Shared Print: The Patron Perspective

UCSD Faculty and Graduate Student Focus Groups

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1. Introduction

The University of California Libraries' Shared Collection consists of information resources jointly purchased or electively contributed by the libraries. Such resources are collectively governed and managed by the University Librarians for the purpose of maximizing access to the widest audience of current and future members of the UC community.

The UC Libraries Shared Print Program was developed by University Librarians as a way to advance strategic directions elucidated in the April 2004 report, "Systemwide Strategic Directions for Libraries and Scholarly Information at the University of California":

> The overall aim of [shared print collections] is to further optimize the management of information resources for students and faculty by reducing unnecessary duplication, leveraging shared assets... and expanding the information resources available systemwide, while meeting the information needs of library users at each campus. (Section 4.1, p. 12)

Specifically, the UC Libraries Shared Print Program seeks to achieve this aim by creating shared print collections that meet the following objectives:

- Broaden or deepen UC Library collections in the service of research, teaching, patient care, and public service.
- Offer economies not available through traditional models of collection development.
- Enhance access by the research community to important cultural assets by ensuring persistence over time.
- Enhance access to the collection for researchers on all UC campuses.
- Enable UC Libraries systematically to develop and manage comprehensive research collections that would otherwise be impossible to build.[1]

1.1 Summary of Findings

1. Patrons view their local OPAC as representing their home campus. In this instance, patrons consider Roger as a surrogate for UCSD libraries. Therefore, only items that are at UCSD should be in Roger.
2. Patrons rely heavily on Request for their research, and they report a high level of satisfaction with the service.
3. For any items discovered online, patrons want the ability to see the table of contents, index, and bibliography – any element that will help provide a sense of a book that a typical bibliographic record does not. They report turning to Amazon.com to fulfill this need.
4. Patrons are aware of the budgetary challenges that campus libraries face and view the idea of a shared central collection as a logical way to eliminate unnecessary duplication and improve the depth and breadth of what's available to them.
5. The success of Request makes the location of a shared print collection irrelevant to patrons.
6. The "UC Libraries" label does not give patrons a sense of place. Thus, it should not be used in the location field of a holdings record.

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[1] http://www.slp.ucop.edu/programs/sharedprint/

http://www.cdlib.org/inside/assess/evaluation_activities/docs/2005/sharedPrintReport_nov2005.pdf

2. Methodology

This round of needs assessment consisted of six group interviews, or focus groups, conducted on November 16-17, 2005 at the University of California at San Diego. UCSD was chosen because of its geographic separation from the Southern and Northern Regional Library Facilities. Each interview included two to five interviewees, a facilitator, and one to two observers. A total of twenty participants with domain knowledge in the humanities and social sciences were recruited by Sam Dunlap and Cathy Holdeman of UCSD for the interviews. Six were professors and fourteen were graduate students; five of the six interview groups included at least one faculty member.

The group interview format was chosen in order to increase the comfort level of the interview subjects by distributing the focus of attention among the group and encouraging interaction among the participants. Felicia Poe of CDL assumed the role of interview facilitator and used a list of prepared questions as a guide for the discussion. Jane Lee and Joan Ariel, both of CDL, observed and took notes on interviewees' responses to questions using laptop computers. At the close of each interview session, the group was asked to complete a short survey.

The main purpose of this assessment was to identify any potential barriers to adoption of a shared print collection by faculty and graduate students. For the purposes of this assessment, participants were told that items in this collection would be shared by all ten UC campuses and that there would probably be only one copy of each item.

2.1 Key Questions

The key questions that were explored by this round of assessment include the following:

1. What are the deal-breakers in terms of patron adoption and use?
2. Do bibliographic records need to appear in local OPAC's?
3. How should the catalog record read for an item in a shared print collection?
4. How will patrons interface with the collection? What are the concerns regarding discovery and access?
5. How many copies of each work should be available?
6. From a patron perspective, does it matter where copies will be stored?
7. How will patrons obtain items? Will they utilize Request/ILL?
8. Browsing online:
    a. Is a call number enough?
    b. Do we need to offer tables of content? Bibliographies? Other elements?

