



The “Value of Resource Sharing” Librarians Who Lunch

In the spring of 2016, Brandeis University’s interim university librarian Matthew Sheehy and OCLC Research program officer Dennis Massie engaged in some informal back-and-forth about the kinds of questions that can be answered about collection-sharing using data. They shared an overlapping interest in finding ways in which data can be used to demonstrate or even measure the impact that library resource sharing operations have on the ability of a parent organization to fulfill its mission.

The correspondence progressed to a point where they wanted to include more voices in the discussion. The idea was to get a number of stakeholders with various perspectives in a room for an hour or so to discuss the value of resource sharing. The 2016 American Library Association Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, provided an ideal opportunity. Matthew and Dennis decided that the ideal size of the group would be 15 people or less and took turns inviting colleagues whom they thought would bring something essential to the conversation. They then settled on this starter set of four questions to kick off the meeting:

- 1) What is the value of resource sharing?
- 2) To whom?
- 3) Can it be measured?
- 4) How do we expect it will change?

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Outcomes

The group gathered in the OCLC hospitality suite at the Rosen Hotel in Orlando on Friday, June 24, 2016, from 1:00-2:30 pm. In the end, we had just enough time to eat lunch, introduce ourselves, say a bit about why we were interested in taking part in this discussion, and ask each other a few questions. Everyone agreed that continuing the conversation in the near future would be a very good thing, possibly with some additional participants who weren't able to attend this initial session. (See **Appendix I on p.11** below for a more detailed account of who said what. See **Appendix II on p. 15** for a word cloud based on our discussion.)

Discussion Summary: High-level

In spite of our limited amount of time together, and the fact that we spent much of it munching on sandwiches, potato salad, and cake, we managed to cover a wide range of topics. Our comments and questions can be sorted into **seven main categories, or themes** (which are listed below, along with what might arguably be considered the group's **top takeaway for each category**):

1. Seeking to understand the current collection-sharing environment.

Top takeaway: We noted that ease of access tends to determine whether research materials get used.

2. Seeking to improve the current collection-sharing environment.

Top takeaway: Several participants noted that we don't always know exactly what it is that our patrons value, and that it may actually vary in different situations; sometimes it's speed, while at other times a longer use period or the ability to renew may weigh more heavily on a patron's wish list. A better understanding of patron desires, expectations, and overall information-gathering behaviors would definitely be a big step toward improving our current sharing environment.

3. Calling some previously-shared values and assumptions into question.

Top takeaway: Once, and for the longest time, lending more than you borrow was a source of pride, but now some net lenders are beginning to think about how finite their resources have become and to wonder if their accustomed role in the sharing community is still sustainable (or desirable) in today's environment.

4. Seeking to understand the effect of the changing environment on collection sharing.

Top takeaway: These days there are so many consortia to join and opportunities for collaborating that it is becoming essential for collection-sharing managers to carefully assess the value of each current and potential partnership and to limit themselves to participating only in those that are essential.

5. Seeking to understand the effect of the changing environment on the library overall (and, in some cases, the parent organization).

Top takeaway: We realize that, as many libraries manage down redundant print collections, fewer manifestations will have to serve as both preservation and service copies; we've seen that this concept

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works reasonably well with journals but wonder, as we move into shared management of print monographs, if it is a sustainable model for other formats.

6. Seeking to understand the effect of the changing environment on patron behaviors.

Top takeaway: We wondered what effects years of an “access over ownership” library collection-building strategy have had on research outputs at various levels and in the various disciplines.

7. Seeking to understand the effect of the changing environment on content and service providers.

Top takeaway: The increased popularity of libraries purchasing articles on demand for their patrons will lead to changes in the business models of publishers.

We identified six different essential facts about **resource sharing value metrics**, including specific measurements that can and probably should be made, plus key ideas about why these metrics matter, and to whom.

Top takeaway regarding metrics: We know that we won’t be effective in improving the institution if we are using the wrong metrics to measure success.

Since “value” was the name of the game, we identified ten **specific ways that collection sharing is valued**, from three different points of view:

1. The Patron
2. ILL Staff
3. The Institution

Top takeaway regarding value: Value to the patron ultimately determines the value to the institution.

Finally, without specifically setting out to make any grand predictions, during the course of our meal four different **predictions** emerged – all of them having to do with resource sharing’s growing impact on collection management activities, and how that impact will affect ILL units, acquisitions, and content providers.

