

Globalization of Faculty, Students, Campuses – Challenges and Opportunities

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Research universities are increasingly participating in global joint ventures and research initiatives across borders, disciplines, and institutions and their faculty and graduate students are engaged in teaching, research and scholarship abroad. The number of international branch campuses (IBC) has expanded over forty percent in the last five years, to more than one hundred sixty. Interdisciplinary and comparative methods of inquiry, mobility and changing student and faculty demographics, and even the campus itself are creating a growing demand for global library collections and services. Demands for geographic or regional-based collections, print and non-print, that support the global curricula as well as faculty and graduate student research are becoming more pronounced, both at home and abroad.

Expanding global collections face some of the same challenges discussed by others, including licensing issues and preservation. Some challenges arise due to the global nature of either the collection/content or the user, e.g., intellectual property and copyright constraints, interoperability of systems, infrastructure deficiencies, and censorship.

One of the greatest opportunities derived from international branch campuses and global research initiatives is the presence of regional faculty-driven research and corresponding faculty engagement with local content creators. This can lead to the identification and collection of primary source material from the region where the institution or research is based and perhaps even new external sources of support for processing and dissemination.

Within the global context, collection “opportunities” that deserve special attention are data, non-print media and qualitative information, such as ethnographic research interviews and recordings. Another opportunity is that librarians are often more embedded in the curriculum and the research at an IBC. These intellectual drivers, coupled with the specialized knowledge and skills to identify needs, and cultivate, collect and curate collections have the potential to lead to rich collaborations joining the expertise of the home institution library with faculty, researchers and librarians “on the ground.” Developing and building lasting partnerships with publishers, data producers, government agencies, videographers, multimedia producers and other content producers becomes achievable. Creating partnerships and networks, with focused geographic/regional collections of excellence accompanied by robust discovery mechanisms and resource sharing will also help meet this demand.

Based on North American teaching trends of incorporating media in the curriculum and the encouragement of primary research, even at the undergraduate level, global collections assume a greater and very practical importance as faculty seek resource materials for their students. The challenge, in addition to acquisition, description and storage is the creation of opportunity and awareness for incorporation into teaching and undergraduate research.

Critical to the ongoing success of library collections that support the global environment is collaborative collection building, preferably on an international scale and across formats. Accompanying this is the creation of networks, and appropriate discovery, authentication, open access and delivery mechanisms that enable user-initiated resource sharing to help meet this demand.

We are only just beginning to learn from the experiences of globalization and our global campuses, faculty, curriculum, library collections and corresponding services. An earlier NDIPP-sponsored study, *National Digital Preservation Initiatives*¹, identified a number of preservation-related challenges and opportunities that are also relevant in the global context. Some of those findings, along with others emerging through increasing university globalization, invite further exploration.

- Globalization naturally brings new faculty and geographic emphases to disciplines and curricula across the spectrum and places demands on library collecting policies that may never have been identified previously, including non-text collections.
- Opportunities for creating joint partnerships (public or private) for building collections, descriptive metadata, digitization and preservation merit more exploration. Merely establishing contact with intellectual content producers is not necessarily sufficient. Standards, collection rationales, transparency, preservation, and dissemination may have many different national (and cultural) interpretations and practices. Working directly with the content producers, perhaps offering workshops, training and seminars, or additional expertise may lead to trust, more of a shared understanding and a path forward. New opportunities for funding may open up as well in this context.
- In addition to relying on the home institution, there are also opportunities to build expertise globally that can serve as the focal point for building, describing and even digitizing or preserving collections that can be shared more broadly. One example, the Afghanistan Digital Library, trained National Archives staff in Kabul in conservation and digitization techniques to further the cataloging and digitization of materials held in various public and private collections inside Afghanistan (<http://afghanistandl.nyu.edu>) This can also result in new administrative structures with distributed staff expertise across global sites and supporting collections, services and workflows throughout the global institution.
- There are differing legal systems, viewpoints and needs to consider re: intellectual property, copyright and fair use. In addition, there is a great desire on the part of North America-based staff to fully deliver digital versions of text, video and audio as part of the global curricula. Not surprisingly, this curricular need can run directly into content licensing issues. Harnessing scholarly communication and legal staff to assist with research and interpretation, and pursuing open access models when possible are critical to facilitating the use and dissemination of the new global curriculum.
- Issues of censorship, rarely experienced in North American academic libraries can be more difficult to navigate – both in terms of building collections, but also in regard to who may have access.
- Time zones and work weeks matter, even in this Internet age. Communication, turnaround, delivery dates, and response to inquiries and problems are challenging to coordinate and can be delayed. Greater operational flexibility among all participants is required to create effective networks between sites and individuals. Resource sharing workflows and non-mediated user options for access and delivery of collections need to be maximized.
- Infrastructure discrepancies become more evident and merit additional time commitments and joint problem solving across the university, including the library, IT, classroom and media services, and telecommunications to resolve. Digital files that are streamed or shared on-campus are not easily available to the global user and take on another meaning when data is transmitted half way around the world. User authentication and IP addresses, especially in regard to licensed e-resources, become problematic with vendors accustomed to North American IPs only. Communication vehicles need to be rethought and new options created

None of these challenges is insurmountable. John K. Hudzik² described the need for a “commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research and service missions of higher education.” Global library collections, when seen through the lens of this perspective, help provide the research and curricular basis for these perspectives and as a result, should be considered mainstream to the library’s mission.

¹ Beagrie, N. National digital preservation efforts: An Overview of Developments in Australia, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom and of Related International Activity. Washington, DC: CLIR, 2003.

² Hudzik, JK. Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action. Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2011.