OCLC conducted a survey among U.S. library consortia leaders to understand the demographic make-up of their groups, strategic initiatives, their groups’ challenges and top methods for communicating with their members.

Most U.S. library consortia:
- Have been in existence for more than 30 years
- Have more than 40 member libraries
- Consider funding to be their top challenge
- Host in-person meetings and networking opportunities with members at least several times a year.

If you would like to read similar reports about libraries in the U.S., U.K., the Netherlands or Germany, see the reports at [www.oclc.org/reports.en.html](http://www.oclc.org/reports.en.html)

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The make-up of U.S. library consortia: Of the 101 U.S. library consortia who responded to our survey, more than half have more than 40 member libraries, serve multiple types of libraries, and have operated for more than 30 years. The large majority employ full-time staff.

### Number of member libraries

- **More than 300**: 14%
- **121 to 300**: 13%
- **41 to 120**: 29%
- **21 to 40**: 21%
- **Up to 20**: 23%

(n=97 of 101)

### Types of member libraries

- **Multiple types**: 52%
- **Academic only (incl. community college and ARLs)**: 24%
- **Public only**: 16%
- **School, federal, government, only**: 5%
- **Special only**: 3%

(n=101)

### Years in existence

- **More than 50 years**: 13%
- **10 years or less**: 13%
- **31 to 50 years**: 40%
- **11 to 30 years**: 34%

(n=99 of 101)

### Staff

- **Full-time**: 88%
- **Part-time**: 47%
- **Contractor**: 22%
- **Volunteer**: 12%
- **Other**: 4%

(n=95 of 101)
Networking, resource sharing and collaboration: Nearly a third of U.S. library consortia leaders feel professional networking is the most valuable aspect of membership. For many U.S. library consortia, facilitating resource sharing, increasing efficiencies through collaboration and leadership through collaboration are their major points of focus.

Valuable aspects of membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional networking</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-content purchasing</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared ILS</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource sharing</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology solutions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Although our network has a small budget and staff, it has received national and international recognition for some of its programs and services. Our success is due in large part to the members’ collaborative spirit and willingness to take risks.”

COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONSORTIUM LEADER

Primary mission

- Facilitating resource sharing: 26%
- Leadership through collaboration: 13%
- Increasing efficiencies through collaboration: 22%
- All of the above: 11%
- Other: 11%
- E-content purchasing: 8%
- Providing technology solutions: 7%
- Fostering exchange of ideas/expertise: 8%
- Pooling administrative resources: 3%

Budget: Consortia receive funding from a variety of sources. Public taxes, state funding and membership fees comprise a majority of their budgets.

Funding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding sources</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple funding sources (69%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees (22%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public taxes/state funding (29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other funding sources (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal funding (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governing/parent organization (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private funding (2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=87 of 101)
Services, initiatives and challenges
Resource sharing is the most-used service by U.S. library consortia member libraries. Licensing of e-content will continue to be the top initiative for the next few years.

Serving member libraries and beyond: Resource sharing, shared online catalog and cooperative purchasing are among the most-used services offered by U.S. library consortia. And, their reach extends beyond their members with services used by nonmember libraries and end users.

Use of services

3 MOST-USED SERVICES

- ILL/resource sharing/document delivery: 45%
- Shared online catalog (group catalog)/union list: 41%
- Cooperative purchasing: 38%

OTHER MOST-USED SERVICES

- Electronic content licensing: 33%
- Training: 31%
- Technology management services: 28%
- Professional and leadership development: 24%

Who benefits beyond member libraries?

End users: 61%
Nonmember libraries: 56%

Strategic focus and pressing challenges: Licensing of e-content is the top initiative among U.S. library consortia both now and in the near future. Funding is by far the most pressing challenge U.S. library consortia are facing.

Top initiatives today

- Licensing of e-content: 37%
- Advocacy: 27%
- Improved resource sharing: 26%
- Digital projects: 24%

Top future initiatives

- Licensing of e-content: 32%
- Improved resource sharing: 31%
- Digital projects: 30%
- Advocacy: 25%

CHALLENGES

- Funding: 52%
- Budget/staff cuts in libraries: 11%
- Lack of collaboration among members: 8%
- Remaining relevant to members: 7%
- Selecting a new “next gen” ILS system: 7%
- Future of education and the library’s role: 6%
- Increasing costs: 6%
- Limited consortia staff: 4%
- Advocating value: 4%
- Resource sharing in evolving electronic environment: 6%

“Talking to other consortia about what we are doing has been very helpful for developing strategies for the future.”

PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSORTIUM LEADER
Connecting electronically and in-person

Most U.S. library consortia use conferences/workshops, listservs/e-mail lists and websites to communicate with their users, and most host in-person meetings with members several times a year or more often.

### Conferences, listservs and websites are top communication channels:

Conferences/workshops, listservs/e-mail lists and websites are the most-used communication channels by U.S. library consortia while webinars, e-newsletters, social media and video conferencing are gaining ground.

### Communicating with users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Channel</th>
<th>Currently Use</th>
<th>Do Not Currently Use but Plan To Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference/workshops</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listservs/e-mail lists</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website/Website Wiki</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-newsletters</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video conferencing</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletters</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### In-person gatherings are the most common way to hold meetings:

Two-thirds of U.S. library consortia host in-person meetings and workshops to connect with members several times a year.

### Meeting with members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Method</th>
<th>Several times a year or more often</th>
<th>Twice a year</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Less than once a year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-person</strong></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Live online (webinars)</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audio conference</strong></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video conference</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>