

The AAU/ARL Global Resources Program: The View from a Crossroads

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The Global Resources Program (GRP) was created in 1996 to address serious problems of access to international research resources, the “crisis in foreign acquisitions,” which had been identified in a set of detailed studies that provided the rationale and momentum for the GRP. The Program, a joint endeavor of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Association of American Universities (AAU), has now reached a crossroads: the funding that supported its first six years has been expended, and it is not yet clear what direction the Program will take in its next phase. This paper will address the best practices of the GRP’s “regional projects” and explore how and why the Program’s orientation shifted dramatically, from a focus on cooperative collection building at its inception to an emphasis on access within just a few years. Everyone present is well aware of the difficulties of creating, coordinating, and maintaining truly effective cooperative collection development programs – if we pooled the years we have all dedicated to this cause, supposing the average in the group is ten years, we would discover that we have spent a total of over thirteen centuries trying to establish viable cooperative programs, and/or to sustain them. The Global Resources Program offers a look at the “new dynamics” of cooperative collection development, and raises questions about old models and their relevance and applicability today.

A brief history, for orientation: In December 1996, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded \$450,000 to ARL to create the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program (GRP). The endorsement of the AAU was especially important, because it signaled that university presidents and provosts were engaged with the issues that led to the GRP, namely, problems research libraries faced in the acquisition and distribution of foreign-language resources. An AAU Task Force on this topic, a precursor to the GRP, concluded in its lengthy final report in 1994 that there was, in fact, a critical need to focus efforts on this area, and produced a set of recommendations:

The major North American research universities and libraries should organize a distributed program for access to foreign acquisitions. This program should include the Library of Congress and foreign national and research libraries working together in sharing responsibility for acquiring, organizing, and facilitating access to foreign acquisitions.

The major North American research universities and libraries should implement the program through three demonstration projects.

Universities should plan and fund the electronic infrastructure necessary to support the new avenues of access and delivery crucial to the success of a distributed North American collection.

University leaders and their research librarians should articulate incentives to scholars and faculty for moving away from local and toward remote access, so that an individual institution's library may develop in-depth collections in a few selected areas, but provide remote access to many more in-depth collections.¹

Germany, Japan, and Latin America became the focus of the demonstration projects, and a 1996 ARL publication, Jutta Reed-Scott's *Scholarship, Research Libraries, and Global Publishing* provided further impetus to launch the GRP. Originally intended to support three years of activity, the Mellon funding stimulated over five years of work focused on improving access to international research materials through cooperative structures and the use of new technologies. A related objective was to generate increased communication with the scholarly community regarding future information needs involving international research materials.

The goals for the GRP were based on a "tactical plan" devised by ARL, which suggested:

- The creation of a Global Resources Program with a federated management structure, hosted by ARL in cooperation with AAU.
- The appointment of a full-time coordinator for an initial three-year term with responsibilities for continued development and improvement of the program.
- An educational effort to inform faculty about the Global Resources Program and to build consensus on the proposed strategies for addressing needs.
- Working with the research library community to strengthen and advance area librarianship.
- Establishment of an Advisory Council that would include chief academic officers from AAU and ARL institutions to guide the development of the program.

Goals outlined in the proposal focus primarily on program expansion and outreach to faculty and scholarly associations:

- identify "lead institutions" for each region, to collect and make accessible a range of materials;
- encourage those institutions to pursue relationships with foreign publishers of newspapers, journals and books to enable them to make these materials available in digital form;

¹ Association of American Universities Research Libraries Project, *Reports of the AAU Task Forces* (Washington, DC: ARL, May 1994), pp. 13-14.

- inventory relationships between individual libraries and research institutes and/or libraries abroad;
- mount information about the commitments and linkages on the Web;
- conduct on-campus symposia and make presentations at meetings of scholarly associations;
- collaborate with scholarly and library organizations to set national policy on issues of importance to the global resources arena;
- develop fully the Web-based protocol of library strengths, collecting policies and responsibilities of participating institutions;
- conduct a survey of area specialists, in cooperation with the Council of National Resource Center Directors (CNRC) of Title VI;
- conduct a survey to determine the new roles for and future supply of area librarians.