3. Analysis

3.1 The Big Three: Roger, Circuit, Melvyl

All UCSD scholars who participated in the focus groups reported using some combination of the following library catalogs:

- *Roger*, the local OPAC for the UCSD libraries,
- *The Circuit*, the combined catalog of UCSD and three other San Diego area university libraries, and
- *Melvyl*, the union catalog of the 10 University of California campuses, the California State Library, Hastings College of the Law, the California Academy of Sciences, the California Historical Society, the Center for Research Libraries, the Graduate Theological Union, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

In terms of catalog use, patrons tend to start close to home and progress towards more broadly scoped catalogs as needed. For example, if a patron began with Melvyl, then his or her next step might be WorldCat or Google Scholar. If patrons used Roger at all, it was usually the first catalog they checked. Then, they would move to Circuit and to Melvyl, as required. There were exceptions, of course. One music professor reported that he starts with a music database, followed by WorldCat for his research. Another interviewee said that because his research focuses on primary sources, he starts with archives. However, both stated that if they needed to find secondary sources, they used Melvyl or Roger.

Those patrons who reported starting with **Roger** gave the following reasons for doing so:

- ➢ Items are here on campus
- ➢ Speed is key, especially with 10-week quarters
- ➢ Roger usually has desired items
- ➢ Likes to start small
- ➢ Wants book in hands
- ➢ Have a time deadline
- ➢ Need something for lecture
- ➢ Get hands on as many books as possible as quickly as possible
- ➢ Starts with Melvyl himself, but advises undergraduate students to use Roger because they never leave enough time to do research

Patrons view Roger as a surrogate for the UCSD libraries. Roger also represents a location, and because this location is their "home" campus, they consider items in Roger to be close to them not only in terms of distance, but also in terms of time. Patrons use Roger because they know that they'll be able to get their hands on a book very quickly.

If patrons use Roger, then they also use The Circuit. The Circuit makes it so they are not "fighting for the one campus copy." One patron stated that while The Circuit is useful for getting needed copies that are checked out in Roger, it does not necessarily add depth to the local collection. Overall, patrons valued The Circuit and appreciated the speed with which they could get books from the partner libraries.

Some patrons began their research with **Melvyl**, giving the following reasons for doing so:

- ➢ Melvyl is "just right", manageable – more than Roger, less than WorldCat
- ➢ Melvyl contains all Roger's information anyway
- ➢ Likes full-text online capabilities
- ➢ Gets stuff delivered no matter what, so it doesn't matter if the book is on campus or not
- ➢ Melvyl is useful when doing research using secondary sources
- ➢ Likes search capabilities and knows how to use them

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A few people mentioned using WorldCat (or Google) on occasion to try to turn up everything possible on a given topic. However, the general consensus was that WorldCat was difficult to use and both produced too much information.

3.2 Request: The grease that keeps the wheels turning

> *"Coming by to pick up ILL, it feels like Christmas. They have a present for me."*

The importance of Request to graduate students and faculty conducting research cannot be overstated. It is "mission critical" to libraries serving the scholarly community. Indeed, the reason that patrons look at catalogs other than their local OPAC at all is because they know that they are able to get books through ILL/Request. Request is essential for research, and they rely on it heavily. In fact, using Request has become such an integral and seamless part of their research workflow, most patrons reported not caring about where the books come from.

Overall, patrons report a very high level of satisfaction with the service. One faculty member stated, "[ILL] is the key thing that I work with, and I am starting to wonder if I really have to travel." Some reported making as many as ten requests per session. The one person who did not use Melvyl's Request function reported that she stopped doing so after having trouble with the system last year. She instead reported using Roger to have books delivered to a specific location on campus, which still demonstrates a high degree of comfort with the service. In fact, several patrons disclosed that they did all of their library research online and had all library books – even those held at UCSD – delivered to a convenient location on campus. These patrons perceive Request as an *intra*-campus, as well as an *inter*-campus, service; it is a local service used in conjunction with the local OPAC.

Of note, in a post-interview survey, thirty-five percent of patrons said that they would be willing to wait a maximum of two to three days for an item requested from an offsite facility. Sixty percent of patrons reported that they would be willing to wait for "as long as it takes". When asked what the shortest acceptable loan period would be for a requested item, sixty-five percent of patrons responded that one month would be acceptable.

Two patrons expressed frustration at certain aspects of Request. For example, they reported that the email informing them that their request has arrived does not list the title of the book, which makes it difficult to keep track of what they've received. They offered the following suggestions:

- Send a confirmation email that a request has been received
- Include titles (not just numbers) in all correspondence
- Add the ability to track the status of a request

3.3 Browsing the stacks

Several patrons noted that a good portion of the books that they ordered through Request did not end up being useful or relevant. At that point, the books have been processed and checked out. Patrons noted that if they were able to winnow their list of books before requesting them, then that would help reduce the number of "useless" requests. They recognize that there are costs involved in every request that they make, and they want to help "eliminate inefficiencies."