Top takeaway regarding our predictions: We expect resource sharing to change the course of library operations by becoming the steering mechanism for collection development and acquisitions, through purchase-on-demand for articles and patron-driven-acquisitions for loans, and also by creating effective delivery mechanisms to empower collective collection development across consortial relationships.

A fifth and final prediction came out of this initial session: that we would definitely seek to meet again in the not-so-distant future.

Detailed Discussion Summary – 7 Themes

- 1) *Seeking to understand the current environment*** was very much top-of-mind among the attendees.
 - Several of us expressed interest in better understanding the actual costs of sharing collections, and in knowing more about what we're sharing – age, subject, format, how widely held – and how it varies by partner.
 - We wondered what percentage of our borrowing requests of all types require staff intervention, what percentage of staff time is spent on tracking down the “hard-to-get” stuff, and if that proportion matches up at all with specific characteristics of the requested material.
 - Someone noted that when a sharing model such as consortial borrowing has a 95% fill rate, the characteristics of the 5% that are unfilled should be of great interest. (It turns out that multi-volume sets make up a big part of that thin slice.)
 - There was some musing about the best ways to determine when to buy or when to borrow.
 - An assessment librarian among us shared his recent experiences experimenting with data visualization in an attempt to better understand and tell the story of the current state of collection sharing.
 - We noted that ease of access tends to determine whether research materials get used.
- 2) *Seeking to improve the current environment*** really got the juices flowing, as it were, for our group members.
 - Linking existing resource sharing systems and forming consortiums of consortia was seen as an important next step.
 - Our assessment librarian hit a home run by pointing out the necessity of combining ILL data with other sorts of data if one is to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding of the library's true effectiveness and worth. A specific example involved tracking the number of turn-away's that local constituents experience when trying to access leased online content and seeing how many of those failures resulted in ILL requests from those patrons; here the inefficiency of the infrastructure has a clear and measurable negative cost.
 - Finally, several participants noted that we don't always know exactly what it is that our patrons value, and that it may actually vary in different situations; sometimes it's speed, while at other times a longer use period or the ability to renew may weigh more heavily on a patron's wish list. A better understanding of patron desires, expectations, and overall information-gathering behaviors would definitely be a big step toward improving our current sharing environment.
- 3) *Attendees called into question several previously-shared values and assumptions.*** One such value shift really stands out: the evolving attitude of big net lenders toward *being* a big net lender.

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- Once, and for the longest time, lending more than you borrow was a source of pride, but now some net lenders are beginning to think about how finite their resources have become and to wonder if their accustomed role in the sharing community is still sustainable (or desirable) in today's environment.
- One attendee even asked, not entirely in jest, "Is there such a thing as altruism anymore?"
- Another recently overheard a colleague saying that some institutions strive to be net borrowers because "they pay to support services for their patrons, not to acquire (and share) materials."
- Our group then pondered the question, "What if we all did that?" If we don't depend upon each other, who will end up providing the content? And is this just a phase we're going through or a genuine shift in resource sharing culture?
- What if we spend our funds on unique and special collections and not core academic content? Who will then provide that content? Is it a commercial opportunity, or a not-for-profit bank of content we borrow from that centralizes collections? A McNaughton plan for core content?
- Other shifting values and assumptions discussed during our luncheon included:
 - The fact that many scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences are going back to using print and avoiding e-resources when possible.
 - Whether libraries should continue to cluster with "like" libraries in sharing consortia or whether it makes more sense to partner with dissimilar libraries with complementary strengths.
 - Whether speed is even a metric anymore when it comes to collection sharing (as the "speed challenge" has already been solved in many contexts).
 - Whether we can continue to afford to borrow.
 - Whether we can ever really afford *not* to borrow.

4) We spent a considerable amount of our time *seeking to understand the effects of the changing environment on collection sharing.*

- The value of consortia seems to be increasing. One attendee noted that his institution fills 80% of its borrowing requests within two consortia.
- Both of those consortia happen to be consortial borrowing arrangements, also known as expanded circulation, or circ-to-circ. Consortial borrowing does have a way of making request volume go up; borrowing requests at this institution have doubled over the past five years. But the model is so fast and so cheap to support that it's become possible to relax restrictive local policies that have been in place for decades. For instance, if the local copy is checked out, instead of recalling the item the patron is permitted to send a request through the consortial borrowing system and retrieve a copy from a partner institution. This works well for more recent, widely-held material, leaving harder-to-get and older material to traditional ILL. And it is wildly popular with end users.

