0	2

An overall summary of the adequacy of the four types of libraries that respondents were asked to rate is given below:

Type of Library	More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	No Opinion
Academic	24 (42.8%)	20 (35.7%)	9 (16%)	3 (5.3%)
Public	28 (37.3%)	33 (44%)	10 (13.3%)	4 (5.3%)
Secondary school	3 (4.6%)	13 (20.3%)	23 (35.9%)	25 (39%)
Special	29 (38.6%)	25 (33.3%)	2 (2.6%)	19 (25.3%)
TOTAL	84	91	44	51

### Additional Comments

Fifty-eight respondents made additional comments. The number of libraries providing additional comments is broken down by type of library as follows: academic (13), public (15), secondary school (7), special (7), and university (11). The largest number of comments (21) were made to

Question 5 which dealt with restrictions for non-affiliated borrowers. Most cited deposits or fees for borrowing and restrictions on the number of items that could be checked out. There were also twelve comments on Question 11 which dealt with types of cooperation, giving additional suggestions (e.g., electronic data delivery). Question 3, concerning categories of non-affiliated patrons, elicited ten comments, usually citing other types of borrowers not given in the examples.

In summary, almost all libraries responding to the questionnaire provided reference service to non-affiliated patrons, with the majority reporting less than ten percent of their reference transactions from non-affiliated patrons. The largest groups of non-affiliated patrons were local residents and college students. In terms of checking out library materials to non-affiliated patrons, seventy-one percent of the respondents provided such service; however, almost two-thirds placed restrictions. Only eighteen percent of the responding libraries had joint borrowers cards. Eighty-two percent of the respondents *accepted* requests from other types of libraries; seventy-seven percent sent interlibrary loan requests to other types of libraries.

Only twenty-nine percent of the responding libraries had written cooperative agreements with other types of libraries. Seventy-three percent of the responding libraries wished to see greater cooperation among different types of libraries with regular meetings, exchange of holdings lists, and courier service being the most popular types of cooperation.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents rated other types of libraries as adequate or more than adequate. Academic (including universities), public, and special libraries all had combined adequate or more than adequate ratings of over seventy percent. Secondary school media centers had a combined adequate or more than adequate rating of 24.9 percent.

### Conclusions

Almost every article ever written on library cooperation comes to the same conclusions—cooperation is good; we need more of it; we need further research on better ways to cooperate to serve the public. Such statements only tell us what we already know and do little to provide immediate relief to the public service librarians in all types of libraries trying to serve their patrons, cooperate with each other, and contribute to the profession. From our survey of the literature, responses to the questionnaire, and professional experience the authors have come to the follow-

ing conclusions:

1. There has always been a cooperative spirit and willingness to share information and resources among libraries in North Carolina, especially among academic and public libraries with the encouragement of the State Library.

2. Librarians in each area of the state should meet on a regular basis (at least once a year) to see who is still who, who has what, who is willing to share. The major public library or university library in each area with a branch of the UNC system would be a logical vehicle to start such meetings.

3. Library directors should be committed to this type of cooperation. Consequently, they should give their staff time to meet with their counterparts, visit other collections, and make any form of cooperative agreements workable.

#### References

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#### Local Cooperation and Role Expectations Among North Carolina Libraries

##### Library Privileges

1. Do you allow patrons not affiliated with your academic institution to receive reference service, either in-person or by telephone?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
2. If the answer to question 1 is yes, what percentage of your reference transactions (in-person or by telephone) are from patrons not affiliated with your institution?  
Less than 10% \_\_\_ 10-25% \_\_\_ 26-50% \_\_\_  
More than 50% \_\_\_ Cannot estimate \_\_\_
3. If the answer to question 1 is yes, which is the largest category of patrons not affiliated with your agency requesting reference service?  
Other businesses/agencies \_\_\_ Local residents (adult) \_\_\_  
College students \_\_\_ Secondary school students \_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_ Cannot specify \_\_\_  
(please specify)
4. Do you allow patrons not affiliated with your agency to check out library materials?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
5. If the answer to question 4 is yes, are there any restrictions on borrowing privileges for patrons not affiliated with your agency?
6. Do you have a joint borrowers card with other types of libraries in your area?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

##### Interlibrary Loan

7. Do you accept interlibrary loan requests from other types of libraries (e.g., academic, school, public) in your area?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
8. Do you send interlibrary loan borrowing requests to other types of libraries in your area?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

##### Cooperative Agreements

9. Do you have any written cooperative agreements with other types of libraries (e.g., academic, school, public) in your area?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, please enclose sample or summarize on back of this questionnaire.
10. Would you like to see greater cooperation among different types of libraries in your area?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_
11. If the answer to question 10 is yes, in which ways would you wish to see greater cooperation?  
Exchange of holdings lists \_\_\_ Joint holdings lists \_\_\_  
Exchange of subject guides \_\_\_ Courier service \_\_\_  
Regular meetings to discuss common concerns \_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_  
(please specify)

### Role Expectations

12. How do you rate the library collections and services of special libraries in your area?  
More than adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_  
Less than Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ No opinion \_\_\_\_\_
13. How do you rate the library collections and services of secondary school libraries in your area?  
More than adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_  
Less than Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ No opinion \_\_\_\_\_
14. How do you rate the library collections and services of public libraries in your area?  
More than adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_  
Less than Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ No opinion \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Comments

If you have any comments on this survey or on other characteristics or concerns about expectations and local cooperation among different types of libraries, please use the back of this questionnaire.

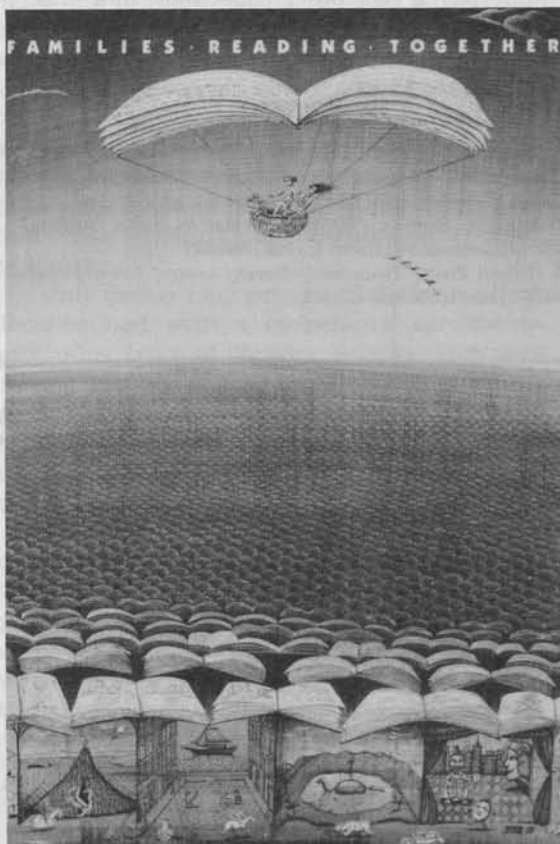
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