When patrons physically browse the stacks, they use several methods to ascertain whether or not to check the book out. They scan the bibliography, table of contents, footnotes, and index. Two reported reading a short excerpt to gauge the desirability of the book. Seeing the surrounding books on the shelves can lead to serendipitous discoveries. Scholars make connections based

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on the proximity or juxtaposition of books to one another. One patron observed that the covers of recent additions to the collection stand out, making it easy to see what's new.

Most scholars enjoy the ability to physically browse a collection, but many of them admit that they almost never go to the stacks anymore. In addition, the library's physical configuration by Library of Congress classification is not necessarily good for interdisciplinary subjects. Virtual, or online, browsing, which includes call number browsing and subject heading linking, may be superior in this case.

3.4 The evolution of browse: Amazon.com leads the way

Although many scholars report that, in theory, they would want to physically browse the stacks, in practice, most browsing occurs online. Some patrons never come to the library, preferring to do all of their library research online. Within OPAC's, interviewees report that subject headings and categories are useful. With their reliance on Request and their heavy use of the Internet in general, it seems natural that patrons have found ways to support their physical browsing habits and techniques in an online space.

We were impressed by the number of interviewees who said that they turned to Amazon for help. Amazon's "Look Inside™" feature allows patrons to access the very components that they would peruse if they had the books in their hands. Scholars reported that reviews and recommendations can also be helpful. One graduate student shared that he uses Amazon to find books. Then he requests them using Melvyl. Then he goes back to Amazon to contribute a review of the book in order to get better recommendations from Amazon. In this case, Melvyl is a *fulfillment* tool and Amazon is the *research* tool.

Another patron facilitates her online research by having two browser windows open simultaneously: one for Melvyl and the other for Amazon.com. If she finds an interesting book in Melvyl, she cross-references it with Amazon's reviews and looks at the table of contents, bibliography, and index. By doing so, she can determine whether or not the book is speaking to the things in which she's interested and in the same time period she's studying. Referring to her use of Amazon, this graduate student stated, "It's one way to screen."

During the course of the focus groups, scholars mentioned the following Amazon.com features:

- Look Inside™, which includes scans of the following:
  - Front cover
  - Table of contents
  - Intro pages
  - Excerpt
  - Index
  - Back cover
- Search Inside™
- Summary
- Reviews
- Recommendations
- "Citations"

All of these elements help scholars get a sense of a book that a typical bibliographic record does not. As a strictly online entity, Amazon has a vested interest in developing creative ways for its customers to interact with and learn about books. Not only do they try to re-create physical browsing with features like Look Inside™, they also offer services, such as Search Inside™, that could only be offered in an online environment.

In comparing Amazon.com and Melvyl, one patron noted that Amazon's search function is "more flexible and forgiving." Another scholar reported using Amazon to find the most recent literature

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that may not have been purchased by libraries, yet. One professor stated that he sometimes goes to Amazon.com and looks at cover images, tables of contents, etc. before looking at library catalogs. He felt that it was difficult to get a sense of a book just from a bibliographic record.

A couple of scholars made interesting comments about how they feel slightly guilty using Amazon for their academic research. We did not explore this issue, but there are two possible explanations that immediately come to mind. First, because it is a commercial site and a departure from trusted library resources, some scholars may feel that using Amazon is somehow an illegitimate academic practice. Second, scholars may be feeling guilty about "freeloading," that is, using Amazon's services without actually buying anything.

3.5 Implications for Shared Print

During the focus groups, patrons were given a hypothetical situation in which Melvyl records would offer expanded bibliographic information. However, budget constraints would limit the enhancements to two out of the following three bibliographic elements: table of contents, bibliography, and index. Patrons were then asked which elements they would choose. Not surprisingly, patrons wanted all three. The table of contents was deemed essential by most interviewees. Between the bibliography and the index, there was no clear preference; scholars found both useful.

One scholar asked why UC can't just use Amazon's services. Why reinvent the wheel? This is a valid question that demonstrates patrons' desire to have access to the kinds of information that Amazon.com provides. Having this information would allow patrons to make judgments about whether or not a book could be useful *before* submitting an interlibrary loan request. Thus, Shared Print should consider offering these services both to satisfy patrons' needs and to make the system more efficient.