Of the goals proposed for program expansion, several were achieved, although not necessarily as originally anticipated. “Lead institutions,” rather than being formally named, emerged within each of the projects. This was determined by the size/strength of the particular area collections at a given library and/or the energy, enthusiasm, and initiative of the area specialist librarian. Some institutions have been acknowledged as lead institutions for many years. Relationships with foreign publishers have been pursued within the regional projects rather than by individual institutions, and have selectively led to consortial product licenses as well as digitization projects, although perhaps not on the scale originally envisioned. One of the earliest Global Resources activities was to conduct an inventory of linkages between North American libraries and other institutions abroad. At that time, such information did not prove to be very useful, but it has now resurfaced as a priority for Phase II of the GRP.

The outreach goals were, for the most part, also achieved. Presentations about the challenges and goals of the GRP were made at numerous scholarly meetings. A survey of area studies center directors was completed in April 1998, and largely confirmed that faculty prefer that materials be available locally, because their experience has been that document delivery/interlibrary loan services are not able to supply materials quickly and efficiently. The AAU Task Force recommendation that we “articulate incentives” to faculty and scholars for “moving away from local and toward remote access” was proving, not surprisingly, to be difficult to address.

The Web-based listing of collecting strengths and policies has not been implemented, in large part because of the labor- and time-intensive nature of the project. In addition, current metadata harvesting projects underway under the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) will make this function moot. Participants in the regional projects believe that they have a good sense of “what’s where” in terms of library collections. Users may not know where special library strengths can be found, but they now have access to internet searches that reveal local websites, lists of resources, and access to local OPACs. It is not clear whether faculty and student use of such a separate, conspectus-like online listing of library strengths, which would be duplicative of other sources, would be worth the investment of time and effort. In the brief five years since

the Global Resources Program was initiated, online access to information about library collections has increased dramatically and this goal no longer seems relevant.

Regional Projects

The GRP includes seven regional projects, each offering a different model for expanding access to scholarly resources. Six of them – on Africa, Germany, Japan, Latin America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia – have become well established. Another, the Slavic Document Delivery Project, was proposed toward the end of the initial grant and has not yet become fully operational. Brief descriptions of the projects are provided below; for more information, see the cited websites.

The African Newspaper Union List Project (AFRINUL)

<http://www.crl.uchicago.edu/info/camp/afrinul.htm>

The Center for Research Libraries (CRL) is host to AFRINUL, a multi-institutional project to produce and maintain an electronic union list of sub-Saharan African newspapers. A joint initiative of the Africana Librarians Council (ALC) of the African Studies Association (ASA) and the Cooperative Africana Microform Project (CAMP) of CRL, AFRINUL also complements the ICON project. The database will consolidate holdings information for collections in North America and will later expand to include holdings in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere. The project also has a preservation component, to be carried out at Northwestern University, and plans to digitize the content of newspapers as well, to facilitate research on African political, economic, and cultural events. The project has fifteen participating libraries.

The German Resources Project

<http://grp.lib.msu.edu/>

The German Resources Project is the sole North American/German library initiative for cooperation in bibliographic control, collection development, digital projects, and document delivery. The Project's website provides full information on the four working groups that are active in these areas. The numerous achievements of the German Resources Projects include: the establishment of the German Resources Partnerships Project, in which North American library selectors for 27 subjects (German studies and beyond) are matched with counterparts in Germany; consortial access to *xipolis.net*, a set of major German reference databases; the expansion of exchange relationships to include more materials and more players; development of digital projects; an active document delivery system between North America and Germany; and the translation of AACR2 into German. Especially noteworthy is the Project's unique model of peer-to-peer relationships, collaboration between North American research libraries and European libraries with very strong historical collections. The Project has 47 members.

The Japan Journal Access Project

<http://pears.lib.ohio-state.edu/NCC/jnpjct.html>

The Japan Journal Access Project's foremost emphasis is on international document delivery. After an initial focus on cooperative collection development and scientific/technical publications (during its pilot phase), the Project turned attention to rapid access to materials held only in Japan. A major achievement was the commitment by the National Institute for Informatics (NII) to implement the ISO ILL Protocol in their interlibrary loan system. This international standard will permit ILL requests and responses to be exchanged between and among Protocol-compliant systems such as OCLC and RLIN. The Union List of Japanese Serials and Newspapers reflects the continuation of early cooperative collection development efforts. The project has 38 participating members.

