27 February 2024

Los Angeles, CA

Weaving the fabric of library collaboration:

Reflections on recent OCLC Research findings

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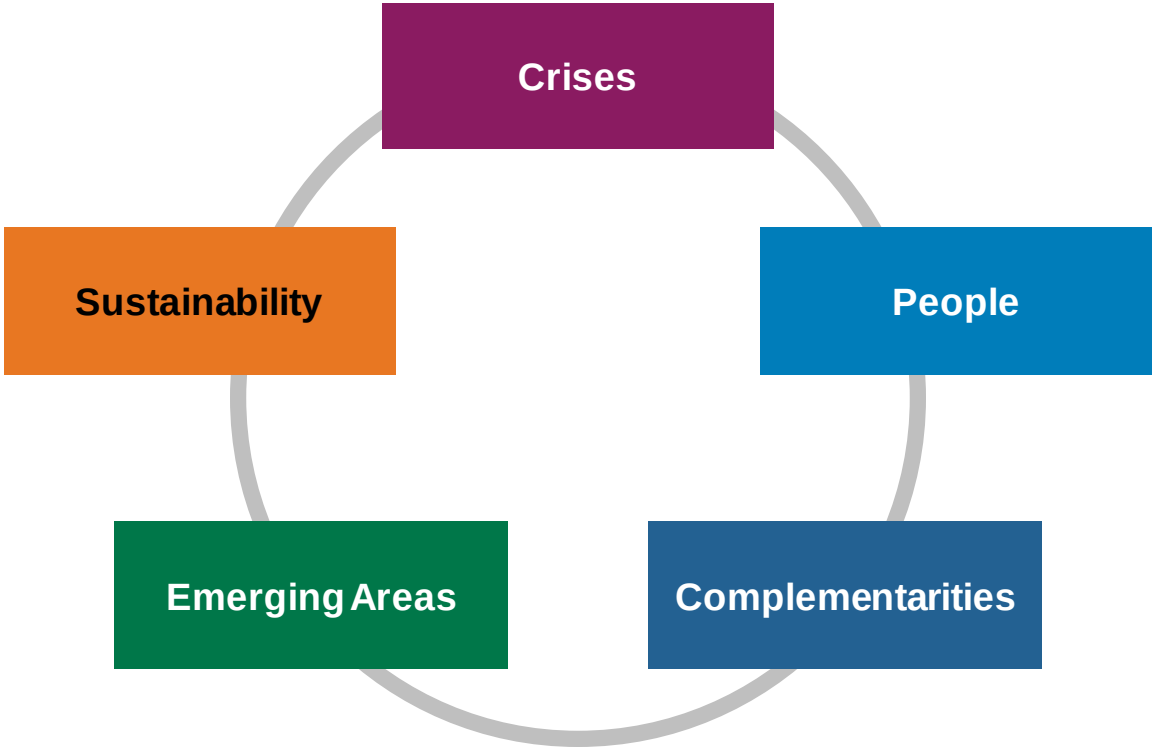
Executive Director, OCLC Research

The importance of library collaboration

Collaboration is important because …



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Library collaboration and OCLC Research

