

Interlibrary Cooperation: The Key to Support

by Philip S. Ogilvie*

State Librarian of North Carolina

When a man who has earned a fortune gives it away or throws it away, there is likely to be some grumbling, especially if one hoped to be among his heirs. At the same time there is some tolerance of his actions, for it is generally, if grudgingly, acknowledged that having worked hard and long to acquire his material wealth entitles a man under normal circumstances to determine its disposition.

When, however, a man inherits a fortune only to lose it through neglect or squander in poorly conceived, hastily fabricated projects, both grumbling and grudging tolerance give way to raw disgust. Despite the fact that the Good Book pleads eloquently for the wastrel to be given a second chance, his indifference or his incompetence seldom find any justification or even mere acceptance in the eyes of his peers. His last fig leaf withers and falls away under searing blasts of criticism to leave him exposed as a practitioner of masquerade. Which is to say that his pretensions of ability and leadership peel away like a poorly bonded veneer, and the kindest gloss that can be substituted for it is to suggest that he is probably ill.

I make these points not because I have a big heart of solid stone, but because I am a librarian as you are and because all of us need to be reminded often that we are beneficiaries of a long line of illustri-

ous and productive predecessors in the field of librarianship. We are indeed the inheritors of a great fortune amassed across many centuries and collected from many tribes and nations on every continent. Ours is the task and the privilege of investing that fortune wisely on today's market so that it will remain viable and productive. Long gone are the days of independent hoarding and guarding of the treasures over which we preside. Also behind us are the times when investment for small dividends in a limited market could be complacently accepted by our patrons or our peers. We hold our inheritance in a time of rapid change that demands daring investment in an open market with freedom to exchange. God help us if we lose our treasure through neglect or render it impotent through mismanagement.

The stock that can pay the greatest dividends for libraries in our day is known as interlibrary cooperation. It has been on the market for some years, but only now is it being recognized as of the very essence of survival for libraries of all kinds. Indeed this recognition has come almost too late, and in some areas the wells of support have begun to run dry.

In an abstract of his paper, "Info-U (Information Unlimited)," delivered at the 1971 ASIS Conference in Denver, Robert T. Jordan of Federal City College, Washington, D. C., has this to say:

*Reprinted from the *Pennsylvania Library Association Bulletin*, September, 1972.

There are three pervasive trends that must be reckoned with the reconciled in assessing the future development of information resources:

- (1) People everywhere, and young people in particular, are ignoring artificial institutional boundaries in fulfilling their informational needs. Increasingly they are acting on the assumption that all information resources should be available to all.
- (2) The need for quick access to information is growing as school, job, personal and community problems become even more complex and perplexing.
- (3) Yet, budgetary limitations are constraining.

In the face of these three dominant trends, it is imperative that a reassessment and a reordering take place to drastically increase the effectiveness of our informational resources. We cannot continue to build in a profligate fashion, without coordination, without guaranteed performance. The time is long overdue for a reordering of priorities, for intraducing new concepts of effectiveness. Nothing mysterious is required; all the pieces are already "on the shelf" — they merely need to be put together in a new way.

The point is simply that interlibrary cooperation is nothing more nor less than putting the pieces of our information resources together in new ways so that they serve a broader clientele. A man expects access to the information he needs regardless of where it is. He expects that access to be reasonably rapid. He will not continue to support all or parts of systems that deny him rapid access to information that he needs when he needs it, wherever it may be and wherever he may be. Interlibrary cooperation is, therefore, a key to support.

Interlibrary cooperation has indeed been on the market for some time. The Union Library Catalogue of Pennsylvania like North Carolina's Union Catalog has been in active use for more than a third of a century. The issue now is to improve access to these catalogs — to broaden their bases and their effectiveness. Other states, too, have embarked on interlibrary cooperation endeavors over the years. There are many examples of effective interlibrary cooperation. In the interest of time, however, I will talk only of interlibrary cooperation in North Carolina and how it is paying off.

Interlibrary cooperation is a long story

H.E.L.P. is on its way!

