

## Practical Cooperative Collecting for Consortia: Books-not-Bought In Ohio

Julia A. Gammon, Head, Acquisitions Dept., University of Akron and Chair, OhioLINK Collection Building Task Force  
[jgammon@uakron.edu](mailto:jgammon@uakron.edu)

Michael Zeoli, Regional Manager, Collection Management and Development Group, YBP Library Services  
[mzeoli@ybp.com](mailto:mzeoli@ybp.com)

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“No Library of One Million Volumes can be all BAD”  
---From a cover, *Antiquarian Bookman*.

“Have I done something for the common good? Then I share in the benefits.  
To stay centered on that. Not to give up.”  
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*. Book 11, 4.

### 1. Introduction

In a passage from a paper presented in this forum in 1999, Carol Pitts Diedrichs, Assistant Director for Technical Services and Collections at Ohio State University, foreshadows what has become the subject of our paper. Responding to an article by Edward Shreeves<sup>1</sup> in which he posits the defining of ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ materials as the “traditional stumbling blocks to successful cooperative collection projects”<sup>2</sup> she writes:

Again, the OhioLINK project flies in the face of this traditional model. These stumbling blocks have been eliminated by jumping forward to skip the process of defining who will collect what, to identifying, instead, what has been missed completely and purchase that material. OhioLINK has not yet taken the step to deal with the issue of purchasing the missing material, but it is easy to imagine that as the next potential step in the process particularly where central funding might be used for that purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Shreeves, Edward. “Is there a Future for Cooperative Collection Development in the Digital Age?” *Library Trends* 45 (Winter 1997): 387.

We are here to report that Ohio *has* “taken the step to deal with the issue of purchasing the missing material.” We will discuss the mechanisms that have grown out of what has come to be known as the *Not-Bought-In-Ohio Report (NBIO Report)* enabling the *sharing* or *distribution*<sup>3</sup> of the contents as well as the efficient purchasing of these materials. Beyond the obligation of presenting our observations regarding the contents of the *NBIO Report*, we would also like to discuss the evolution of the *NBIO Report* and the underlying OhioLINK history as we firmly believe that *getting to the NBIO Report* is an important and informative story. This has been a voyage of discovery and much experience has been acquired along the way.

An important *leitmotif* in the history of this project has been the value created in the partnership between OhioLINK and YBP Library Services (YBP). *Partnership* in its fullest sense is the *sine qua non* in developing effective systems and practices for the consortial environment, as we hope will become clear in the following pages. We would also offer this as evidence of a paradigm shift<sup>4</sup> in the library-vendor relationship which, again, “flies in the face” of common belief – held both among vendors and librarians – that in many respects the enterprises of vendors and libraries are at odds with one another (breeding skepticism and suspicion). Dan Halloran, states:<sup>5</sup>

Consortia participants are unlikely to reduce their total number of book purchases (good news), but there are no operational economies of scale for the book vendor when he

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<sup>2</sup> Diedrichs, Carol Pitts. “Designing and Implementing a Consortial Approval Plan: the OhioLINK Experience.” <http://www.crl.uchicago.edu/info/awccconf/awpapersgenl.htm>: 30. Subsequently published in *Collection Management* 24, 1/2 (2000): 15-44.

<sup>3</sup> The importance of this distinction is nicely drawn by David Swords, Vice President of International Sales, YBP, in an unpublished paper, entitled “Cooperative Collection through Interactive Profiles.”

<sup>4</sup> John Secor, founder of YBP, has long held “partnering” with libraries as a core value (“Partnering: A Powerful ‘What to Do’ Management Tool or Just Another Fad?” *Against the Grain* 10:1 (February 1998): 70-73. Partnerships have been achieved to varying degrees long before YBP’s relationship with OhioLINK, however, the difference is that the OhioLINK mission *requires* partnership with the vendor while relationships between individual libraries and the vendor do not. Also see: Gammon, Julia A. “Partnering with Vendors for Increased Productivity in Technical Services or, Bleeding Edge Technology.” *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory* 21:2 (Summer 1997): 229-235; Shirk, Gary. “Lee Tzu’s Pit: Partnering in Dangerous and Chaotic Times.” *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory* 22:4 (Winter 1998): 415-421.

<sup>5</sup> Halloran, Daniel P. “1998 From a Book Vendor’s Perspective.” *Against the Grain* 11 (February 1999): 30. Mr. Halloran, currently President and CEO Blackwell’s Book Group, was President of Academic Book Center at the time his article was written.

enters into a contract with a consortium (bad news). [...] So, for the book vendor, the attraction of a consortial contract may be the assurance of a volume of business over some period of time. For the consortium, it's the expectation of standardized discounts (at the most favorable rate) for all members, as well as shared access to purchase information.

The revealed truth beyond speculated "attractions" and "expectations" is that by allying forces the vendor and consortium obtain a pool of material and intellectual resources, and a sense of common purpose, capable of creating far greater and enduring value than either of the constituents could imagine if left to operate individually. Working together OhioLINK and YBP have been able to inform and enhance each other's practices, strategies and development agendas. From YBP's point of view, the attraction and value of this relationship is most successfully measured in terms of the advances in systems development, approval plan strategies, and a host of experimental consortial projects, rather than in mere dollars earned.<sup>6</sup> Among OhioLINK libraries, the value of the relationship with YBP can be measured more successfully in terms of new electronic services (and their ability to inform these), a willing partner in consortial projects, access to the largest approval plan universe of titles available, and excellence in service, rather than simply in terms of discount.

One of the concepts that stands at the base of the OhioLINK consortium mission, and of this project in particular, lies in increasing the diversity of resources available to member libraries. In 1997, following the lead of an often cited report by Anna Perrault<sup>7</sup> which observed that "the core of titles academic research libraries select in common is increasing, resulting in less diversity in title and subject coverage among those

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<sup>6</sup> We would like to remind readers of the very low profit margins within which monograph vendors operate (not to be confused with margins in other sectors of the book trade). Considering the exacting and extraordinary requirements of supporting a consortium on the scale of OhioLINK, and bearing in mind the substantial discount provided, it should come as no surprise that the greatest benefits to the vendor in this relationship lie in developments that represent a competitive advantage rather than in dollars earned. For interesting discussions, see: Shirk, Gary. "Understanding the Library Marketplace." *Against the Grain* 13:5 (November 2001): 24-33; Nauman, Matt. "Evolution of the Supply Chain in Academic Library Bookselling." *Against the Grain* 13:5 (November 2001): 36-39.