Recent OCLC research on collaboration

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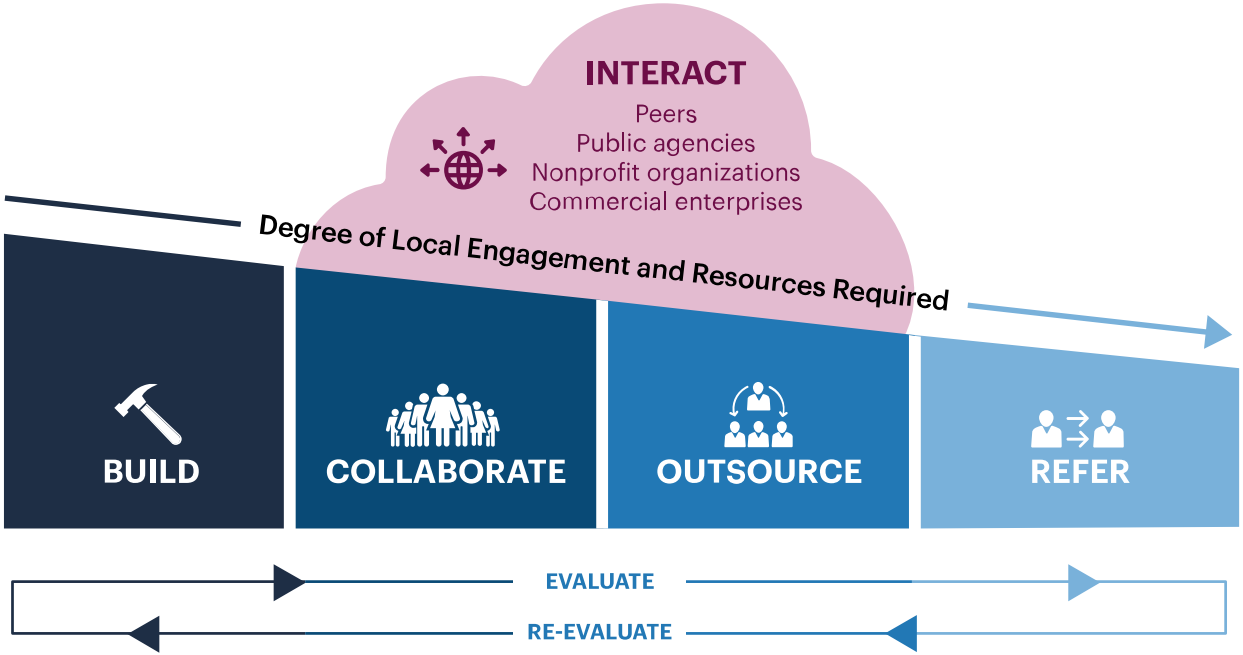
OCLC Research findings on library collaboration

Why?	Pros, cons and trade-offs: collaboration as a strategic choice
Who?	Finding and retaining collaborative partners
How?	Insight and lessons learned on making collaborations work

Library collaboration: Why?

Four Sourcing Strategies for Libraries



"Four Sourcing Strategies for Libraries" by OCLC Research, from *Library Collaboration as a Strategic Choice: Evaluating Options for Acquiring Capacity* (https://doi.org/10.25333/mt16-0c57), CC BY 4.0

Choosing a sourcing strategy

"The effectiveness of an operations strategy is determined by the degree of consistency among competitive priorities and corresponding decisions regarding operational structure and infrastructure."

Mandar Dabhilkar, in "*Trade-Offs in Make-Buy Decisions*" (2011)

So:

Match means to ends

But … a sourcing strategy can't reflect all priorities

Manage trade-offs

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Example

TABLE 1.1. Process: A list of key sourcing considerations.

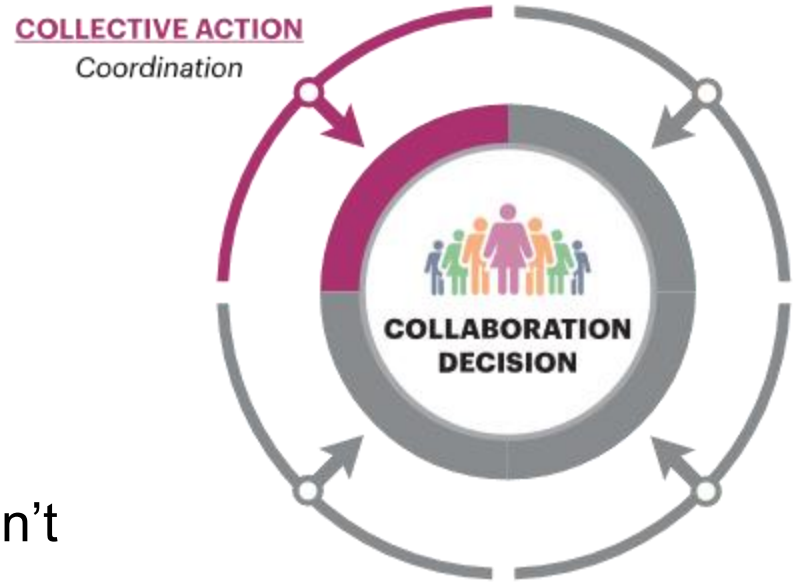
Process	
Agility	Consider the flexibility and nimbleness a strategy allows as conditions evolve or change.
Speed	Evaluate if the sourcing strategy permits quick deployment and immediately addresses user needs.
Autonomy	Discuss how much decision-making authority a local institution would have to cede to an external entity. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of this?