In this past year we've installed a \$100,000 computer system that offers you a totally new program to simplify your bindery preparation. We call it H.E.L.P.—Heckman's Electronic Library Program. This program will simplify your work and actually cut your bindery preparation time by 1/3 to 1/2. New simplified forms give you a total and continuous recycling record of each publication at your fingertips. It's really revolutionary... and it's from the originators of 28 day service. Ask your Heckman representative for H.E.L.P. Write or phone. Better yet, come and visit us.

**THE HECKMAN
BINDERY, INCORPORATED**
NORTH MANCHESTER, IND. 46962
TELEPHONE (219) 982-2107



"BOUND TO PLEASE"®



in North Carolina. It is a many faceted story that reaches way back in the library history of the state. Only the highlights of such a story can be mentioned here. They will be sufficient to indicate a trend — a way of thinking about libraries in North Carolina — that has made the current nationwide emphasis on interlibrary cooperation merely a reordering and enlargement of an established pattern.

In the early part of this twentieth century, the librarian of the University of North Carolina recognized that the taxpayers of the state had a stake in the tax-supported library which he administered. Because of this he considered that his library had responsibilities not only to the academic community of the university, but also to any taxpayer who might turn to it for help. He deliberately built an extension collection to be circulated freely by mail to any state resident seeking such services, and the university library provided such services for more than fifty years.

Also early in this century the North Carolina Library Commission was established to promote the development of public libraries throughout the state and to provide public library service by mail and traveling book collections where public library service had not yet been established. From its very inception the Library Commission adopted the attitude that the University of North Carolina Library was a partner in service to the public at large. The team theme was stressed. The intent was clearly to complete rather than compete, in providing a pattern of service that would leave no man without at least a minimum of the library assistance he might need.

This kind of interlibrary cooperation among academic, public, and state library agencies persisted until 1956 when the North Carolina Library Commission and the old State Library were united into a single agency, the North Carolina State Library. At that time the University Library ceased providing direct loans of materials to persons not part of the campus community and directed its energies along

with those of the new State Library to the development and promotion of other forms of interlibrary cooperation that promised even more benefits for North Carolinians in general. Interlibrary loans became part of the new emphasis and the North Carolina Union Catalog gained greater stature as a supporting element in that new emphasis.

The North Carolina Union Catalog began in 1935 as a cooperative venture between the libraries of the University of North Carolina and Duke University, the two strongest libraries in the state. These two university libraries, one private in Durham, the other public in Chapel Hill, are only nine miles apart in what is known as the Research Triangle area of North Carolina. They initiated the Union Catalog as one part of a plan to develop and share separate subject strengths. A few years later they welcomed the addition of the North Carolina State College (now also a university) of Raleigh to participation in the Union Catalog. And, in the forties more academic libraries and some major public libraries began participation.

The fifties saw further growth in the North Carolina Union Catalog because of State Library-sponsored special collections in public libraries all across the state, and the sixties saw more of the same plus complete incorporation of the State Library's own catalog into the Union Catalog. The seventies are seeing the addition of certain special libraries and the libraries of two-year colleges and technical institutes to the catalog, and already more than a million and a half titles can be located through this valuable tool which is now in process of being microfilmed with the intent of duplicating it and making it available in other locations.

Since the University of North Carolina Library got out of the extension business in the late fifties all public library requests for interlibrary loans have been directed to the State Library and filled from State Library resources when possible. Requests exceeding State Library resources have been referred by teletypewriter exchange

(TWX) to the Union Catalog for locations, and the State Library has then notified the requesting library of locations of needed materials. This saved some time over total reliance on postal services, but it was still too slow for an age of rapid development and drastic changes. Besides that it was not often used for reference requests, and it certainly was, and still is, the case that too many of North Carolina's smaller public libraries lacked the materials and personnel resources to cope with some serious informational requests. Thus it happened that Library Services and Construction Act Title-III funds were thought of immediately as contributing to faster and broader cooperative exchanges and assistance among libraries of all types by improving communications among them.