<sup>7</sup> Perrault, Anna H. "The Shrinking National Collection: A Study of the Effects of the Diversion of Funds from Monographs to Serials on the Monograph Collections of Research Libraries." *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory* 18:1 (Spring 1994): 15-16. For other interesting comments on this report see also, Nardini, Robert F., Charles M. Getchell, Jr., Thomas E. Cheever, "Approval Plan Overlap: A Study of Four Libraries." *Acquisitions Librarian* 16 (1996): 77-78; Diedrichs, *Ibid*, 6-7.

libraries,” Tom Sanville, Executive Director of OhioLINK, studied the availability of recent imprints requested in Ohio.<sup>8</sup> He discovered that the number of unfilled requests was growing, while contemporaneously the number of duplicate holdings of 5 or more copies of individual titles was also increasing.<sup>9</sup> He presented his findings to the Library Advisory Council (LAC), a committee of Ohio Library Directors responsible for defining and organizing consortial missions for OhioLINK, who attributed this phenomenon to the homogeneity of approval plans. It is hard to support or deny the validity of this common indictment of the lack of ‘individuality’ of approval plans without examining the details of the particular approval plans functioning in the state at the time, but there is good reason to question this assumption based on the results of several recent studies. Studying approval plan overlap among TRLN (Triangle Research Library Network) libraries, Kim Armstrong, Program Officer, Triangle Research Libraries Network, and Bob Nardini, Senior Vice President at YBP, write that:

The percentage of titles held by only one library, 50% following approval plan shipments, fell to 11% after other types of purchases. Titles held by all three TRLN libraries, 14% due to approval plan shipments, rose to 64%. The change is most dramatic in F History, where approval plan shipments placed no titles in all three libraries. Yet Table 2 shows that all three libraries in fact acquired 72% of the titles in F, while only 10% were held in the end by just one TRLN library. [...] These results run contrary to the opinion held by some librarians, that is, that approval plans homogenize library collections. In the case of the TRLN libraries, the relative uniqueness resulting from approval plan shipments in fact was largely erased by discretionary purchases.<sup>10</sup>

In a study<sup>11</sup> of approval titles purchased among 70 or so libraries in Ohio from YBP during one week of March 1999, we observed that of 726 unique titles, 606 were collected by five or fewer libraries. Just 67 titles sold more than 7 copies, after which the numbers drop sharply ending with 2 titles selling 12 copies

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<sup>8</sup> Sanville, Thomas. *Expectations Fulfilled, Expectations Yet to Keep*. Columbus, OH: OhioLINK, 1996; *Snapshot 1998: OhioLINK, Six Years of Serving Ohio Higher Education*. Columbus, OH: OhioLINK, 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Diedrichs, *Ibid*, 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, Kim and Robert F. Nardini. “Making the Common Uncommon? Examining Consortial Approval Plan Cooperation.” *Collection Management* 25:3 (2001): 87-105.

<sup>11</sup> These figures are drawn from the correspondence of David Swords, Vice President of International Sales, YBP, with the Collection Building Task Force, OhioLINK.

each. Unfortunately, these numbers also include purchases made from YBP notification slips and firm orders (not just books shipped directly on approval plans). This raises the tantalizing question of how many of the duplicates resulted from library orders. Though we do not have the answer to this question, it seems clear that whatever problems there may be in collecting duplicates, it is unlikely to be the homogenizing handiwork of approval plans. Also, returning to the ideas of ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ mentioned at the beginning of our introduction, one can begin to understand, given the relatively narrowness of the universe of widely duplicated titles, the difficulty of defining these concepts, across multiple institutions.<sup>12</sup> However this may be, it is true that this common belief in the homogenizing effects of a consortial approval plan served early on to instigate the study of a consortial approval plan in Ohio, and this has led not only to a general accumulation of knowledge and experience, but also to the *Not-Bought-In-Ohio Report* which functions to increase the diversity of titles available in Ohio.

Before we lose the trail of our real quarry, let us take a look now at the genesis of the *NBIO Report*.

## **2. OhioLINK and the Collection Building Task Force: Background History**

In this section we would like to briefly present background information on OhioLINK in order to understand the scale of our undertaking. We would also like to retrace some of the key events leading to the formation of the Collection Building Task Force (CBTF) and, subsequently, birth of the *NBIO Report*.

The following description of OhioLINK and additional information is available on the OhioLINK website:<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The authors of the already cited article “Approval Plan Overlap” make the following observation: “The ‘core’ idea can carry two meanings. It can refer to a core of books necessary to the mission of a particular library, without reference to any other library. Or, it can refer to a core of books so important that nearly every academic library should acquire them. In describing approval plans as a method for building core collections, librarians have seldom been clear about which meaning was intended. If the latter meaning, these references to core collections stand in remarkable contrast to overall collection overlap, which consistently have found scanty common ground among libraries.”

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ohiolink.edu>

The Ohio Library and Information Network, OhioLINK, is a consortium of Ohio's college and university libraries and the State Library of Ohio. Serving more than 500,000 students, faculty, and staff at 80 institutions, OhioLINK's membership includes 17 public universities, 23 community/technical colleges, 39 private colleges and the State Library of Ohio. OhioLINK serves faculty, students, staff and other researchers at member institutions via 120 campus-based library systems and networks, and the Internet.

OhioLINK offers access to more than 31 million library items statewide. To date, the OhioLINK Central catalog contains more than 8 million unique master records from its 80 institutions, encompassing a spectrum of library material including law, medical and special collections. The catalog systems throughout the state provide capacity for more than 4,500 simultaneous users. The OhioLINK central catalog also is available to outside users via the Internet. OhioLINK offers user-initiated, non-mediated online borrowing through its statewide central catalog. Our students and faculty have the ability to electronically request items while searching the OhioLINK central catalog. It also provides a delivery service among member institutions to speed the exchange of library items.

Resource sharing throughout the State of Ohio was the primary goal in the founding of OhioLINK. Having built a strong delivery system for sharing resources, a combined catalog and shared online system, and established a history of cooperation, the critical infrastructure necessary to pursue cooperative collection management had been put in place. Carol Pitts Diedrichs, in the article we cited at the beginning of our paper, presents an excellent in-depth account of the design and implementation of OhioLINK's "consortial approval plan."<sup>14</sup> Based on her article, and the first hand experience of one of the authors as a member of Collection Building Task Force (CBTF) a summary follows.

As already mentioned, Tom Sanville, Executive Director of OhioLINK, tracking trends in collection building in Ohio, noted that during the mid to late 1990s the collections of OhioLINK member libraries were becoming more homogeneous. Sanville found that there was duplication in recent imprints, that is, 5+

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<sup>14</sup> We will hasten to point out that "consortial approval plan" is a misnomer, leading one to believe that there is a master program busily churning far away as it makes decisions as to which titles will go to which libraries. No such monster exists – yet. We shall discuss this shortly.

copies of a title were available in the OhioLINK shared catalog at the time of a patron request. Yet, there were requests for other materials that went unfilled; and this number was growing. In 1997, these figures were presented to OhioLINK's Library Advisory Council (LAC), the operational governing body of the consortium composed of library directors, and, upon further discussion and observation, the hypothesis was launched that the increasing rate of duplication was the result of similarity in approval plan profiles (regardless of vendor).