"Table 1.1: Process: A list of key sourcing considerations" by OCLC Research, from Library Collaboration as a Strategic Choice: Evaluating Options for Acquiring Capacity (https://doi.org/10.25333/mt16-0c57), CC BY 4.0

Four Economic Concepts, Four Perspectives:

Strategic Frames for Collaboration

- Groups with shared interests don't always succeed
- How to coordinate collective efforts within a group



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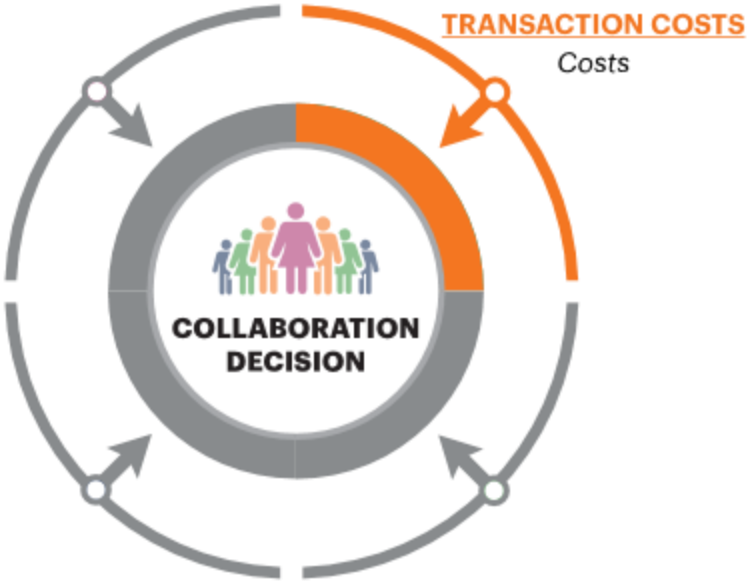
Four Economic Concepts, Four Perspectives:

Strategic Frames for Collaboration

- Conducting economic exchanges/transactions involves costs
- Understanding the “costs of collaboration”



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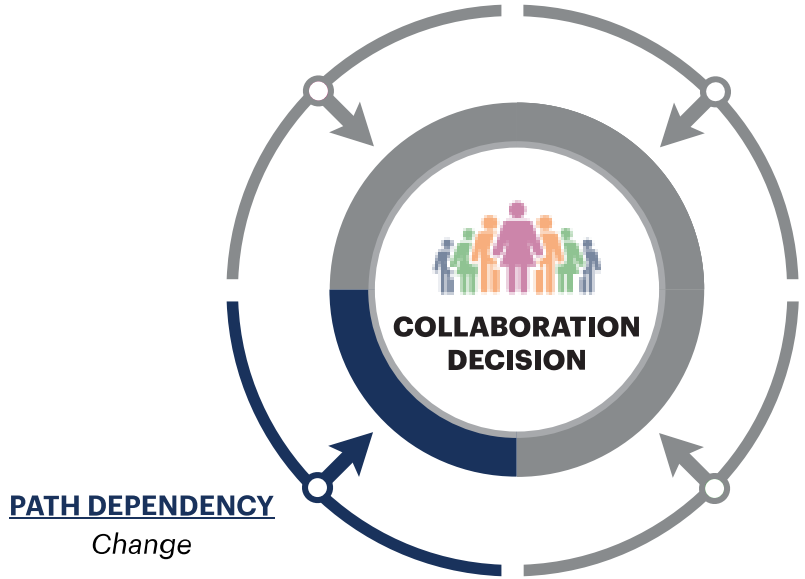
Four Economic Concepts, Four Perspectives:

Strategic Frames for Collaboration

- How organizations cope with change
- Managing change from one sourcing strategy to another (collaboration)



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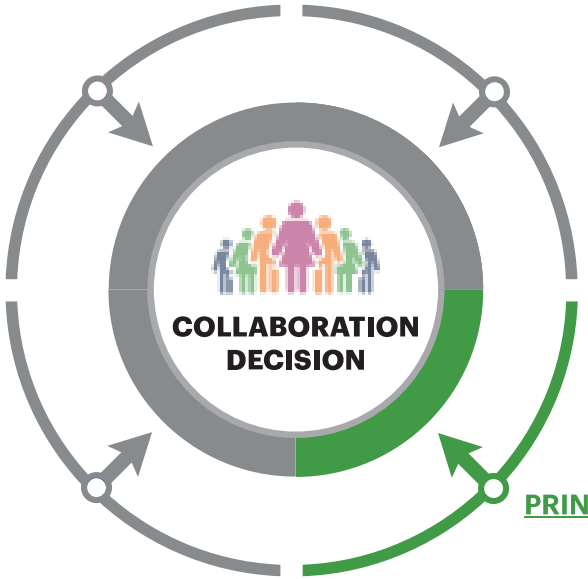
Four Economic Concepts, Four Perspectives:

Strategic Frames for Collaboration

- Separation of ownership from control
- Managing decision-making within a collaboration



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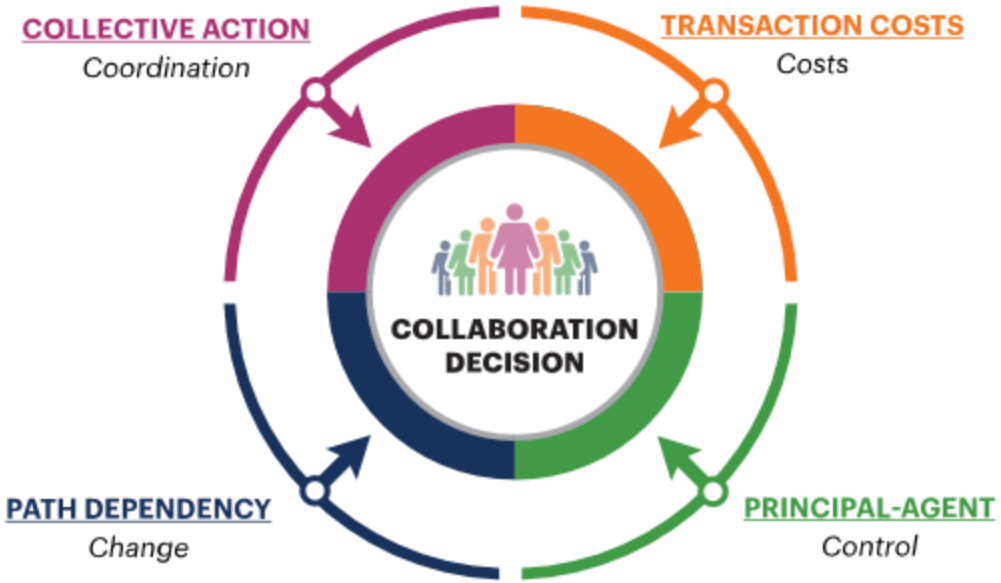

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Example

TABLE 5. PRINCIPAL-AGENT—Control

Key concepts	Prompts to action and considerations
Separation of ownership and control • Separation of executive authority from direct membership control (i.e., an executive entity acting on their behalf)	**Identify** • Where final decision-making authority resides (e.g., majority vote among participating members or an executive director) • Stability of current arrangement: Is it expected to transition to a new model in the future?

"Table 5: Principal-Agent - Control" by OCLC Research, from Library Collaboration as a Strategic Choice: Evaluating Options for Acquiring Capacity (https://doi.org/10.25333/mt16-0c57), CC BY 4.0

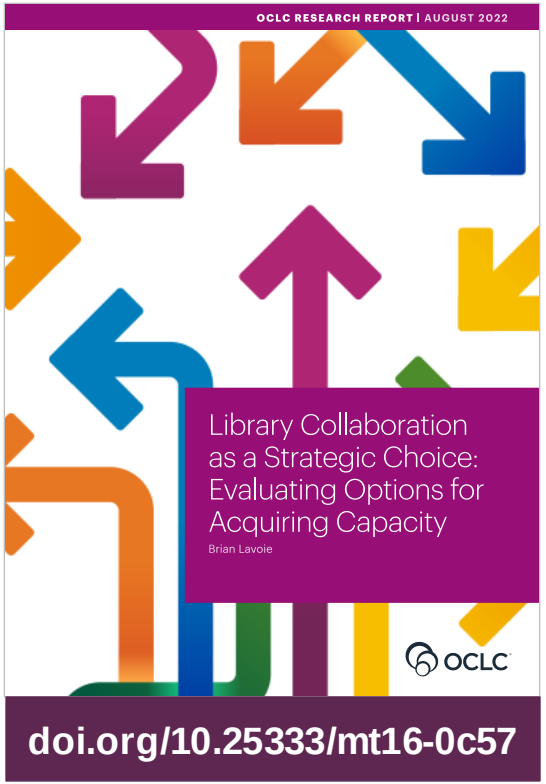
Takeaways

Collaboration should be a strategic decision

Identify priorities, pick best fit, manage trade-offs

Understand what drives effective collaboration

Question of HOW just as important as WHAT



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Library collaboration: Who?