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- A shared print expert was part of our group and noted that many library administrators want to “manage down” their redundant print collections. This will lead to less redundancy across the system -- and a need for those remaining copies to support more use per copy, with much of the extra requests potentially coming from distant scholars at other institutions.
 - This issue points back to our earlier discussion about net lenders not wanting to be net lenders any more, and whether there is any altruism remaining in the library environment. If fewer copies of print materials are retained across the system, and your institution is not privy to the shared print agreements under which those materials are being held and preserved, will your patrons still have ready access to that content?
 - One issue that many in the room currently face can be characterized as “an embarrassment of riches.” These days there are so many consortia to join and opportunities for collaborating that it is becoming essential for collection-sharing managers to carefully assess the value of each current and potential partnership and to limit themselves to participating only in those that are essential. Because of the considerable resources expended in resource sharing and collaborating, the value of each partnership must also be articulated to library administrators and continued participation justified, often on an annual basis. (The attendee who brought this up is using the Balanced Scorecard assessment method.)
- 5) As a group, we made an effort to lift our eyes up a bit above the horizon, ***seeking to understand the effect of the changing environment on the library overall (and, in some cases, on the parent organization)***. We definitely produced more questions than answers in this category, but, even so, we were pretty sure about a thing or two.
- We know that in some instances it costs less to import items from lending partners than it does to buy a subscription to something that will get used a half dozen times per year.
 - We know that we won’t be effective in improving the institution if we are using the wrong metrics to measure success.
 - We feel that it can be difficult sometimes to get upper management to look beyond metrics.
 - We believe that subject bibliographers should be using resource sharing data to guide them in their collecting decisions. But we’re not always sure how aware they are of the resources that we can provide for them.
 - We’re aware that many library administrators want to achieve a faster deaccessioning rate and a lower print count, which will put more emphasis on borrowing that which is discarded.
 - We realize that fewer manifestations will have to serve as both preservation and service copies; we’ve seen that this concept works reasonably well with journals but wonder, as we move into shared management of print monographs, if it is a sustainable model for other formats.
 - We wonder what effect putting HathiTrust records into one’s local catalog and wish we had hard data showing how often those records drive users to seek out print copies.

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- 6) While end users were very much on our minds throughout the conversation, we made only a couple of points that specifically addressed ***the effects that the changing environment will have on user behaviors.***
- We wondered what effects years of an “access over ownership” library collection-building strategy have had on research outputs at various levels and in the various disciplines.
 - We especially wondered how “access over ownership” has affected the information gathering and consumption habits for the up and coming researcher.
- 7) Finally, we really saw our conversation touch upon ***the effect that the changing environment will have on content and service providers*** in one instance: when discussing the fact that the increased popularity of libraries purchasing articles on demand for their patrons will lead to changes in the business models of publishers.

Detailed Discussion Summary: Thoughts on Metrics

While considering the question of how we might measure the value of resource sharing, the following statements and questions about metrics came up:

- We’ve already mentioned two in the context of understanding how the changing environment will impact the institution and/or parent organization: that if you use the wrong metrics you won’t be able to measure success in improving the organization, and that it can sometimes be difficult to get upper management to look past metrics at other cogent factors.
- One measure of the value of resource sharing for the patron may be the number of resources available through both discovery and access that they wouldn’t normally have at the local level.
- One measure of the value of resource sharing for institutions can be measured by the net amount saved by providing resources to patrons for free through reciprocal networks.
- Value to institutions can also be measured by calculating the impact of income generated through providing resources to requesting institutions on the lender’s bottom line.

Detailed Discussion Summary: “Value to the Patron” ultimately determines “Value to the Institution”

While our luncheon mostly turned out to be an introductory session where we got to know each other and worked toward a shared understanding of the current resource sharing environment, as well as the larger library environment, we did take a few stabs at articulating the value that sharing our collections brings to Patrons for whom we borrow, and to the Institutions that employ us. We also noted some things about collection sharing that ILL Staff value – or, in some cases, *would* value, if these things could only become reality.

First *the value that collection sharing delivers to Patrons:*

- Ultimately, the value of resource sharing is the ability to provide patrons with access to resources that they would not normally have at their institution through the local collection.

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- Resource sharing is of value to the patron because resource sharing can provide a world of resources at little-to-no cost.
- Students (and increasingly university administrators) also value controlling costs for purchase of class texts, so more are valuing resource sharing as a way to obtain course readings.
- What users *don't* value is having to figure out the growing number of resource sharing options available to them, and they have indicated a desire for greater simplicity; they would value a simple 'Get It' button that would allow library staff to determine the best ways to obtain material while still honoring the values of the requestors (for speed, longer loan periods, fewer recalls, etc.).