LAC asked the OhioLINK Cooperative Information Resources Committee (CIRM) to charge a task force to investigate the feasibility of a consortial approval plan. In fall 1997, this small task force met with vendors to gain their perspective on the feasibility of such a project. While issues were raised by both vendors and OhioLINK member libraries, none appeared insurmountable. In January 1998, the initial CIRM Approval Plan Task Force membership was expanded and began to work in earnest.

The task force surveyed the libraries to collect information on approval plan expenditures, discounts, vendors, as well as, interest in participation should the idea go forward. Interestingly, in the survey results showed that libraries interested in participating fell into two camps: 1) those who were *willing* to join with no vendor yet selected and, 2) those who would *not* sign on until the vendor was determined. Those who were willing to sign on in good faith, the 'risk-takers,' became responsible for the design of the RFP. In just ten months OhioLINK signed a contract with YBP Library Services<sup>15</sup> on behalf all the libraries, and approval plan profiling began with the University of Akron in 1998. Others followed quickly in succession. As we write, approximately 70 libraries of all sizes and interests across the state have become YBP customers, and nearly as many YBP approval book or slip plans are in place. The importance of this achievement in carrying forward the consortium's mission cannot be underestimated (and, indeed, the consortium will make efforts to defend and increase this level of participation among its members) as we hope will be come clear in the following pages.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.ybp.com>

At the 2001 OhioLINK summit meeting on collection building, came a new charge for the reformed, revised and reconstituted CBTF. The charge includes:

- Actively seek to reduce unnecessary duplication of print materials in order to free funds for increasing the depth and breadth of the OhioLINK collection.
- Increase the involvement in and coordination of local collection development activities.
- Expand the amount spent on cooperative central OhioLINK purchases.
- Expand the central war chest idea in both dollar amount and type of material purchased (move beyond books).
- Explore expanding the book approval plan to other vendors, including those dealing with non-English and non-US imprints.
- Encourage YBP to actively market the statewide approval plan to local institutions as part of a movement to an “all in” approval plan in the future.

One of the first tasks to be initiated this fall was an active marketing plan for ‘reselling’ involvement in the coordination of collecting around the state through a series of regional meetings called the *OhioLINK-YBP Road Show*. The purpose was to educate and re-educate new and old staff on the benefits of collection building across the state through YBP. Demonstrations were offered by Ohio librarians on how YBP services – including approval plans, but also, and importantly, technical services - could be used to greatest effect; these educational presentations will be ongoing.

But let us return to the subject of the *NBIO Report*. Some of the very early ideas that the CBTF discussed were ways to reduce duplication across the state while increasing the diversity of the collection, as we have said. But how does one do this and not give the impression that OhioLINK is telling libraries what to buy? How can the constructive nature of our interest be made clear? One way was to make available information on titles that were not represented in the collections of any library in the state. The CBTF felt that if collection managers in Ohio knew what was *not* being purchased, buying patterns and purchasing decisions could be altered for the benefit of all. We sought answers to the following questions:

- What titles were not being purchased?
- What titles required ILL to find a title from an out-of-state source?
- What titles were heavily represented statewide?

- What titles were frequently unavailable due to high circulation?

One could call this ‘negative’ collection building by finding out what is not there! Finding out what one does not have is relatively easy, but getting to this point is not. Neither is getting beyond this point. These form the interesting chapters surrounding the *Not-Bought-In-Ohio Report*.

### **3. Debunking the Myth of the ‘Supra-Profile’: Cooperation and Coordination.**

Not infrequently (and occasionally, still, even in Ohio), we encounter the belief that OhioLINK and YBP have created a ‘supra-profile,’ that is, a monolithic over-arching approval plan which responds with a single voice both to the needs of the individual member libraries while at the same time efficiently coordinating collecting statewide. Let us debunk the myth and state explicitly that there is no YBP-OhioLINK ‘supra’-approval plan; references to its existence are greatly exaggerated!

So why not a supra-profile? On the surface, it might seem reasonable to believe that a state with a history of cooperation going back to the early years of the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) could draw on the collective intelligence of its members to develop guidelines for the writing of a ‘supra’ approval profile designed to determine the locations and to calculate the numbers of many new titles to be distributed in Ohio. In one sense, YBP already does this in its internal purchasing process, which involves ordering a prescribed number of copies of a title from a publisher based on previous approval sales of similar titles from that publisher. For each approval title, YBP has already made an estimate of how many of copies of each title are likely to be sold in Ohio. But not so fast! The road to a statewide approval plan is as difficult as the twelve tasks of Hercules complete with the killing of the man-eating Stymphalian birds (– perhaps the vultures at Denison?) and the cleaning of the Augean stables.

## **Complexity**

The first obstacle in attempting to design a supra-profile is simply one of scale for both the library and the vendor. The number of participating institutions (80 at last count), multiplied by the number of participating collection managers, divided by the geographical boundaries of a large Midwestern state present a significant level of complexity. Then take these simultaneously active and geographically distributed participants and create a coherent system by which they can each interact with some portion of the number of new monographs being profiled by YBP's approval program each year (56,000 new titles in 2001-2002), and arrive at decisions that benefit both their individual libraries and the OhioLINK collective.

## **Modularity**

Too often these cooperative efforts bog down under the overwhelming weight of complexity. We have met with some preliminary success in breaking the complexity problem down into 'modular' units by limiting the scope of cooperative collecting projects. OhioLINK's committees and members are pursuing multi-campus coordination of collecting in specific subject areas. The CONSORT libraries (The College of Wooster, Denison University, Kenyon College, Ohio Wesleyan University), with the absence of Oberlin College, have been conducting a number of experiments in cooperative collection development over the past several years and have had interesting results and made good progress. The collecting of all playscripts among the group is one successful project. They have also investigated Philosophy and Asian Studies. Attempts have been made to coordinate the engineering profiles at Wright State University, Ohio State University, and the University of Toledo. A religion group has recently met to coordinate purchases in the southern part of the state. The assignment of purchasing music scores by specific composers is carried out by one group of libraries. Most recently, another task force called the Working Group on Subject Groups is moving towards integrating the collecting by subject on multiple campuses. There is also interest in coordinating the purchasing of continuation/standing order titles across the state through YBP. Not limited to just print materials, another task force is looking at the purchase of digital video materials and other audio-visual materials. By breaking cooperative collecting initiatives into coherent 'modular' units, it is easier to reach a practical coordination of collecting that truly does reduce duplication

and extend the combined budgets of the participants to allow for the coverage of titles that would otherwise be unlikely to be represented in their collections.<sup>16</sup> We can imagine that the success of these cooperative efforts, eventually reaching an optimum density within the state, might be measured in terms of sufficient but not excessive duplication, the satisfaction of 99% of ILL (both traditional and patron-initiated borrowing) requests from within the state, and full coverage of all approval plan titles with academic merit.