In 1968, the State Library directed some LSCA Title-III funds to strengthen the Union Catalog and most of the remainder to the installation and operation of Inward Wide Area Telephone Service (IN-WATS) connecting public libraries to the State Library. All other types of libraries in a given locality were to be provided access to the line through the public library. At the same time TWX equipment was installed at the Duke University Library and costs for TWX there and at Chapel Hill were assumed by the State Library as compensation for assistance with reference questions and interlibrary loans where such requests exceeded the resources of the State Library. A policy was established that the IN-WATS line would be answered at all times by a professional librarian or by a recording device when the State Library was closed. This had the effect of making the weakest libraries in North Carolina as strong as the strongest, and this was explained in appropriate detail to all candidates for the state legislature who were urged to use their local public libraries as source of or link to any information they might need for speeches or other purposes in connection with their campaigns. Many of them did so, and those who were elected came to Raleigh with a new awareness of the value of libraries singly and in cooperation with each other.

In the meanwhile, in May 1968, the State Library worked out an agreement with the Association for the North Carolina Regional Medical Program to provide physicians with access to Medical Library Extension Services through their local public libraries to the State Library via IN-WATS and thence by TWX to the three major medical libraries in the state. This won for local public libraries, the State Library, and the medical libraries the additional support and influence of medical men throughout the state. This circumstance added to the influence of the North Carolina Library Association and the North Carolinians for Better Libraries and led the 1969 legislature to increase state aid for public libraries by one and a half million dollars for the 1969-71 biennium. The legislature also strengthened the State Library by doubling its book budget, increasing its staff, and adding to other items for a total biennial increase of approximately \$280,000.

In April 1969, the direct access to the IN-WATS line was granted the libraries of all four-year colleges and universities, and in April 1970, the line was made available to thirteen special libraries in the state. Candidates for the 1971 General Assembly were informed of the increased access to the North Carolina Interlibrary Services Network of which IN-WATS and TWX were the primary communication links. Again they used these services for information pertinent to their campaigns and again interlibrary cooperation was the winner, for the 1971 legislature added for the 1971-1973 biennium another \$400,000 to state aid for public libraries, another \$286,512 for increasing staff and otherwise strengthening the State Library, plus \$273,030 especially earmarked for further expansion and improvement of the North Carolina Interlibrary Services Network.

In October 1971, direct network privileges were granted librarians of all two-year colleges and technical institutes in North Carolina. In the spring of 1972, candidates for public office were informed of these added points of access to information available to them and to all

citizens, and many of these candidates availed themselves of these services and demonstrated to themselves in a very personal way the value of the assistance of professional librarians, rapid communication, and interlibrary cooperation to any and all who need ready access to information or materials resources. In the 1973 General Assembly they will listen knowingly to appeals for support strengthening local libraries of all kinds and strengthening the network that unites them in a team effort. They will understand that interlibrary cooperation or library resources sharing makes the money spent on libraries many times more effective than dollars spent on libraries bent on going their own

separate ways.

More interlibrary cooperation, especially networking electronically, is the wave of the future as we see it in North Carolina. It is the key to better service and additional support. Somewhere down the library road in our state, and not too far distant, I believe, there are microfilm, tele-facsimile and computer applications for interlibrary cooperation or resource sharing. There is not time now to spin our dreams out for you to review in detail, but we dream, confidently knowing that the services we can provide through interlibrary cooperation will merit the support we will need to improve upon them through still further cooperative efforts.

Classified Advertising

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES accepts classified advertisements for positions wanted, positions open, items for sale or exchange and items wanted. No commercial advertising will be accepted for the last two categories.

Rates are \$3.00 for one advertisement of eight lines or less. Each additional line is \$.50. Advertisers may calculate their costs on a basis of forty spaces per line. "Blind ads, which keep the identity of the advertiser confidential, may be inserted for an additional charge of \$1.00. Payment must accompany copy. Please make checks payable to

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES.

Classified advertising orders, copy, and payment should be addressed to Associate Editor, **NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES**, Greensboro College, Greensboro, North Carolina 27420, and should arrive there before the first of the month of publication (March, June, September, December).