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BEST PRACTICE AND COOPERATION IN RESOURCE SHARING AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARY CONSORTIA: METHODOLOGIES AND INNOVATIONS IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, ASIA AND THE UNITED STATES

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The author's presentation begins by establishing the fiscal context in which academic library resource sharing exists. This consists of a brief examination of the difficult economic factors confronting libraries and the efforts to reconcile these factors with resource sharing goals and objectives. Included in this examination is an overview of the changes in the materials supply industry that have resulted in fewer viable vendors and aggregators, increased costs, and an attendant irresistible pressure to transfer these costs to libraries.

The author draws on his experience in working and consulting with academic library consortia in Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the United States on behalf of the materials suppliers that serve them to discuss examples of best practice and cooperation in resource sharing, including interlibrary loan. The presentation provides an environmental scan of methodologies used by consortia, and developed by suppliers, to meet critical and growing collection development and management expectations. These include the introduction and evolution of approval or profiling methodologies and their use in calibrating the identification and purchase of print and digital material by subject (including by subject classification systems like DDC and LC), publisher or interdisciplinary study, and the reduction of unwarranted and expensive duplication across the consortia's holdings or its access. Innovative methods including e-approvals, patron-driven selection, and linked and coordinated profiles across consortia is described. The author examines the current research in evaluating the cost and efficacy of current interlibrary loan methods and the attempts to discover a useful formula for the return on investment in current schemes.

Cost-effective alternatives to traditional interlibrary loan structures are posited and tests examined. These include the rapidly emerging print-on-demand facilities proliferating around the world ranging from very large operations to stand-alone kiosks, and the creation of discovery platforms for digital material. The author describes cutting-edge research and development of new discovery platforms intended to reside in library and consortia catalogues consisting not of purchased material, but instead of profiled metadata describing digital and print resources available for purchase on demand and how this new method can cut material costs, improve the speed of delivery of interlibrary loans, and provide a more comprehensive resource by creating a convenient repository for local and national digital resources in addition to those produced commercially. Finally, the presentation examines initiatives by consortia in Australia (WAGUL, ARLAC).