3.6 Shared Print: a welcome idea

> It's not important that the books are here;
> it's important that they're available and can be here quickly.

Patrons are aware of the budgetary challenges that campus libraries face and view the idea of a shared central collection as a logical way to eliminate unnecessary duplication and improve the depth and breadth of what's available to them. Because of their positive experience with Request and the fact that ILL is already integrated into their normal research practices, the idea of an offsite collection does not bother them. To paraphrase a sentiment that we heard repeatedly from both faculty members and graduate students, it's not important that the books are here; it's important that they're available and can be here quickly.

The main concern that patrons expressed was about the availability of copies. When exploring the question of how many copies would be enough, patrons expressed some unease with the prospect of ten campuses fighting for a single copy. Increasing that number by just one, however, eased patrons' fears. Furthermore, there was deference to librarians' professional judgment. When asked how many copies there should be, one faculty member replied, "You guys know better than I."

3.7 Physical location of collection

Although both faculty and graduate students said that the location of the shared collection doesn't really matter because of ILL, some patrons offered their thoughts on where the collection might

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be located. A few said that if the collection were going to support physical browsing, then it would need to be housed in a single location, and the books would need to be on shelves. Some patrons thought that it would be useful to house the collection in a campus library (provided there was room) so that standard reference materials would be nearby and to increase the visibility of the collection. If the collection were housed on a campus, some wondered whether it would be wiser to place the collection at the campus best known for that discipline. This brought up the question of equity and how one judges which campus is "the best." In general, however, neither faculty nor graduate students expressed a need to "own" shared collection items.

Patrons' impressions of how specialized a shared print collection is may influence their views on where it should be located. Scholars are accustomed to considering highly specialized collections, such as archives, as stand-alone destinations where one goes to gather information for further analysis back at home. If their impression of a shared print collection is that it consists of highly specialized, rare books, then they are more likely to want the collection to be housed in a conveniently located space so that they could physically browse the entire collection. If they consider the shared print collection more like a typical library collection, then interacting with the collection via Request would meet their expectations and it would not matter where the collection is located.

3.8 Location of records

Roger = "Here on campus"

Catalogs represent both location and ownership, but what matters to patrons is location. When they use Roger, not only do they expect items in Roger to be in the UCSD library, they go to Roger *because* items there are held at UCSD. One patron, reporting that librarians tell them not to request UCSD's SRLF books through Roger, thinks it's silly to list SRLF books in Roger just because of ownership. Patrons strongly believed that it would be confusing to list shared print collection books in Roger, because "Roger is for stuff that's here."

Melvyl was the overwhelming choice for where bibliographic records should appear. Roger is UCSD, and Melvyl is all of UC. Therefore, shared print collection records should be in Melvyl. Individual campus distinctions do not matter to patrons when using Melvyl, because of Request. If they want to drill down to a campus on Melvyl, they can do so. But, the scholars' world view in terms of library research tends to be binary: it's either here or it's not. If it's not, then they use Request.

Within an OPAC environment, special identification of a collection may not be necessary depending on how the shared print program is defined and designed. If the collection is to be very specialized, some patrons said that it would be helpful to have an indication on the bibliographic record that the book is part of a specialized collection. Along the same lines, when asked, only a few patrons showed interest in a special website for the collection. Most felt that unless the collection is extremely specialized, it does not warrant its own website. However, as stated earlier, patrons expressed a strong desire for as much information as possible to be included in bibliographic records for each item. They pointed to Amazon.com as the model.

3.9 The meaning of the "UC Libraries" label

Participants were asked what the holdings records should indicate for Shared Print items and how they might interpret the label: "UC Libraries". For patrons, holdings records represent a physical location, and the name "UC Libraries" would not answer their first question: "Is it here?". Most patrons agreed that "UC Libraries" was confusing, but one commented that "we could be trained very quickly." Other scholars noted that by the time they reach Melvyl, they don't care

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where books come from. However, they do want to know if the book is at UCSD, their home campus.

When asked what the name "UC Libraries" would mean to them if they saw it within the holdings area in a bibliographic record, patrons gave the following responses:

- Everyone has it.
- It's lost.
- It gives the impression of uncertainty
- Could it be digital?
- "It's somewhere in the UC system."
- "I would just imagine we [UC] owned it… that it's available."
- "That it's become digital and it's available to everyone at their home institution."