Art research collections: What's inside?

The Proxy Art Research Collective Collection (Size and Holdings)

- 85 institutions
- 8.6m distinct publications
- 16.0m total holdings

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Specialization creates valuable partnerships

TABLE 5. Special material categories collected vs. shared by art research libraries.

Genre	No. of publications*	No. shared via ILL*
Exhibition catalogs	675,116	23,791
Auction catalogs	143,460	1,097
Artist files	129,550	78
Artists books	25,465	242
Trade catalogs	10,396	22
Catalogues raisonnés	8,968	871
Prints	5,212	5
Photo books	4,922	282
Zines	2,716	27

*Data from analysis of 655 field

"Table 5: Special material categories collected vs. shared by art libraries" by OCLC Research, from Sustaining Art Research Collections: Using Data to Explore Collaboration (https://doi.org/10.25333/v636-pe98l), CC BY 4.0

Libraries are increasingly working with other campus units

Job posting: Library Chief Data Strategist, University of Rhode Island, USA

This position will work with the **Office of Institutional Research** and DataSpark (Library-based data analytics unit) to identify avenues to increase faculty and researcher success. Working with internal (e.g. MakerspaceURI, Launch Lab, Think Lab, and the AI Lab) and **external (e.g. the Office of Advancement of Teaching and Learning; the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity; Division of Research and Economic Development; and IT) partners**, the incumbent will plan and implement experimental and innovative activities to **cultivate and expand synergistic relationships**.

Libraries are increasingly working with other campus units

Several extra-library units named:

1. Office of Institutional Research
2. Office of Advancement of Teaching and Learning
3. Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity
4. Division of Research and Economic Development
5. Campus IT

Takeaways

Use data-driven analysis to identify collaborative opportunities

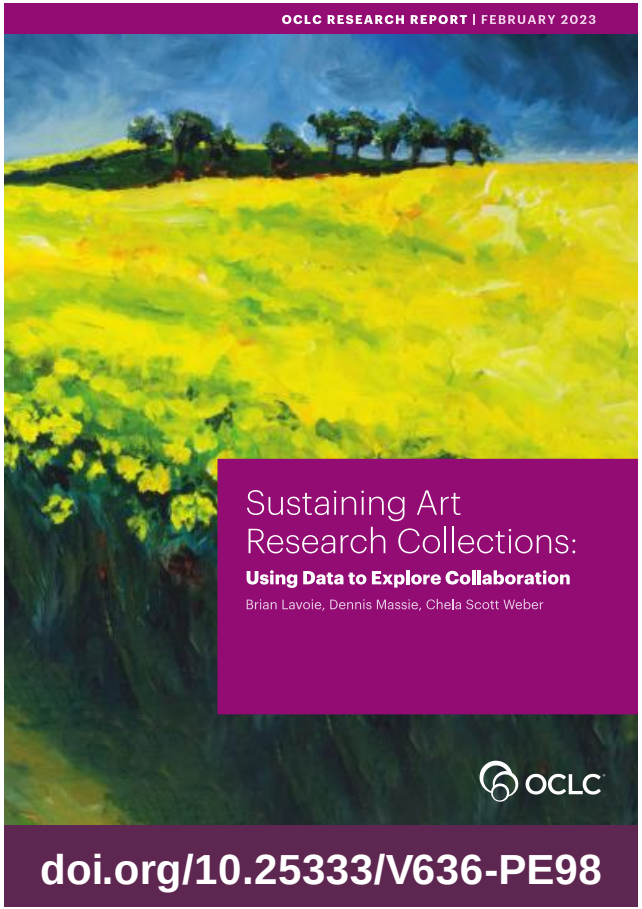
Identify partner strengths, priorities, synergies