The Latin Americanist Research Resources Project (LARRP)

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/arl>

The Latin Americanist Research Resources Project was launched as a pilot and, at an early stage, secured an additional 1:1 matching grant of \$60,000 from the Mellon Foundation. Each participating library was to contribute a one-time fee of \$3,000. Early expectations were that the Project would have 20 participants; current membership stands at 46, so the matching funds have totaled \$138,000. This additional funding has enabled the project to develop a multi-faceted array of project components, and to attract additional funding from the U. S. Department of Education. The Project includes:

- LAPTOC Database (Latin American Periodical Table of Contents)
- Distributed Resources
- Presidential Messages
- Case Study on Cooperation
- Latin American Partnerships
- Latin American Open Archives Portal

The Slavic Document Delivery Project

<http://www.ku.edu/~slavlib/arlproject.htm>

This project is in its formative stage. The goal is to create a document delivery system between libraries in Slavic countries and in North America. Initially, six libraries in East Central Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union were expected to participate, with a core group of North American libraries as their counterparts.

The Digital South Asia Library (DSAL)

<http://dsal.uchicago.edu>

The Digital South Asia Library and the closely related Digital Dictionaries of South Asia project both originated with seed money from the Global Resources Program.

Both have attracted significant additional funds from the U. S. Department of Education. DSAL is expanding access, through digitization, to numerous categories of research material:

- Books and Journals
- Dictionaries
- Bibliographies
- Images
- Statistics
- Maps

The Southeast Asia Indexing Project/Thai Journal Index

<http://content-dev.lib.washington.edu/thai/index.html>

The Project is composed of two parts: a project based at Cornell University Library to enhance the range of materials represented in the *Bibliography of Asian Studies* and a project based at the University of Washington to provide access to Thai journals, using scanned images of part of the original text and transliterated metadata. Both are projects sponsored by the Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA), a subcommittee of the Association of Asian Studies.

Whatever Became of Cooperative Collection Development?

Of the seven regional projects within the Global Resources Program, only two have a stated focus on “cooperative collection development.” The overwhelming emphasis is on *access*: two union lists; four document delivery structures; a nearly pervasive digital focus throughout. This is a far cry from the “distributed program for access to foreign acquisitions” recommended by the AAU Task Force – or is it?

When we think of cooperative collection development, we think books. We think print. We think Farmington Plan. We think assignments. We think central coordination. The Global Resources Program has approached cooperative collection development from a different perspective, staying in sync with the ubiquitous dynamic of digital access. The GRP’s regional projects are cooperative, and they involve multiple institutions. They are bringing users what they need and want, be it the latest article from a Mexican journal, a German document, a historical map of India, or a Japanese working paper. What they are not doing (with one notable exception) is centrally managing distributed responsibility among a large number of institutions for the cooperative acquisition and cataloging of books and journals published abroad, those materials whose fate was the concern of Jutta Reed-Scott and the authors of the many studies that make up her book.

The exception is the “Distributed Resources” component of the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project, which depends on voluntary specialization among 28 libraries. It is a cooperative collection development effort in the “classic” sense. Twenty-eight of the nearly fifty Project members have agreed to reallocate at least 7% of

their collection funds to deepen their collections in established areas of local emphasis. The result has been enhanced coverage of non-core materials, expedited cataloging, an expansion of “the commons” of materials available to all. All Latin American countries and many subject areas (e.g., labor) are covered. It has worked well for reasons that everyone attending this conference will understand: participation is voluntary; the area of collecting focus is locally determined, based on local strengths and needs (i.e., not a centralized assignment to collect in an area that is not of particular local interest), and it is blissfully free of bureaucratic complexity, loosely coordinated by a single individual in a participating institution.

Why did the GRP not create a distributed model? Each project developed according to specialists’ assessments of the scholarly needs of the field or region. For example, the projects on Africa and Japan stressed that cooperative collection development would be more easily accomplished if a union list were created first. Other projects focused on the “chicken and egg” issue, seeking to put in place well functioning structures for expedited international document delivery and interlibrary loan, since faculty were likely to be more accepting of “remote” collections if they could have rapid access to them.