3.10 Conclusion

Throughout the interview process, there was ample evidence that patrons – both faculty and graduate students – are comfortable with the concept of Shared Print. In fact, they are not only comfortable with the idea of pooling resources to build a collection, they welcome it and see it as a logical strategy in today's tight budget climate.

What mattered to patrons is the following:

- Enhanced support for online browsing and discovery by way of access to and integration of extended bibliographic information, akin to the services provided by Amazon.com,
- Ease of use/transparency, and
- Integration with their existing Request/ILL practices.

Issues pertaining to where bibliographic records showed up, where the collection would be housed, etc. were not sources of contention. Patrons considered the "cost" to them – that copies would not be on their home campus and that they'd have to share with other patrons across the UC system – negligible compared to the perceived benefits of using those resources to increase and improve the libraries' offerings.

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4. Appendices

4.1 Appendix A: Post-interview Survey and Results

1. The book you want is not available in your library. Given that all of the following can deliver your book to you within 48 hours, please indicate your first choice from which to request the book. (Please check one option.)

Count	Percentage	Response
0	0%	Northern Regional Library Facility
5	25%	Southern Regional Library Facility
4	20%	University of California Libraries
0	0%	Center for Research Libraries
11	**55%**	**Doesn't matter**

2. Please circle the maximum amount of time you'd be willing to wait to receive a requested book from an offsite facility.

Response	< 24 hours	24-48 hours	2-3 days	As long as it takes
Count	0	1	7	**12**
Percentage	0%	5%	35%	**60%**

3. Please circle the shortest loan period that you would find acceptable for a book from an offsite facility.

Response	2 weeks	1 month	1 quarter	1 year	Other:_____
Count	1	**13**	5	1	0
Percentage	5%	**65%**	25%	5%	0%

4. If a book you were interested in could only be used within your library, would you still request it from an offsite facility?

Response	Yes	No
Count	**20**	0
Percentage	**100%**	0%

4.2 Appendix B: Questions and Objectives

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your area of expertise.
   Objective: Give participants an opportunity to speak in order to break the ice.

2. Is there anything unique about your area of expertise that makes research particularly challenging?
   Objective: Determine sources of pain, which might help identify a role for Shared Print.

3. After identifying a research question, how do you get started? What are your strategies for finding information?
   Objective: Determine research behaviors of users. Determine whether or not the local OPAC is the primary starting point for users.

4. Are you satisfied with the availability of books through your library?
   Objective: Determine potential research needs. Determine if there is a reason to change current practices and adopt new methodologies.

5. Have you used Request? How would you describe your experience using Request?
   Objective: Determine users' currents experiences and expectations concerning Request.

   a. How long do you usually have to wait to get requested materials? Is this acceptable to you?
   b. Distance vs. Arrival Time vs. Ownership: Isn't it all about availability and arrival time?

6. If you saw an entry for UC Libraries under holdings in a Melvyl record, what meaning would that have for you?
   Objective: Determine users' impressions of ownership/affiliation and access with the "UC Libraries" brand.

7. Scenario: Your area of study is Eastern European literature. UC Libraries has purchased 100 books on Eastern European literature since the fall of the Soviet Union for UC to share. What is the most likely way that you envision yourself discovering one of these books? What do you imagine is the ideal way for you to discover these books? [Explore varying levels of "marketing" and "packaging."]
   Objective: Determine the ways in which shared print collections need to be exposed. Do they need to be treated as a special collection?

8. What might hinder you or your colleagues from using or supporting a program like this?
   Ratings worksheet:
   a. delivery time
   b. "distance" to storage facility
   c. loan periods
   d. circulation restrictions
   e. delivery options
   Objective: Determine potential deal-breakers for adoption and use.

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4.3 Appendix C: Schedule

<u>Wednesday, November 16, 2005</u>

9:30 – 10:30 AM
- History professor
- History graduate student
- Sociology graduate student

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Sociology professor
- History professor
- Sociology graduate student
- Visual Arts graduate student

1:30 – 2:30 PM
- Anthropology graduate student
- Sociology graduate student
- Sociology graduate student

3:00 – 4:00 PM
- Literature professor
- History graduate student
- Literature graduate student
- Sociology/Science Studies graduate student
- Literature graduate student

<u>Thursday, November 17, 2005</u>
9:30 – 10:30 AM
- Music professor
- History graduate student

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Political Science professor
- History graduate student
- Anthropology graduate student

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