

The OCLC Research Library Partnership



The OCLC Research Library Partnership is an energetic and influential global collaborative of research libraries and archives that work with a sophisticated and robust technical capacity, highly skilled on-staff experts and external consultants to achieve significant, innovative and collective action for the benefit of scholars and researchers everywhere.

The OCLC Research Library Partnership is an organization born out of the successful merger of RLG and OCLC. Just five years ago, expert staff from the two organizations were blended into one team with a combined effort directed toward supporting research libraries and archives. The merger created a venue where affiliated institutions could collectively identify, analyze, prioritize and design scalable solutions to shared information challenges.

Today, the Partnership is supported by a large, cohesive team of dedicated, imaginative and innovative information scientists, librarians, archivists, Web developers and designers, programmers, analysts and allied experts. Partnership libraries work with like-minded organizations, institutions and consortia in North America, Europe and around the Pacific Rim; collectively, much has been accomplished in five years:

- **Research Information Management:** Detailed the current nature of research in various disciplines; wrote a manifesto; commissioned a study of various modes of assessing the scholarly output of an institution; looked at the tools and services that researchers actually use and identified gaps in what is available to support their processes.
- **Mobilizing Unique Materials:** Began developing tactics that help institutions move away from operations designed around item-by-item techniques and move toward more industrial processes for description, digitization, rights assessment and more; developed and shared strategies for more effective collaboration among libraries, archives and museums (LAMs) operating under a single administration (e.g., universities and large, multi-part museums).
- **Metadata Support and Management:** Assessed current practices; wrote guidelines for more efficient descriptive policies, developed schema transformation services, designed and supported a shared multi-national and

multi-lingual authority file (VIAF); began to address the global need for coordinated name disambiguation services and explored a range of ways to make WorldCat data work harder for the benefit of all.

- **System-wide Organization:** Expanded SHARES, the Partnership's global human network of trusted document supply/resource sharing partners; extended the machine-to-machine network of participating institutions; streamlined processes; modified policies; identified and shared a set of agreed-upon "green" practices; coined the phrase "collective collection;" defined the problem space; analyzed large-scale holdings; and began working out commonly agreed-upon policies to rationalize overlapping general collections and design system-wide solutions.
- **Tools and Solutions:** Developed applications that bring the OCLC information discovery environment to mobile devices; contributed to the development and promotion of OCLC APIs; helped form the OCLC Developer Network, an open source, code-sharing infrastructure that improves the value of OCLC data for all users by encouraging new OCLC Web Service uses; developed software solutions for museum data sharing; developed a solution to the global challenge of theft in cultural institutions that facilitates the identification, sharing and—often—recovery of missing materials.

Now the Partnership is building on its successes and moving to the next level of participatory action. Our outlook is dynamic and transnational, our agenda is inclusive and transformational, and our colleagues and peers live and work in all corners of the world. The Partnership is an organization designed to enable the world's top research libraries and archives to work together within an exciting, high-impact and cost-effective infrastructure.

The cost to support this new collaborative is shared between OCLC and Partner institutions, reflecting a mutual commitment to both investment and benefit. Annual membership dues (see reverse) make a number of privileges

and prerequisites possible for Partner institutions wishing to meet their own mission-critical goals:

- **Opportunities for participation in:**
 - well-managed, sharply-focused working groups
 - the production of studies, research, surveys, events and reports
 - the design and implementation of experiments and demonstration projects
 - early-adopter technology applications
 - local collection analyses and comparisons with other collections
 - on-request match-making among institutions facing similar challenges
 - consultations around partners’ key challenges (e.g., local user studies, Web services, archival aggregation)
- **Access to a sophisticated technology experimentation platform** for researching and solving some of the shared challenges facing research libraries;
- **Facilitated opportunities to interact with key parts of OCLC;**
- **Time-bounded, exclusive access to Partnership outputs** (e.g., articles, reports, webinars, podcasts, videos) and participatory forums and other events.

Attributes of OCLC Research Library Partners

Academic, subject-focused, national and other specialist research libraries and archives that choose to affiliate with the Research Library Partnership share these characteristics:

- **A strong motivation to effect system-wide changes** to better serve the needs of our organizations and users and the broader global research and scholarly community;
- **A commitment to collaboration** as a means of achieving collective gains;
- **A desire to engage with an international research library organization** that works alongside national research library groupings but is uniquely adapted to the globalizing dynamic of the research sector and the realities of a Web-scale world;
- **Senior management groups that are ready to join a cohort of peers** to provide leadership within the transnational research library community, including the institutions that appear in lists such as the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings*, as well as others that are widely recognized as exemplars of their type by peer organizations and leading specialists;
- **Deep and rich collections and information resources and a mandate to make them accessible** now and into the future together with a commitment to exploit technology to make collections accessible to the research “commons;”
- **The capacity and the will to contribute to the Partnership** in multiple ways (e.g., with digital collections, metadata/ records, usage data, by sharing expertise and technology infrastructure, by helping to set work directions, by participating in research and studies);
- **A desire for a shared venue** that is technologically sophisticated and that offers lightweight and scalable solutions.

Annual Dues

Many RLG Partners who transitioned into the OCLC Research Library Partnership saw their annual dues/fees drop to rates that are roughly one-third of what they were when RLG and OCLC came together in 2006. This is possible because OCLC is committed to supporting research libraries and has therefore doubled its financial support for this endeavor. Affiliation has never been more strategically necessary nor so demonstrably affordable.

OCLC Research Library Participation Dues/Fees Effective 1 July 2011			
Operating Expense	National & University Libraries Inside North America, ARL or ARL-Qualified	National & University Libraries Outside North America, SCONUL- and CAUL-Qualified	All Others
Up to \$35M per annum (pa)	\$6,000 pa	\$4,000 / € 2,965 / £2,500 pa	\$4,000 / € 2,965
Above \$35M per annum (pa)	\$9,000 pa	\$7,000 / € 5,188 / £ 4,378 pa	/ £ 2,500 pa

Joining the OCLC Research Library Partnership

If you are interested in joining the Partnership or in learning more, please get in touch with Nancy Elkington at nancy_elkington@oclc.org or +1-614-764-6375.

Information about the Partnership is available on the OCLC Research Web site. Look for notices and links here: <http://www.oclc.org/research/partnership>.