Next, ***the value that sharing collections delivers to the Institution:***

- Resource sharing is of value to institutions by making it possible to access material without having to tend and store it in perpetuity.
- Resource sharing is of value to libraries in allowing administrators to think differently about our collections: not only can resource sharing inform purchase decisions but also decisions to rely on the "collective collection" rather than purchasing local copies.
- Or, put another way: resource sharing relationships allow us more latitude in making collection-building decisions -- not just choosing what to buy, but choosing what not to buy.

And finally, ***we articulated some aspirations for collection sharing that ILL Staff would value:***

- We would value ways to determine the 'value' of participating in specific resource sharing arrangements.
- We would value knowing more about what our patrons want, expect, and – yes – value, because we're not always sure.
- We would value knowing some sure-fire methods for demonstrating the value of collection sharing to those who allocate money to support library services.

Detailed Discussion Summary: Some Modest Predictions

Last, but not least, ***five predictions emerged from our discussion of the Value of Resource Sharing:***

- 1) As we manage down redundant shared print collections, fewer copies will have to serve as both preservation and service copies.

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- 2) Many libraries want to get away from print management. We will soon need to very intentionally create some large net lenders, with mechanisms in place to honor the real costs for those lenders.
- 3) We can expect resource sharing to change the course of library operations by becoming the steering mechanism for collection development and acquisitions, through purchase-on-demand for articles and patron-driven-acquisitions for loans, and also by creating effective delivery mechanisms to empower collective collection development across consortial relationships.
- 4) Libraries are going to subscribe to fewer journals and journal packages and purchase individual articles on-demand. This shift will change both the way that borrowing article requests are handled by practitioners and how journal article providers position themselves within the information marketplace.
- 5) This group – or some transmogrified version of this group – will meet again in the near future to pick up where we left off in our effort to articulate the Value of Resource Sharing.

Conclusion

We've taken one step on the path to laying out the value resource sharing brings to various stakeholders: patrons, ILL staff, libraries, parent institutions, and content and service providers. We will meet over lunch once more at ALA Midwinter in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday, January 21, 2017, from 2:30-4pm, to build upon what was said in June 2016 in Orlando.

--Compiled and synthesized by Dennis Massie, with coaching from Matthew Sheehy and extensive edits suggested by David Larsen.

Appendix I: Participant Self-introductions, Top-of-Mind Issues

We started by going around the table, introducing ourselves, saying a bit about our current positions, and offering a top-of-mind resource sharing issue with which we are currently grappling.

Dennis Massie, Program Officer, OCLC Research: “I coordinate the activities of the SHARES resource sharing consortium and work on research projects that rely on collection-sharing data. I lead a working group that is building a tool that will act as a real-time ILL cost study. I’m also conducting studies of ILL data from the IviesPlus and Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions. A current top-of-mind issue is wondering about what it is we’re actually borrowing and lending. How old is it? How widely held? How much of it is the long tail? What percentage of requests require staff intervention, and what percentage of staff time is spent on hard-to-get stuff?”

Matthew Sheehy, Interim University Librarian, Brandeis University: “This is what I am thinking - mostly questions: 1) Can we measure activity by a subject and use this to find synergies that already exist? Who is lending what to whom and can we use this to build relationships between our collections? 2) Effects of access over ownership in research at various levels and subjects (humanities scholar, STEM research, undergraduate student, business person) and how the behavior is changing information consumption habits for the up and coming (teenagers)? What will the effects of a pre-print culture be on sharing? Open access? Open educational resources? Does a shift happen in human resources from traditional technical services and move more towards reference and consultation services who can find and interpret information? What happens with the long form and the monograph, regardless of format? Will shared collections be more than preservation efforts? 3) What are the perceptions of net lenders and how do they differ from those of net borrowers? Is there such a thing as altruism? I have heard partners run to be net borrowers with the justification they spend collection money on the service, not on the accession of material. What if we all did that? What if we spent our funds of unique and special collections and not core academic content? Who will provide that? Is it a commercial opportunity, or a not-for-profit (I hope) bank of content we borrow from that centralizes collections? The McNaughton plan for core content. If we do not depend on each other, who is providing the content, and is this an evolution in resource sharing?”