Engage partners around efficiencies AND complementarities

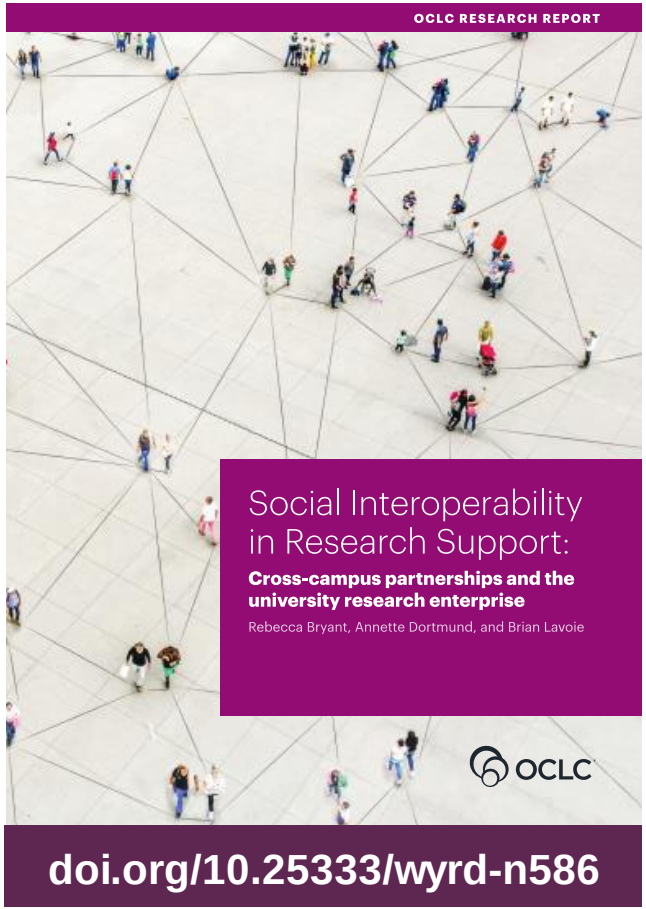
Collaborations with partners WITHIN institutions are important

Be intentional about building cross-unit partnerships

Build skill set in identifying, getting to know partners



doi.org/10.25333/V636-PE98



doi.org/10.25333/wyrd-n586

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Library collaboration: How?

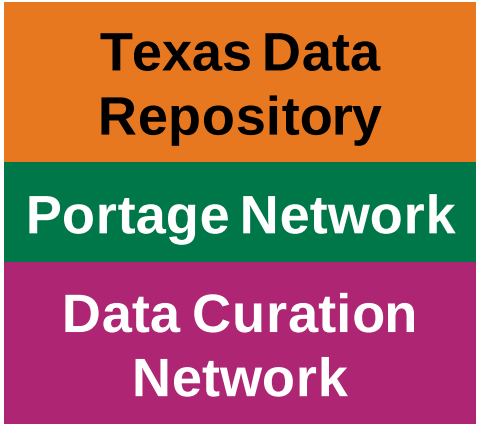
The art and science of collaboration

“Effective library collaboration is art as much as science. While concepts, frameworks, and theory are important for deepening our understanding of what makes collaborations successful and sustainable, we believe that sharing practical experiences of successful collaboration is also essential.”

From the Preface, *Building Research Data Management Capacity: Case Studies in Strategic Library Collaboration* (2023)

The realities of collaboration: RDM edition

- What is the collaboration's "origin story"?
- Why was collaboration chosen as the strategy for acquiring capacity?
- How do the partners act collectively to achieve their goals?
- What are the costs of collaboration?
- How does the collaboration align with established stakeholders & workflows?
- How does decision-making take place?
- Lessons learned



The realities of collaboration: Art libraries edition

- What is the collaboration's "origin story"?
- What does participation involve?
- How does governance take place?
- How does the collaboration sustain itself?
- Lessons learned