## **Technology**

OhioLINK had reached a certain level of maturity in terms of technological and human infrastructure at the point it went looking for a vendor.<sup>17</sup> Reviewing the responses to the RFP, OhioLINK discovered that very few vendors had developed ways to share information across a group of users in a real time. Nor had vendors developed the technological and human infrastructure to work with large consortia. The need for a vendor to develop new technology in support of OhioLINK initiatives was recognized early on as essential in a cooperative venture of this scale. Whoever was selected as the vendor of choice for OhioLINK would be faced with a steep technology development agenda. Success would require speed, and greatly improved access to information and reporting mechanisms.

YBP has made significant efforts to develop technology in support of OhioLINK cooperative collection development initiatives and has benefited from its partnership with OhioLINK as a result. One of the earliest developments was the ‘GobiTween’ screen. When a library calls up an individual title in GOBI, YBP’s interactive online utility for acquisitions and collection development, the user is presented not only with the local history for that title at that institution, but also with the history of that title among Ohio libraries represented in YBP’s database. An Ohio library can see who else has received a notification slip,

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<sup>16</sup> Psychologists’ recent studies of cooperation in organizations support the view that effective cooperation is most readily achieved by forming small working teams. Workers should focus on sets of mutually desirable interdependencies and outcomes that link stakeholders, rather than emphasize the issues or problems of a single stakeholder. Such groups tend to foster cooperation rather than competition, and collaboration has been shown to strengthen such groups and encourage them to complete more challenging tasks. Mosher, Paul H. “Cooperative collection development equals collaborative interdependence” in *Collection Management: Current Issues* edited by Sarah Shoemaker. New York: NY, Neal Schulman, 1989. p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> It is a significant advantage to cooperative efforts to have the entire state running on the same integrated library system. To facilitate participation in the approval plan by member libraries and to provide help for

which libraries received the book directly on approval or have placed an order, which libraries may have received the title as part of a standing order, and which libraries may have blocked or returned the book. This tool is used most often by selectors reviewing their weekly approval notification slips, but has also proven useful to acquisitions, for example in avoiding duplication.

GobiTween was developed to support Ohio's expressed intention of trying to limit the number of copies of an individual title purchased in the state, thereby freeing up funds with which to purchase less well represented titles. This has worked to some extent; however, in some instances, the fact that one institution has thought a book good enough to add to its collection, has functioned to encourage other libraries to purchase the title as well, thereby defeating to some degree one of the original intentions of GobiTween.

Similarly, YBP developed the ability to print numbers on each paper notification slip reflecting how many books and how many notification slips were sent to Ohio libraries via approval plans for that particular title (a function which has been replicated electronically in GOBI Edition 2). Again, the goal was to support cooperative collecting efforts in the state by offering data to help selectors determine when 'enough' copies of a given title may have been purchased in the state, so that the funds could be directed towards more 'exotic' titles. Since this tool does not list the individual names of institutions receiving the book, the anxiety of influence is greatly reduced, and so may function better in leading to the acquisition of fewer duplicate copies.

Finally, GOBI Edition 2 (GE2), released late in 2002, represents an enormous leap forward in online vendor interfaces. For the purpose of this article we want to point out the fact that GE2 incorporates many features specifically designed to facilitate consortial initiatives (some of these will be discussed in the section on the 'Not-bought-in-Ohio' report). The GE2 development team traveled around the United States in order to involve libraries in the design process. YBP systems developers spent a week at various libraries across Ohio seeking information on use and compiling a 'wish list.' Some time after this visit, a GOBI Development Agenda was submitted for consideration by librarians in Ohio. GE2 alpha and beta

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staff, Innovative Approval Plan Loaders were purchased by OhioLINK and made available free of charge

testing has since been conducted in the state. Ohio has been and continues to be a close partner to YBP as new components of GE2 are designed and implemented.

As OhioLINK libraries came onboard, their individual YBP approval plan profiles were posted to the OhioLINK website for the purpose of sharing and to promote cooperative collection management across the state. As the number of profiles multiplied, the task of comparison became very complicated. YBP and Ohio have been experimenting (in some of the initiatives discussed in the previous section) with a new profile format that allows the side-by-side comparison of multiple profiles.<sup>18</sup> This tool, developed for Ohio, has applications in any environment in which multiple profiles exist, even on a single campus.

#### **Financial resources: renewable?**

One can imagine the development cost of the technology described in the previous section as well as the costs to continuously maintain and update that technology. In the case of YBP, how can this development be sustained? YBP's investment in technology has enabled the company to offer innovative services to other customers, thereby providing it with a significant competitive edge in the marketplace. It has also positioned the company well as a prospective partner for innovative projects.

With current trends in state budget-cutting for education, where will OhioLINK find the funds to develop and maintain the technology that has served it so well? While the consortial discount was not the basis for selecting a vendor, the ability for all libraries, large, small, medium-sized, and specialized, to benefit is worth noting. Declining budgets and serial pricing issues stress purchasing power even more. Most OhioLINK libraries have been able to improve their buying clout as a result of the OhioLINK-YBP contract by adjusting workflows to incorporate continuations coverage with approval plans, and by increasing efficiency through electronic services such as GobiTween, GobiSelect (a process of downloading bibliographic records to the local system for duplication control and ordering), PromptCat, and physical processing.

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to individual libraries.

Another issue in the coordination of approval plans is determining the financial burden each participating library must bear. For OhioLINK, the financial commitment rests most heavily with individual libraries who support the travel expenses and staff time to attend meetings to plan and learn about new initiatives. New OhioLINK procedures require that libraries plan, adjust and adapt workflows to take advantage of new services. Change always requires an investment in people and training; however, we feel strongly that the development of a system like OhioLINK *requires* that changes in individual member library procedures and workflows be made.

Currently, cooperative collection management initiatives are directed by committee or task force, a group of hardworking professionals who all have other full time jobs. Although progress has been steady in working collaboratively on collection development, it has not always been as quick as we would have liked. Recognizing the need for a full time person devoted to coordinating collection building across the state, the CBTF proposed the funding of a position of coordinator whose principal charge would be to advance two priorities stated in OhioLINK's strategic plan:

- Expand resource sharing of the collections
- Maximize the impact of cooperation on our purchasing power to expand information access.

Due to the state budget woes, however, the position has not been funded. The CONSORT libraries won a grant to hire a manager for their cooperative collecting project. This has made a clear difference in the ability of these libraries to move forward with experimental cooperative projects, some of which we have already mentioned. Perhaps this can be a model for future cooperative efforts.

From the vendor side, the Ohio experience has clearly demonstrated the importance of having a dedicated staff to develop and manage the unique complexities of cooperative ventures. Ohio is labor-intensive, however, it affords YBP the opportunity to work intimately with a very large academic library system, from which it draws enormous and incomparable experience with complex library systems and development initiatives.

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<sup>18</sup> David Swords, YBP, developed (and continues to develop) this format.