Bill Jones, IDS Project Creative Technologist at SUNY Geneseo Milne Library: “As the Creative Technologist, I provide technical and logistical support to a national consortia, currently consisting of 94 libraries that focus on free reciprocal resource sharing, staff professional development, and community driven technology innovations. I’m currently the President of State University of New York Librarians Association (SUNYLA), the ALA RUSA STARS Webmaster, and a member of the RUSA STARS Promotion & Outreach committee. One of the reasons that I wanted to attend the OCLC special meeting was to hear about what other high-profile ILLers were doing in terms of Interlibrary Loan automation and fulfillment efficiencies. IDS Project provides members and subscribers a platform, called IDS Logic, that automates commonly performed ILL tasks including determining real-time availability and routing based upon that availability. To me, the value of resource sharing is the ability to provide patrons with access to resources that they would not normally have at their institution through the local collection. Ultimately, this is of value to the patron because resource sharing can provide a world of resources at little-to-no cost. This value can be measured by the number of resources available through both discovery and access that they wouldn’t normally have at the local level. Alternatively, resource sharing is of value to institutions because it can potentially save money through free borrowing, or create avenues to gain revenue by charging for lending resources. This value can be measured in the net amount saved by providing resources to patrons for free through reciprocal networks. This value can also be measured by

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calculating the monetary net gain generated through providing resources to requesting institutions. I think that we can expect resource sharing to change the course of library operations by becoming the steering mechanism for collection development and acquisitions through purchase on demand for articles and patron driven acquisitions for loans. More immediately, I think that libraries are going to subscribe to fewer journals and journal packages and purchase individual articles on-demand. This shift will change both the way that borrowing article requests are handled by practitioners and how journal article providers position themselves within the information market.”

Micquel Little, Director of User Services & Resource Sharing, Claremont Colleges: “Professional Development of staff is essential to the support growing and changing field of resource sharing, including everything from stronger, more efficient daily workflows, to integration of broader projects such as shared print initiatives, purchase on demand integration, etc. Resource Sharing is growing and changing as more and more libraries depend on it to supplement and support their changing budgets, collection strategies, consortia participation, etc. Staff need to be empowered and developed to be successful in supporting the success of these changes.”

Emily Batista, University of Pennsylvania, Coordinator of Access Services and Resource Sharing Systems: “I’ve been at Penn for over 30 years in a variety of public services positions, and particularly involved in software systems that support circulation and resource sharing services. As one of the original partners in Borrow Direct, I have long been involved in initiatives to help make resource sharing more efficient, cost-effective and available to patrons. The value of resource sharing is huge, but the issue is demonstrating that value to those who allocate money to support library services.”

Krista Higham, Access Services Librarian, Millersville University: “I work at a mid-size public university with some masters and applied doctorate programs. In addition to other areas of Access Services, I oversee ILL, primarily setting policy, introducing new workflows, and researching difficult to locate requests. I’m currently the ALA RUSA STARS ILL Discussion Group chairperson, on the STARS ILL Assessment committee, and our regional PALCI E-ZBorrow (unmediated returnables borrowing/lending) Advisory Council. I’m also chair of Millersville’s Collection Development Committee and often use ILL data in renewal and new purchase decisions. My top-of-the-mind issues are advocating for longer lending periods, creating more efficient workflows (process more with the same number of people), and how ILL statistics influence collection decisions.”

Tom Delaney, Director, Rapid Outreach & Support, Colorado State University: “I’m now doing analytics more than support for RapidILL. RapidILL continues to grow every year both in the number of filled requests processed within the system and in the number of participating libraries. Recently we’ve expanded into supporting fulfillment of books as well as articles. The emphasis is keeping the process cost-effective. We average a 12-hour turn-around and about a 97% fill rate. Within the system we group like libraries with like libraries.”

Emily Stambaugh, Shared Print Manager, California Digital Library: “I manage projects, such as WEST, that use data to make decisions about retaining resources, to consolidate and preserve print collections, and to record and share retention commitments. I have a strong interest in studying the actual cost of ILL lending. We have substantially advanced shared print journal collections and have more to do in this arena. I believe that Hathi will become a national model for archiving print monographs. As we relocate and reconfigure physical collections and formulate long term collection agreements, in what ways can we reconfigure access to them and the many institutions that depend on them? The long term success of shared print collections will depend upon continued collection growth for the shared collections that

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are in new configurations and their success will also depend on nimble, unmediated access to the print collections and new pathways to digital conversion and access, when possible. A lot of infrastructure is in place to identify shared copies with retention commitments in metadata records; in what ways can we leverage that and user authentication mechanisms to re-connect users with distributed print collections? If we don't re-connect them, are we doing a disservice? How valid will our print usage data be?"