The evolution of the GRP from its original goal of centralized coordination, a “federation” of institutions all embracing a very rationally designed and distributed set of responsibilities for collecting and cataloging print materials occurred rapidly. Projects were proposed that sidestepped the idea of assigning such responsibilities, focusing instead on using technology to bring about rapid access to resources needed for scholarship and teaching. The rapidity with which the technology advanced, making available approaches to access that were not “on the radar” at the time the proposal was written and funded, refocused the GRP more this area and less on the challenges of “classic” cooperative collection building. The memories and baggage of the Farmington Plan, the reluctance within individual libraries to dedicate funds and efforts to collecting materials for anyone other than their own faculty, the inability to take the more daring steps of canceling journals and relying on the holdings of other institutions, or adjusting collecting policies to focus more intensely on an area that would support national needs rather than only local needs – all these came into play, along with the sheer excitement of trying out new digital technologies and designing new means of electronic access. A new approach was more intriguing than an old one. Thus the GRP took a detour toward access.

I remain concerned about the “crisis in foreign acquisition,” and, to some degree, with the constant refrain of inadequate collections budgets when true cooperation and a greater degree of interdependence could help to make our collective spending go farther. Is it fear of local faculty dissatisfaction? Probably. Is it concern about the complexity of coordination and the burden of bureaucracy? Perhaps. Do we need to continue to worry about whether we are collecting “the universe” of all appropriate research materials from abroad? I think so, but maybe it’s time to be realistic about what we can and can’t do within North America and with our own budgets. The pressures of providing expanded

access to electronic resources (most duplicated many times throughout our libraries) have further curtailed our ability to acquire a broad range of international materials.

If we can build international alliances, as the German project has done, and focus on document delivery, as the Japan, German, and Latin American projects have done, we will provide access to more resources. If we draw more international partners into our arena, as the South Asia and other projects have done, we can move to a new model of resource sharing that does “expand the commons.” At the same time we can promote the development of capacities – such as the digitizing being undertaken in India– elsewhere in the world. If we pursue consortial deals, such as the *xipolis* package that the German project was able to craft, we will save money. I do not believe that the projects of the GRP have failed to create a viable model of cooperative collection development; the Program has adapted the model to take advantage of the available technologies and branched out creatively with efforts that could not have been foreseen or predicted in 1995.

In retrospect, the past five years – the first five years – of the GRP have offered many lessons, some unanticipated, some not so surprising. Changing collecting behavior is notoriously difficult. This has been borne out in the GRP, especially in the Latin American project, whose cornerstone is the LAPTOC table-of-contents database to which all participating libraries, as well as several Latin American partners, contribute. LAPTOC now offers open access to the tables-of-contents for over 700 journals, approximately 140,000 articles and delivery of articles to users at participating institutions. Originally intended not only to facilitate direct, unmediated user access to non- or little-indexed journal articles, but also to encourage cancellation of some commonly held titles (in order to redirect those funds to other titles), LAPTOC has led to minimal, if any, cancellations. I am reminded of the early years of the RLG Conspectus (back in the Stone Age of cooperative collection development) and the reluctance of some well-known libraries to rely on others even when those fellow institutions had committed formally to a PCR, or “Primary Collecting Responsibility.” Times have not changed much in this area. In that case it was a trust issue: how do I know that Library X’s level 4 is the same as MY level 4? Just as PCRs never really took root beyond fairly marginal areas – Icelandic Studies, for example – our ability to orchestrate a federated and interconnected system of collecting remains out of reach. Or perhaps it is still within the reach of regional consortia.

This is a transition year for the Global Resources Program. A new director, my colleague and friend Dan Hazen, is already at work developing the next phase. The achievements and lessons of the first five years will provide, to some extent, a map for the next five. A closer relationship with researchers and faculty will be of critical importance. For example, the Council of National Resource Center Directors of Title VI is planning, post-September 11, to create a website that will provide information on language skills and area/disciplinary knowledge available throughout the United States. Preliminary conversations about including information on library collections have been very positive. More publicity for the Program’s goals and achievements is a must. Building on the strong relationships already in place with the Center for Research

Libraries, and finding a larger role for the Library of Congress and other national libraries, will also be important. A cross-regional and cross-disciplinary focus will benefit those scholars whose work is not limited to one field or part of the world. Perhaps an expanded role for publishers and booksellers, already developed to some extent in the Latin American project, will emerge. Links to cataloging (access too, of course) have already been constructed in the German project, and could easily develop for other areas. More sharing among projects, of “best practices” will advance the larger goals of the Global Resources Program and result in stronger new projects. The Program should not lose track of its roots in the “crisis in foreign acquisitions.” I hope that the new, exciting models of cooperation that characterize the GRP can also incorporate a means to collect and preserve print resources from around the world. Who knows where the next five years will take us?