## Political turf

G. Edward Evans<sup>19</sup> states that the biggest barrier to cooperative collection building is people and that the planners of a program must overcome a variety of psychological barriers:

- Fear of change
- Loss of autonomy
- Passive resistance, inertia and indifference
- Questioning the quality or reliability of one or more of the proposed partners

There are two important issues here: “Who gets to buy and keep stuff?” and “We don’t want OhioLINK to decide what we need.” Knowing that the words “cooperative collection management” can carry a politically ticklish load, the task force was anxious to avoid misunderstandings surrounding the intent of a statewide approval program. The task force drafted two simple documents outlining what the intentions were of the consortial approval plan project, and what they were not (see appendix 1). These documents, along with meetings and an open discussion via a listserv, were used with some success in preventing inevitable misperceptions.

‘Selling’ a consortial approval plan on campus can be a very difficult business, but it is a part of the mandate that OhioLINK has assigned itself. Strong leadership by librarians on the various campuses shows faculty and students the value of having a strong collection across the state. In the case of the CONSORT libraries, the fact that cooperation allows them to have a full representation of current publishing in playscripts, and greater depth in the Asian studies collection is a point that the library director can take to the college administration to seek more funds. It is also an attribute that will make the institution more attractive to prospective faculty, and will certainly please current faculty as well. The political difficulties destructive to the cooperative effort will creep in. For example, if a group of libraries were to decide that a single copy rather than 3 of the expensive and generally low-circulating *Lecture Notes*

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<sup>19</sup> Evans, G. Edward. *Developing Library and Information Center Collections*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000. p. 461.

*in Mathematics* (Springer-Verlag) was sufficient among them, there might well be some unhappiness in the Math departments of the institutions that would cease purchasing this expensive series. However, by agreeing to buy just one copy of an expensive title in a prolific series with low circulation, the libraries are allowed to collect a greater number of unique titles and thereby enrich the breadth of the collection. Similarly, there is sometimes a suspicion that since this effort is apparently counterproductive to the vendor, who would prefer to sell 3 copies of the Springer-Verlag title, YBP would not be anxious to support cooperative efforts. The truth requires us to understand that ultimately YBP's existence will depend not on selling 3 copies rather than 1 of an expensive title in Ohio, but rather on developing the ability to support the libraries in achieving their goals and, thereby earning a greater share of their business.

### **Education and re-education**

Continuing education and communication of ideas, procedures and information is imperative to the success of the OhioLINK mission. Over time, with staff turnover and the foibles of human memory, the CBTF has found that continuous education and re-education is needed. It is enough to recall that some librarians, even in Ohio, believe that it is OhioLINK's goal to develop a supra-profile that will strip them of their collecting rights and duties. It is also important to keep pace with changes in technology, particularly the technology that the vendor is continuously developing to make all aspects of the vendor-library (-consortium) relationship(s) more effective. There are also a great many efficiencies that can be enjoyed in Ohio because all the libraries use Innovative Interfaces and many use YBP as their primary vendor. Efficiencies cannot be realized in the libraries and new services will be doomed to failure if the staff is resistant to change, and ultimately these individual failures affect achievements of the consortium. It is critical that OhioLINK and YBP keep people informed and educated.

We would conclude this section on cooperation and coordination with some deadly accurate 'bullets' to consider when establishing a resource-sharing program:<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Evans, G. Edward. *Developing Library and Information Center Collections*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000. p. 475.

- Avoid thinking of the cooperative as “supplementary” and an “add-on”; instead, consider it as something it is impossible to do without
- Have planners spend time working out operational details
- Realize that the system *should* cause major operational changes in the member libraries
- Avoid thinking of the system as providing the library with something for nothing.
- Have the cooperative’s funding and operations handled by an independent agency.
- Realize that it takes time; careful, complete communication; and one or two persons who take on the leadership role with patient understanding for such a project to succeed.
- *Remember that above all else, forming a cooperative is a political process.*<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Development of the ‘Not-Bought-in-Ohio’ Report

Since the inception of our partnership cooperative collection development has been one of a core group of projects.<sup>21</sup> As discussed, OhioLINK and YBP have explored many avenues in attempting to coordinate the acquisition of English language monographs across Ohio. The undertaking has been fraught with difficulties, and, as will be the case in exploration, many of the avenues have proven blind alleys. However, these experiences have served to inform successive efforts, providing an ever stronger platform from which to launch new initiatives. Generally speaking, our pursuits in cooperative collection development can be grouped under two rubrics: ‘approval plan coordination’ and ‘post-approval plan coordination.’ Our purpose here is to discuss the second rubric, ‘post-approval plan coordination.’ We will point out that the fundamental difference between the two methods is that the first attempts to capture titles via approval plans *as they are published and become available*, while the second method is *retrospective* in nature. The ‘post-approval plan coordination’ of collecting treats titles well after they were published and have been available, and, therefore, does not involve approval plan coordination in any way. We have come to call the form that this process has taken the ‘Not-bought-in-Ohio’ Report (‘NBIO Report’) or simply the ‘Not-bought’ report.

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix 2 for a timeline of the *NBIO* project.

The process of setting up individual approval plans at libraries across Ohio required much time and energy both for the libraries and for YBP. It was only after many of the approval plans had been set up and gone through an initial period of trial and revision that resources could be brought to bear, in a concentrated fashion, on the possibilities of cooperative collection development within the essentially monographic relationship established between OhioLINK and YBP. By this time, we had begun to accumulate a substantial quantity of data regarding purchasing from YBP in Ohio. An obvious first step in approaching cooperative collecting was to examine this purchasing history. Many data were collected and studied to answer questions such as: “How many copies of a title were purchased in Ohio?” “How many titles sold just one copy?,” but the question that lies at the base of this paper was: “How many titles were not purchased at all in Ohio?” Rather than discuss how many duplicate copies of books were being purchased in Ohio, the CBTF felt that if collection managers in Ohio knew what was not being purchased – certainly a more positive approach - buying patterns and purchasing decisions could be altered. Since one of the mandates of OhioLINK is to enrich the availability of information in Ohio, the answer to our question also represents the ‘scope of the problem’ identifying gaps in the web of monograph collecting across Ohio. The answer to this question has born fruit immediately in terms of expanding the number of unique titles available in Ohio. Some of the reasons for this success are obvious, while others are more subtle; all are worthy of discussion.

Owing to the success of the OhioLINK patron initiated resource-sharing option which quickly moves materials around the state to fill requests in 24-48 hours, traditional inter-library loan (ILL) requests have dropped significantly. During the 2001-2002 fiscal year OhioLINK libraries requested over 650,000 items held by member libraries and the numbers continue to increase yearly (does not include periodical requests). To put this number in perspective, the University of Akron (UA) requested 28,558 items from other OhioLINK institutions during 2001-2002, and lent 41,463 items to other OhioLINK libraries making the UA a net lender. During that same period, UA’s traditional ILL requests for books numbered only 816 items - meaning only 816 items were not available in the state, and therefore needed to be borrowed from out of state. Almost 3% of the total items not available in the state for UA library patrons could have been

provided from within state had the *Not-Bought-In-Ohio* project been implemented. When this figure is multiplied by the number of academic libraries across the state one begins to see the scope of the problem.