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Rice University

OCAD University and the Ontario Council of University Libraries

Worcester Art Museum and College of the Holy Cross

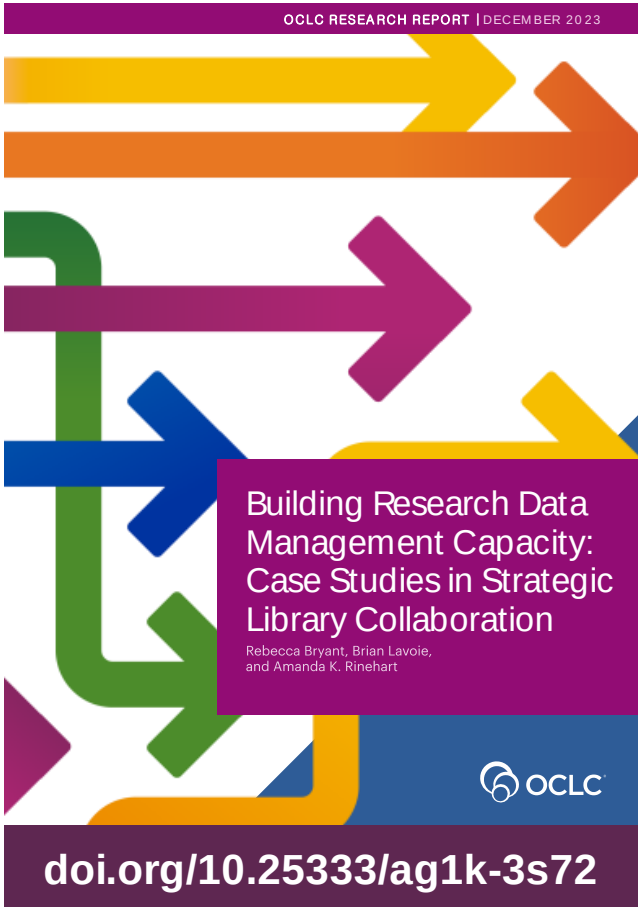
Takeaways

Clear articulation of tractable goals

Creative understanding of partnership value

Sustainability through trusted relationships

Asymmetries in contributions and benefits


OCLC RESEARCH REPORT | DECEMBER 2023
Building Research Data Management Capacity: Case Studies in Strategic Library Collaboration
Rebecca Bryant, Brian Lavoie, and Amanda K. Rinehart
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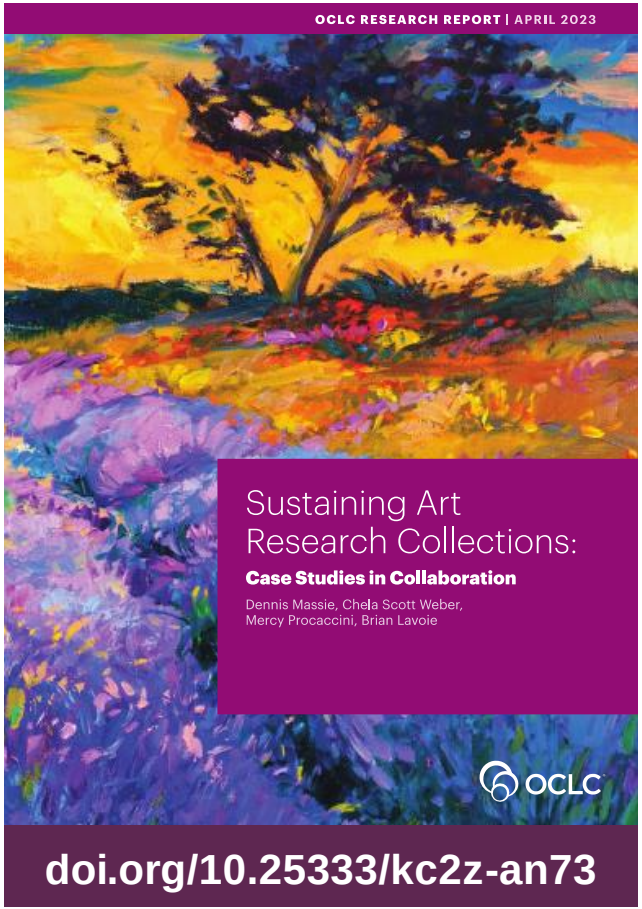
doi.org/10.25333/ag1k-3s72


OCLC RESEARCH REPORT | APRIL 2023
Sustaining Art Research Collections:
Case Studies in Collaboration
Dennis Massie, Chela Scott Weber, Mercy Procaccini, Brian Lavoie
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doi.org/10.25333/kc2z-an73