Megan Gaffney, Coordinator, ILL & Document Delivery, University of Delaware: "I'm very interested in communication, both within our libraries and outside them. For example, we need to advocate for generous lending policies as a direct benefit to our own users, since it helps us to build productive partnerships. Communication with staff at all levels for ongoing training related to resource sharing activities is very important, as is communicating with our users to ensure we are meeting their needs and making decisions that directly benefit them. Data is really important in discussing the value of our work, but it's just one piece of the bigger picture. I'm worried about the implications of being a big net lender, and whether that is sustainable."

Peter Collins, Project Manager, Borrow Direct, University of Pennsylvania: "Borrow Direct offers a single-search of, and unmediated requesting from, 13 Ivy Plus academic research libraries of "returnable" material. Real-time shelf-status availability and NCIP circulation integration create an enhanced user experience and streamlined processing workflow compared to our other ILL platforms and request options. A top interest of mine is to better link up disparate resource sharing platforms, optimizing request flow, and providing a seamless single interface for our users."

Mark Paris, Collections Analysis Librarian, Brandeis University: "My role at Brandeis is to support effective decision making around library collections. This involves all of our acquisitions streams and using resource sharing (ILL) to inform acquisitions. My current top-of-mind issue has to do with relating resource-sharing with other types of library data to get a bigger picture. Most recently, we have started combining our electronic usage data with ILL. For example, when looking at journals with high turnaway rates, we want to also see the number of times articles have been requested via ILL to see if those turnaways end up materializing as ILL requests. If we are seeing a lot of turnaways and ILL requests, we may want to evaluate the title for inclusion in the collection. Decisions could also go the other way...we may be better served (and better serve our constituency) by letting our ILL partners supply an article or resource rather than own it ourselves. I am interested in data visualization and have been experimenting with Tableau."

Hollyann Kozlowski, Supervisor, Borrow Direct & ReCAP Access Services, Columbia University: "I manage day-to-day activities of our Borrow Direct Operations and am the point of contact for the Access Services side of our offsite storage collections. I am interested in the value of resource sharing for the Access side of operations and examining the effects across internal collections and collection management."

Andrea Loigman, Head, Access & Delivery Services, Duke University: "I'm new to having administrative responsibility for ILL. Duke is part of the Triangle Research Library Network (TRLN), a small sharing group of four North Carolina university libraries. TRLN is adopting Relais D2D. Within the last few years we joined Borrow Direct. I want to learn the value/cost of collection sharing in staff, labor, time, cost for patrons of Duke. I don't think I have the tools I need to explain costs and value."

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David Larsen, Head of Access Services & Assessment, University of Chicago: “I chair the Big 10 Academic Alliance (formerly CIC) UBorrow consortial borrowing service and am co-chair of the Ivy Plus BorrowDirect consortial borrowing service. I value consortial relationships: the University of Chicago is able to fill 80% of its borrowing requests from just the Big 10 and Ivy Plus groups. Users value discovery and request interfaces that allow them to quickly determine when available copies can be supplied, and the number of loan requests received at Chicago have almost doubled over the past five years as use of these systems has grown. However, users don’t value having to figure out the growing number of resource sharing options available to them, and they have indicated a desire for greater simplicity; they would value a simple ‘Get It’ button that would allow library staff to determine the best ways to obtain material while still honor the values of the requestors (for speed, longer loan periods, fewer recalls, etc.) Students (and increasingly university administrators) also value controlling costs for purchase of class texts, so more are valuing resource sharing as a way to obtain course readings. Resource sharing is also of value to libraries in allowing us to think differently about our collections: not only can it inform purchase decisions but also decisions to rely on the “collective collection” rather than purchasing local copies. What justifies a purchase? What justifies relying on borrowing? Personally I would value ways to determine the ‘value’ in participating in specific resource sharing arrangements. How does one assess the costs and benefits of participating in Rapid, SHARES, or reciprocal agreements? Does one take into account only how these arrangements facilitate resource sharing or also how they enable different approaches to collection building?”

Scott Anderson, Information Systems Librarian, Millersville University: “‘Efficiency’ and ‘rapidity’ are two things that are top of my mind. As the ‘time to fill’ becomes shorter, via either improved physical lending mechanisms or through consortial electronic purchase on demand, the ability to collectively share ‘on demand’ significantly leverages collections and buying power. It costs less to import collections from lending partners rather than keep collections internally.”