### **Scope of the Problem**

How many titles recognized in the YBP approval universe were going uncollected in Ohio? Before a routine profile revision visit, YBP will often compare YBP profiled titles with those actually purchased by a library. This comparison is often useful to see where an approval plan may suffer important lapses, and more generally, to use as a tool during the profile revision process. To collect and study this data for 70 or 80 libraries across the state, many of which have multiple approval plan accounts and still more firm order and standing order accounts, represents a gigantic leap in complexity both in terms of the simple mechanics of gathering data, as well as in the ability to uncover meaningful patterns in the results. And, of course, all this occurs well before beginning to consider how to act on the results, which presents us with yet another hurdle.

Lacking a clear idea of how the results might look, it was easy to gain agreement on the mechanics of the project.<sup>22</sup> We would simply gather a file of all approval titles profiled by YBP in the course of a single month, and match these against the Ohio order history in the YBP database. We left a 3-month gap between the time we ran our report gathering data on Ohio purchasing and the time the titles were actually profiled in order to allow adequate time for collection managers to have made decisions regarding titles for which they had received approval notification slips.

### ***NBIO Reports: Our Findings***

YBP typically profiled just over 1,000 unique titles per week for treatment on its approval plans at the time the project began. In the initial report, we discovered that Ohio was being *notified* of nearly every title that YBP profiled, that is, at least an approval notification slip or a book had been sent to some OhioLINK library. Of the 4,666 books (this number includes 452 alternate editions) profiled by YBP in January of

2000, the first month chosen for the *Not-bought* report, Ohio libraries did not purchase 1,047 (including alternate editions; 1028 titles were unique) from YBP. We will use this report as a case study.

In order to quickly separate the wheat from the chaff, we sorted the list of titles by the readership level. We suspected that the ‘popular’ level titles (‘POP,’ defined as “materials intended for casual reading or individual self-help or instruction as opposed to academic or professional study”) would represent the largest portion of the un-purchased titles given the nature of OhioLINK. At first glance, the result did not seem to confirm our suspicions as the numbers of titles not purchased at each readership level were quite similar as can be seen in the table below. However, on closer inspection, it is evident that *as a percentage* of the total number of items profiled at that level, far fewer POP level materials were collected in Ohio (57% of these titles were not bought) than titles profiled at the other levels. The fact that far fewer titles are profiled at the POP level owes generally to the market that YBP serves. We suspected that the Professional level materials (‘PROF,’ defined as “practical guidebooks written for working professionals in fields such as Education, Business, Law, Medicine, Nursing, or Social Work,” and also “as works of extreme technical difficulty or treating such esoteric subjects as to interest only well-trained specialists in the field”) might also be somewhat well represented among the materials not purchased for similar reasons. One reason for this is that many of the PROF level materials are collected by special and professional libraries (e.g. Law and Medicine), which often use specialized vendors. Once again the data supported our expectation: 35.4% of the profiled titles were not purchased.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> One peril to consortial efforts is getting lost in the generation of endless reports and minutiae which devour the time and energy participants will typically have available. Strong leadership is required to navigate around this black hole.

<sup>23</sup> As a humorous aside, among the ‘professional’ titles not bought was the *ALA Survey of Librarians’ Salaries* ! Also missing from the state’s collection were *30 Days to a Smart Family*, and *Boundaries in Dating: Making Dating Work* (both from Zondervan), both, we would think, potentially useful in fostering future consortial development.

<b>Readership Level</b>	<b># Titles Profiled (including alternate editions)</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b># Unique Titles Profiled</b>	<b>% Unique Titles</b>	<b># Not Bought (Unique)</b>	<b>% of Not bought</b>	<b>% of Unique Titles Profiled, Not bought</b>
<b>POP</b>	497	10.65	493	99.20	282	27.4	57
<b>PROF</b>	663	14.2	643	97	228	22.2	35.4
<b>GEN-AC</b>	1269	27.2	1163	91.65	219	21.3	18.8
<b>ADV-AC</b>	2237	47.9	1915	85.6	299	29.1	15.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4666</b>		<b>4214</b>	<b>Avg. 90.3</b>	<b>1028</b>		<b>24.4</b>

The composition of the POP category included 33 ‘Complete Idiot’s Guides’, 14 ‘Fodor’s’ travel guides, 13 ‘Karen Brown’ guides, 12 ‘SAM’S Teach Yourself’ books, and 10 ‘IDG Books for Dummies.’ A full third of the POP books not purchased can be accounted for in these series or among the publishers of these types of guides (other examples of well represented publishers were QUE, Barron’s, Frommers, CityPack).

Many of these materials, and particularly the computer guidebooks, are best presented in electronic formats as they are often reference works to be consulted rather than read cover-to-cover. They also go out of date quickly (not to mention the problem of theft). POP level materials not purchased are also commonly found classed in GV (Recreation. Leisure), HQ (Family. Marriage. Women), and in PR and PS (English and American literature respectively, in which genre literature and first novels constitute a large body of material). These numbers reveal the generally shared underlying belief among collection managers that there is no need to spend additional funds, staff time, and space to collect these materials. Interestingly, there has been debate over the need to continue to include the POP level in the *NBIO Report*. One side has argued that the file best serves busy librarians by focusing as much as possible on materials likely to be of interest, which does not often include POP level titles that have not already found reason to be purchased. The other side, however, believes that the number of titles in the file is small enough, especially considering that collection managers need only consult their own subject areas of the *NBIO* file, that there is no harm in having a full showing of titles not bought. Owing to the diversity of opinion within the

Collection Building Task Force (reflecting that among OhioLINK libraries), it has been agreed that the POP category will remain in the report.

At the Advanced Academic ('ADV-AC') level, more than half of the 299 un-purchased titles cost over \$100. Just under half of the titles at the Professional level were over \$100. None of the POP titles and just 21 of the 1163 General Academic titles cost more than \$100. Generally, libraries will set \$100 as the approval plan price ceiling, meaning that for titles above this ceiling notification slips are sent in lieu of the book. The price ceiling can be – and often is – adjusted within a profile to reflect the relative costs of titles in specific subject areas. Our findings here have indicated that perhaps more use of this flexibility should be employed in approval plan profiles.

As for publishers, Routledge was well represented with 117 titles remaining un-purchased (almost all expensive Kegan Paul reprints in psychology). Prentice Hall had 87 unsold titles. There were 35 unsold titles from Springer-Verlag (often the 'Lecture notes in...' series), 31 from Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins, and 29 from McGraw-Hill. W.B. Saunders, the American Mathematical Society, Kluwer, and Zondervan were also well represented. Again, there are no real surprises here. The number of Routledge titles reflects the skepticism commonly expressed towards this publisher (particularly regarding the price differential between paper and cloth editions). The publishers of 'PROF' materials are also well represented for reasons already discussed. Zondervan is a strong participant in the POP category.

