
The book Library Consortia: Models for Collaboration and Sustainability, is a well-structured introduction for librarians unfamiliar with library consortia. The book is organized around six initial chapters and sixteen subsequent case studies. As the title suggests, the first six chapters serve as a general overview of consortia. The first chapter is a primer of consortia. The second chapter moves to the landscapes of how many consortia there are in the United States and the world. From there, the third chapter addresses how consortia are managed. The fourth chapter is a discussion of the services offered, and the final two chapters are a focused look at some of the services offered. The two highlighted services are “Discovery, E-content Delivery and Resource Sharing” and “Physical Delivery.” The second half of the book contains a variety of case studies, which serve to provide the reader with examples of both practical applications of consortia interactions, as well as a road map for some of the future possibilities library consortia can offer libraries as a whole.

Of the six main chapters, Valerie Horton writes three of the chapters, including the important first chapter, which provides an overview of the different library consortia. Valerie Horton is the executive director of MINITEX, which, as the authors illustrate, is one of the largest consortia in the library world. Her experiences with this group give her a unique insight and qualifications in talking about the importance of library consortia and the ever-increasing role they play in the functioning of libraries. It is important for the uninitiated among us to understand how the authors define consortia. Using a definition from a U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, they cite the definition of consortia this way: “A ‘library consortium’ is any local, statewide, regional, or interstate cooperative association of libraries that provides for the systematic and effective coordination of the resources of schools, public, academic, and special libraries and information centers, for improving services to the clientele of such libraries.” This definition serves the authors well and lays the groundwork for having a consistent term the reader can understand to begin an analysis. The six chapters as mentioned do a good job of highlighting the different organizational pressures a library consortium faces. They also illustrate the different services these consortia provide, which can help improve and meet the needs of libraries as a whole. The final half of the book is a series of case studies, which serve to highlight the different models of collaboration and sustainability.

Each of the case studies begins with a needs and benefits bulleted list. This list serves to give context to the case study and provides readers with better understanding of the needs they were seeking to solve and the benefits that the solution has had for the consortia. I would like to highlight the IDS project’s ALIAS, a system that checks the licensing availability of items requested through ILL to see if they can be lent per the contract with the vendor or not. This book is well organized and well written. It would have been beneficial if the authors had spent more time on contract-related discussions and the role of eBooks.

While the authors do discuss the importance of how consortia can get better deals working with vendors, what they do not address would be an interesting discussion about how consortia, with their collective influence, can work to alter the contract terms as never before. If consortia are that powerful, then we should, as libraries, seek to not only get better deals, we should also seek to change the terms of the contracts themselves. For example, we can work to get a deal where we can pool the resources into one easily accessible place for eBooks. What about seeking to change the terms to allow for the ILL of eBooks? That would be a way we can maintain our traditional resource-sharing models and give libraries new flexibility with their eBooks.

doi:10.5860/crl.76.6.850
Overall, this book is well organized and well written with clarity of thought that is refreshing. The authors’ extensive professional experiences are clearly at play in the way they can easily and succinctly illustrate a point to the reader. Consortia are a vital part of any library relationship, and this book can serve to help the unfamiliar gain a good foundation for the role consortia play in libraries today and possibly in the future.—Ryan Litsey, Texas Tech University


In his book, Andrew Weiss takes what could be written in volumes and condenses the information into one accessible book. Massive digital libraries (MDLs) have had substantial impact on the world. Weiss provides a solid case on the potential that MDLs have for future use in libraries.

Weiss splits the book into three sections: background, philosophical issues, and practical applications. The first four chapters cover background. He presents a very short history in the first chapter on digital libraries, the merging of libraries and computer science and engineering, and other interesting topics. In the second chapter, Weiss tackles defining MDLs by outlining criteria and characteristics of an MDL, including collection size; acquisitions, collection development, and copyright concerns; collection diversity; and more. Weiss looks at several MDLs from the United States and Europe in the third chapter, such as HathiTrust, Google Books, and Europeana. He provides fact sheets on each project, giving the reader an easy-to-read overview of the particular MDL.

In the fourth chapter, Weiss takes traditional library roles, like providing access to print material and rare or old materials, interlibrary loan, and course reserves and discusses how MDLs may impact them. He includes examples, such as the Spanish Language Virtual Library of Historical Newspapers project, the Vatican library’s digitization project, and Melville’s Marginalia. This chapter includes information on MDLs’ effect on collection development, consortium opportunities, preservation and quality of digital and print assets, challenges with metadata, and other topics.

In the second part of his book, Weiss covers some important philosophical issues regarding MDLs. These projects can’t be addressed without mentioning copyright, of which the fifth chapter is devoted. Weiss argues that copyright law benefits not the authors or creators of content; instead, it benefits distributors and publishers. He discusses three important lawsuits brought forth by publishers, not authors, fighting over copyright. Weiss also covers current copyright law, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), the impact of MDLs on copyright law, and other topics. This chapter has the most robust references and notes section. It would be worth it for those interested in copyright to take a look at this chapter. Weiss presents an interesting comparison of the collection development approaches of HathiTrust, Google Books, and other MDLs in chapter 6. A topic that goes hand in hand, according to the author, with collection development is collection diversity, covered in chapter 7. The author argues that diversity is related to collection development policy and discusses a few communities. The author addresses future directions, European criticism and approaches to content diversity, and positive trends in MDL diversity.

Weiss looks at open access (OA) models and MDLs in chapter 8. There is a for-or-against divide between publishers on OA, which only causes more of a rift between libraries and publishers. He mentions that most of the OA discussion has focused on journal publishing primarily, so he provides extensive discussion on OA books. Again, he looks at Google Books, HathiTrust, Europeana, and the Open Library in regard to digital content and copyright and presents pros and cons of each MDL. He argues

doi:10.5860/crl.76.6.851