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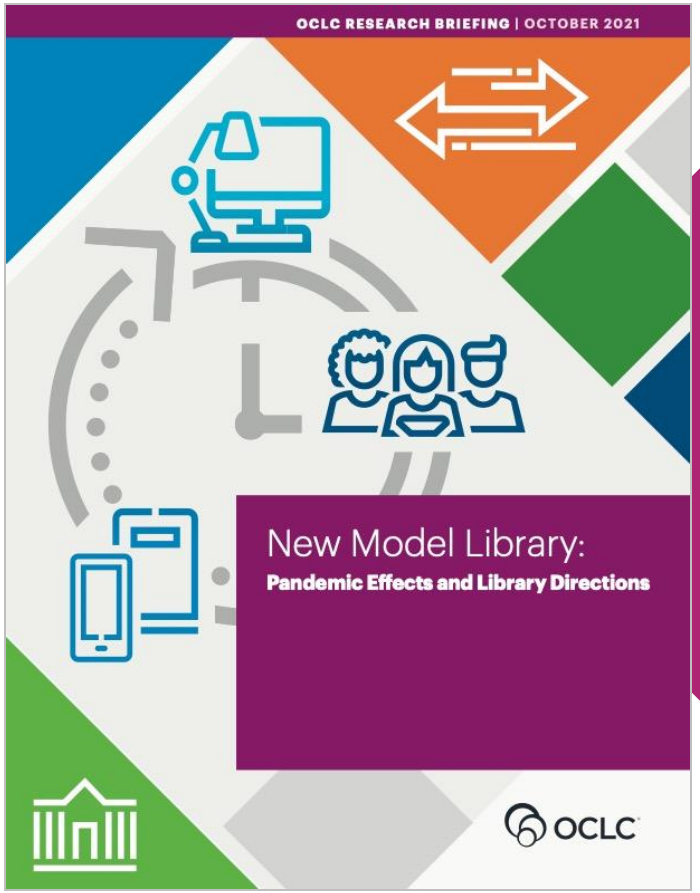
Conclusion: The fabric of library collaboration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New Model Library:
Pandemic Effects and Library Directions
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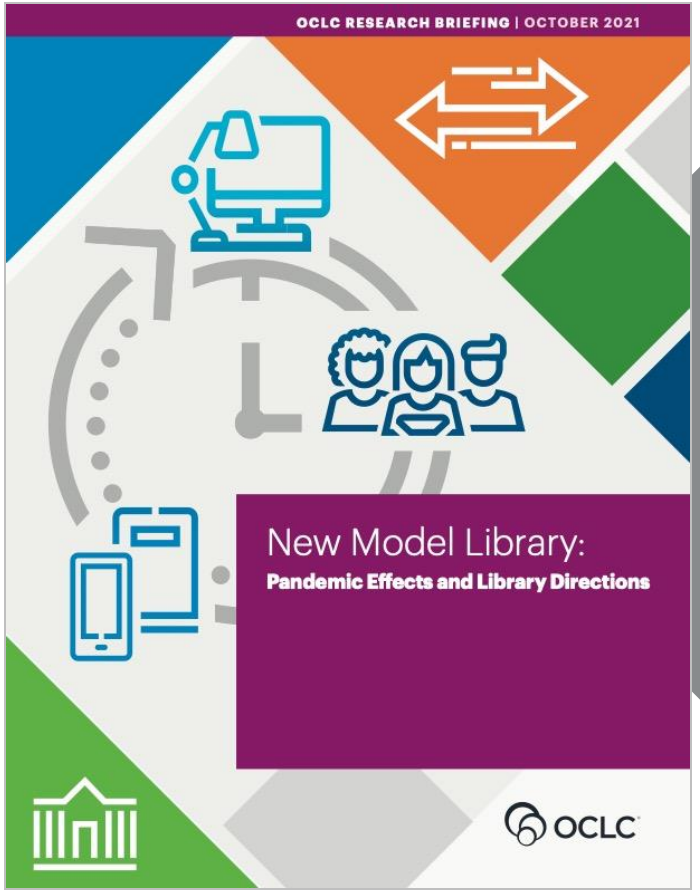
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The fabric of collaboration …

Why?

Who?

How?

Coming attractions …

Stewarding the Collective Collection:

An analysis of retention data in the US and Canada

- Coverage by shared print retention commitments

Partnership for Shared Book Collections

Stewarding the Collective Collection:

US and Canadian Perspectives on Data and Workflow Tools for Shared Print

- Data and tools supporting shared print workflows

scelc

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Collaboration in the Netherlands

Peer institution and consortial collaboration drives:

- Policy making
- License negotiation
- National portal development

Open Access Discovery

oc.lc/oa-discovery-project

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Because what is known must be shared.®

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