At the beginning of this section, we noted that at least a notification slip had been sent to some library in Ohio for nearly every title that YBP profiled. There were just 16 titles for which no books or no notification slips were sent anywhere in Ohio, and for which YBP received no orders from any OhioLINK library. Of these, significantly, 12 were from the UK and had no US editions. All 12 had been reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* and each was an important book (one was the Whitbread biography of the year). At that time, no Ohio library used YBP's UK approval services, nor did any use YBP's *Times Literary Supplement* approval plan service (available on U.S. approval plans). The CBTF has recognized that the integration of Lindsay & Howes (YBP's UK subsidiary) approval plans (as well as firm order and

standing order accounts) is an important step in carrying forward their efforts in coordinating collection development.

A partial manual review of the first *NBIO* file by simple ISBN at the University of Cincinnati<sup>24</sup> revealed that at the POP level about 20% of the titles were in fact in the OhioLINK shared database; at the PROF level, 45% were in the database; 36% of the ADV-AC titles were present; and 25% percent of the GEN-AC titles were also accounted for. When these titles were further reviewed for alternate editions the percentages of titles available in Ohio increased as would be expected. It was clear that these numbers reflected purchases from other vendors, gifts, orders placed after the *NBIO Report* had been completed, and standing orders (with other vendors). Since this review was not comprehensive, these figures did not serve as an exact measure, but rather as a strong indication that 1) Ohio was in fact doing a better job of collecting than YBP's numbers demonstrate, and 2) that the data necessary for analysis was scattered and efforts needed to be made for its unification.

This review by the University of Cincinnati underlined the importance of finding a method of efficiently removing those titles already owned in Ohio from the *NBIO* file before releasing the file to collection managers for purchasing. OhioLINK has developed a method of matching the YBP *NBIO* file against the shared OhioLINK database in order to remove the duplicates. This process served to remove an average of 250-350 titles that had been acquired from sources other than YBP from the *NBIO* file. As would be expected, these duplicates were located principally among the ADV-AC level materials, followed by the GEN-AC level, and to a much lesser degree among PROF level materials. There were few if any duplicates ever found at the Popular level (supporting the findings from YBP purchase data discussed above, that POP materials not already purchased were unlikely to be purchased).

The number of duplicates found, however, in matching the *NBIO* Report against the OhioLINK shared catalogue was cause for an important decision regarding the design of data collection. The first report had allowed for a 3-month period between the time of YBP profiling and the time of the report. A significant

number of titles that had appeared as ‘not ordered’ at the time the report was generated, were in fact ordered shortly thereafter – but still before the report had been made available in Ohio. It was decided, therefore, to allow a 6-month lapse from the date of profiling to the running of the report. This would allow those selectors who held notification slips ‘in reserve’ ample time to make decisions (and for review sources to exert their influence on ordering), and so reduce the number of *NBIO* titles. Allowing more time for titles ordered in Ohio to be accounted for in YBP’s database would also serve to reduce the number of titles in the *NBIO Report* that would match holdings in the OhioLINK shared catalog.

### **The Next Hurdle: the Mechanics of Buying**

The report itself has been a tremendous success from the outset, but the question of how to enable a process of selection and acquisition has presented a host of problems. The CBTF needed to insure that the *NBIO* titles would be reviewed, and that the desirable ones would be ‘adopted’ by some Ohio library, and no longer ‘orphans’ (as the task force liked to call them) - although it was clear that some of these books could remain orphans as far as they were concerned!

The mechanics of generating the *NBIO* file of titles became routine. Rather than immediately making the *NBIO* list available publicly to OhioLINK libraries, the CBTF assumed responsibility for experimenting with various review and purchasing processes. As in the case of other cooperative collecting efforts, there were the usual obstacles to be overcome. On a very basic level, there was the problem of facilitating the ordering process, while at the same time safeguarding against duplication. First, the idea of posting the list on the OhioLINK website was discussed, but no satisfactory method of interacting with the list could be found. Then there was the question of whether or not the book should be removed from the list once it was purchased? Could selectors do this at the point of purchase? Would duplication occur? Would it be undesirable? How would we encourage busy collection managers to visit the website regularly and review this lists considering all the other responsibilities with which they are burdened?

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<sup>24</sup> These numbers were supplied by Jerry Newman, Assistant Dean for Collection Development at the University of Cincinnati.

The CBTF decided that the *NBIO* list should be produced as a packet of standard YBP yellow notification slips (when all else fails, produce more paper!). The idea was to pass these from library to library, removing notification slips for ordering, solving the problem of duplication and allowing participating libraries to integrate purchasing into their regular workflow. This method also allowed the titles to be separated and sent to libraries in different ways (by subject, by price, by dollar amounts committed to the project, etc.). Even with a small group of libraries participating, this method bogged down and proved unreliable; the process was slow and the slips would inevitably lose their way (or lose steam along the way).

It was decided to post the list in GOBI, YBP's online acquisitions and collection development database. YBP created a single 'OhioLINK' in GOBI; the intent was to assign each participating library a sub-account<sup>25</sup> on which to select and order. The idea offered clear advantages over earlier ideas (especially in that it allowed the full integration of this workflow into that used in individual libraries):

- it allowed libraries across the state to access the list simultaneously; titles could be searched by desired criteria (LC class, publisher, series, etc.);
- titles could be ordered directly via GOBI or selected, downloaded to the local system (also in 'batch mode'), and ordered via the Innovative Interfaces system;
- the library's regular technical service specifications such as book processing, cataloging and other outsourcing options with YBP could be observed for these purchases;
- management reports available to all GOBI users would function fully for this special account, thereby enabling a wide variety of reports (including expenditure reports) to be used to analyze activity at any time by any participating library;
- titles purchased would also become visible to all OhioLINK libraries in the consortial history screen ('GobiTween').

But best of all, as the titles were ordered, they would disappear automatically from the online list, thereby removing the issue of duplication.

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<sup>25</sup> GOBI accounts allow the creation of up to 98 sub-accounts, more than sufficient to cover Ohio's needs, at least at this early stage.

This method also pushed the question of responsibility for purchasing a step further; if the list were opened up to all libraries in Ohio, many titles could simply be acquired as desired. After a period of ‘open purchasing,’ it would be a relatively small step to arrive at a design assigning responsibility for the ‘clean up’ of titles that had still not been purchased. A report on this “relatively small step” will have to wait as, alas, we have not yet been able to take it.

A question developed regarding the security of each sub-account. What would protect one library from inadvertently placing orders on an incorrect account? Might a collection manager from the Bowling Green State University mistakenly purchase an *NBIO* title on Ohio University’s sub-account? Some felt the risk would be too great and the potential consequences grave as the process was opened to libraries across the state. Here, one might recall G. Edward Evans indicating “Questioning the quality or reliability of one or more of the proposed partners” as psychological barrier to cooperative ventures; however, given the intended scale of this project, the possibility of error seems a reasonable cause for concern.

The original GOBI was unable to offer a solution to this concern as the assignment of passwords was fixed at the *general account* level rather than at the *sub-account level*. Even weighing all of the benefits of the GOBI method, the issue of security nevertheless brought the project to its knees. Fortunately, the cavalry is charging in from over the hill to save the day in the form of GOBI Edition 2 (GE2), which permits individual access to be controlled at the *sub-account* level, thereby providing the desired level of security. Beyond resolving the issue of security, GE2 will allow the *NBIO* to be run and managed directly and on-demand by the end users, i.e. the participating libraries.

## **5. Conclusion**

Not long ago, a vendor who was visiting the University of Akron library mentioned that he had recently been in Louisiana and was asked by one librarian during a library visit if she could “have one of those OhioLINK things” meaning the consortial approval plan. Unfortunately, distressed at missing a possible

sale, he had to tell the librarian he was fresh out of them! It wasn't a package deal he could pull off the shelf.

Thinking about his remark, after the vendor left my library, I mused to myself, thinking how would a vendor reconstruct an OhioLINK in another place? What would it take? The vendor would need to find a geographic area that was not more than a two hour drive for anyone to a shared meeting site, a city large enough to have good ethnic restaurants for catering working lunches at those meetings, and a firm policy that no meeting should last past three o'clock to beat the rush hour traffic out of town. After these tactical needs have been met, the OhioLINK package requires strong leadership, good vendor partnerships, excited and motivated staff, and a hardworking group of creative risk-takers. Once these requirements were met, then, and only then, would the package be for sale. After getting past these hurdles, having the vendor add the *NBIO Report* to the standard OhioLINK package should be a piece of cake!

The experiences of the Collection Building Task Force, some of which we have reviewed in the preceding paragraphs, confirm the accuracy of a warning issued by Richard J. Wood: "It should be apparent that the implementation of cooperative collection assessment and development projects is long, arduous, complex and time consuming, and that it requires considerable commitment in terms of planning, organization, time, and funds."<sup>26</sup> OhioLINK and YBP have broken much ground here, and their work serves to broaden the collection of academic monographs available within the state. In the process we hope to have created a model that can find use in libraries beyond the borders of Ohio. The lessons learned from working with YBP on the *Not Bought* initiative will serve the task force well in pursuing its agenda with other vendors (foreign approval plans, etc.). These lessons will enable YBP to offer these services to other consortia. Is it too early to be thinking about statewide consortia looking across state lines, or to peer institutions in collection building attempts? Can the *NBIO* initiative be expanded beyond Ohio, perhaps to Indiana and Pennsylvania, in cooperative collection building ventures? The technology is there, but are we?

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<sup>26</sup> Wood, Richard J. "The Axioms, Barriers, and Components of Cooperative Collection Development" in *Collection Management for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; A Handbook for Librarians*. Ed. G. E. Gorman and Ruth H. Miller. Greenwood, 1997, p. 239.

# # #

The authors would like to express their gratitude to David Swords, who is the inspiration behind this paper.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Vision Statement for OhioLINK Consortial Approval Plan: What it is and What it isn't.**

#### **What it is**

- A single OhioLINK contract covering an English language approval plan for participating institutions
- A project to strengthen collection resources and cooperation among OhioLINK libraries by increasing diversity of collections by the most Cost-effective means
- A library specific profile created, managed and maintained by each local library
- Access to a Web-based tool provided by the vendor which displays the approval selection activities of other participating OhioLINK institutions
- A contract which would allow for firm ordering and continuation ordering from the same vendor
- An alerting system to appraise collection managers of the number of copies already purchased within OhioLINK to inform selection choices
- An algorithm developed by consensus among the participating institutions which may provide an initial allocation of particular titles to particular institutions
- A voluntary project done in phases as libraries are able and willing to participate
- A plan to facilitate the purchase of material normally purchased on approval or via firm order regardless of the library's intent to circulate
- A plan including options for purchasing cataloging and shelf-ready materials by individual library choice
- A plan that operates with normal approval plan requirements for returns and vendor viability
- A contract that would address the quality of service provided as well as coverage and discount
- A plan with options for participation by 2 year and 4 year institutions

### **What it isn't**

- A single centrally-controlled, statewide approval profile covering all institutions
- A contract which limits a local library's choices about where to place firm orders or continuation orders
- A system to limit the number of copies of any given title in the state or prevent the purchase of multiple copies statewide
- A process to limit the individual library's choices about which titles to purchase locally
- A mandatory process
- A mandate to make all titles purchased available for circulation
- A project to mandate the receipt of cataloging and processing from the vendor
- A process to limit the returns or require purchases within the state
- A contract awarded solely on the basis of discount

In summary, the approval plan would be a voluntary project to extend options and efficiencies for individual libraries and the state while not constricting choices available to any individual library to develop its local resources as deemed most appropriate.

## Appendix 2

### History of the '*Not-Bought-In-Ohio*' Report \*

**January 1999:** Establish GobiTween and preview it with Ohio University. Make appropriate changes and set-up GobiTween so that any OhioLINK library can see whatever action YBP takes on any title for each Ohio school.

**February 1999:** GobiTween implemented

**May 1999:** Meeting in Columbus between OhioLINK librarians and YBP. Develop the idea for a "*Not-Bought-in-Ohio Report*". Discuss possible cooperative collection experiments, including with the Five Colleges and the engineering work group.

**June 1999:** At YBP M. Zeoli and Ruth Fischer collect data and prepare the first *NBIO Report*. The report becomes the model of a production means for OhioLINK libraries to share the responsibility for buying worthwhile academic titles not owned by any library in the State. Analysis of the data show that owning "too many" copies of a title is not a considerable problem.

**November 1999:** D. Swords meets with the Five Colleges to talk about cooperative profiling. YBP agrees to prepare (1) comparative list of publishers on the approval profiles of the colleges (2) report of titles in philosophy owned and not owned by the colleges and (3) a comparison of the philosophy profiles of the colleges.

**December 1999:** D. Swords meets with the engineering workgroup to plan a cooperative profile in engineering. YBP delivers the publisher lists, report of titles not owned, and comparison of philosophy profiles to the Five Colleges. YBP delivers approval profiles to OhioLINK for posting to the OhioLINK website for comparative purposes.

**January 2000:** D. Swords circulates report to CBTF on cooperative profiling. Deliver comparison of profiles to the engineering workgroup with suggestions for developing a cooperative profile.

**March 2000:** M. Zeoli and D. Swords produce second *NBIO Report*.

**May 2000:** YBP executives meet with the CBTF. Develop plan to move the *NBIO Reports* onto a production schedule.

**June 2000:** M. Zeoli and Swords work out schedule for *NBIO Reports*. Deliver report and analysis to Jerry Newman.

**August 2000:** YBP confirms the feasibility of putting *NBIO Reports* in GOBI so that selectors can review notification slips online and need not send slips from one university to another. With CBTF, work out possible workflow scenarios for the *NBIO Reports*.

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\* Our thanks to David Swords, who is the author of this timeline.