

Collaborating for Our Community: A Case Report

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Abstract

For approximately three years or so the directors of the three major libraries (Hanover College, Ivy Tech-Madison, and the Jefferson County Public Library) in our rural county have been meeting periodically to find creative ways to collectively better serve our diverse populations. This has resulted in several cooperative database subscriptions, creation of a Local Living Authors document, and shared outreach to local junior high and high school teachers, in addition to more traditional collaborations among our distinct libraries such as inter-library book sale contributions, reciprocal patron agreements, cross-promotion of speaker events, etc. We continue to investigate other possibilities to gain efficiencies and to benefit residents and students served by our libraries.

Keywords

academic libraries, case studies, community colleges, joint ventures, libraries & community, public libraries

Introduction

In July 2010, in advance of an annual review with the Dean of Academic Affairs, the director of the Duggan Library listed as one goal for the upcoming academic/fiscal year, the following: Initiate routine (quarterly?) luncheon/meeting of Jefferson County librarians for collaboration and community sharing (Ivy Tech, Jefferson County Public Library, High School librarians, Historical Society, etc.). This goal was in alignment with the philosophy of the current college president who wanted to increase interactions with the wider community. From this rather modest goal, the first meeting involving the directors of the Duggan Library, Ivy Tech-Madison, and public library was held in November 2010. Discussion of potential areas of common interest to explore included cyber contingencies, grant writing, e-book collections or other shared databases, policy review (for example, public computer use policies in all three libraries), sharing in publicity of events (i.e. a community bulletin board), and a mutually supported seasonal charity, among other ideas. We determined that we should strive to meet every three to four months and to rotate meeting sites.

Our gatherings have been held in all three libraries across four locations (Hanover branch of the public library, main location of the public library, Ivy Tech and Hanover College) as well as

in a local coffee shop. Meeting in the individual libraries has helped us to become acquainted with the facilities of each and we have found the coffee shop offers an informal and relaxed atmosphere conducive to brainstorming.

Fortuitously, before the second scheduled meeting in February 2011, the director of the Duggan Library attended the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter meeting, and went to a vendor session on ebrary Public Complete, a relatively new e-book subscription resource. This product fit perfectly with what had been previously discussed and became the impetus for our initial collaboration. Although guiding principles had yet to be fully articulated, this grassroots venture set the stage for other mutually-beneficial projects that were to come. However, before detailing our various endeavors it may be meaningful to first have an overview of our county and our respective libraries with their diverse populations to provide context for the importance of our cooperative activities.

Overview

Formed in 1811, Jefferson County is a rural county in the Southeast part of the state and resides on the Ohio River. The population according to the 2010 census is 32,428. It contains 360 total square miles making the population density 90 people per square mile (United States Census Bureau, 2014). By comparison, Marion County with 396 square miles and a population of 903,393 has a population density of 2281, or about 25 times that of Jefferson County (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The county seat is the city of Madison with the contiguous town of Hanover being its second most populous. Madison has the largest historic district in the state and the area has a proud Underground Railroad heritage, including Eleutherian College, a pre-civil War site educating all races and genders. Today, visitors come for many reasons, including Clifty Falls State Park, the annual Madison Regatta, and Hanover College, to name but a few (VisitMadison Inc).

Hanover College is the oldest private college in the state, founded by abolitionist John Finley Crowe in 1827. The college has an historical affiliation with the Presbyterian Church and sits on a 630 acre campus. It is a traditional four year liberal arts college with majors in Philosophy, Music, History, English, Modern Languages, Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology and Integrative Physiology, International Studies,

Education, and more. The fall 2013 student FTE was 1,160, including international students. The College's Agnes Brown Duggan Library, named for the sister of philanthropist and donor J. Graham Brown, opened its doors in 1973 and celebrated its 40th anniversary during the 2013-2014 school year. The library provides research level materials, mainly in support of the undergraduate curriculum. Currently, the library holds more than 300,000 print titles and subscribes to more than 40 databases including article, media, and e-book content. Also, provided free via the State Library through INSPIRE are an additional 23 or so databases. Currently, Duggan Library is open during the academic year 95.5 hours per week, with a gate count of 54,348 for the 2012-13 year. A PALNI (Private Academic Library Network of Indiana) institution, sharing an integrated library system (OCLC WMS/Worldcat Local as of July 2014), Duggan also participates in ALI (Academic Libraries of Indiana) and has memberships with MCLS (Midwest Collaborative for Library Services) and ILF (Indiana Library Federation), in addition to the ALA/ACRL (American Library Association/Association of College and Research Libraries). Duggan Library relies on InfoExpress for delivery of items between libraries for purposes of Interlibrary Loan. The library also provides service to the community as a federal depository library and it has significant Archives and Special Collections holdings including the largest Presbyterian archives in the state.

Founded in 1963 by act of the General Assembly, Ivy Tech Community College, offering associate degrees and program certificates, has 31-degree granting locations (campuses) and 75+ educational sites throughout Indiana. Ivy Tech-Madison was chartered in 1968 beginning in a leased building in downtown Madison in 1971 and graduating its first class of 11 students in 1973. Today, the student FTE is 831 and students can study Nursing, Power Plant Technology, Criminal Justice, and Industrial Technology among the many other options available to them. In 1984 the original building on Madison's hilltop opened and the current building was completed and opened in November 2007 including a new state of the art library. The library is devoted to offering a digital-intensive collection with a primary mission of providing access to materials, information, and services that support and supplement the educational mission of the college. Open 60 hours per week, the library gate count for fiscal year 2012 was 33,046.

Like Duggan Library, memberships are held in ALI, MCLS, ILF, and ALA/ACRL. In addition to the Madison location, the director also oversees library services at the Ivy Tech Lawrenceburg and Batesville locations. The Southeast Region library provides access to more than 16 academic databases including scholarly journals, full text e-books, music and streaming videos.

In the latest reporting period more than 161,000 e-books, 57,000 online periodicals, and 20,000 streaming videos have been made available for Ivy Tech-Madison students. In the college's 2013 Strategic Plan, Accelerating Greatness 2013,

the library is named as having the responsibility of increasing Ivy Tech's access to the ever expanding universe of published knowledge. In response, over the next five years, the library plans on replacing the existing Voyager ILS with a new Library Service Platform (LSP) and Discovery System, update Ivy Tilt (online library tutorial for distance education students) and add additional staff.

The Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) has a history going back to 1818 and the Madison Society Library. Its first permanent home was established in 1854 at the southwest corner of West and Second Streets in Madison. In 1888 the Society entered into an agreement with the City of Madison to make the library open to all citizens of Madison (\$3 fee). In 1921, the library was moved to the second floor of the Masonic Building on Main Street between Mulberry and Jefferson Streets. There it remained until 1929 when a bond was issued for the purchase of the Powell House (1859), at the corner of Main and Elm, its current location. In 1966 the building underwent major changes and construction resulting in the present structure which was reopened in 1968. A converted bank building, the Hanover Branch, was opened in 2010. The library, serving the population of Jefferson County, is a Class 1 library organized under Indiana Code 20-14. IC 20-14-2-2 which states that public libraries are municipal corporations and it is governed by the Library Board of Trustees appointed by the appointing bodies: Jefferson County Council, Jefferson County Commissioners, Madison Schools, and Southwestern Schools. The library derives benefits by meeting standards of the Indiana State Library such as subsidies for e-rate (about 78% of Internet and phone) and InfoExpress, any LSTA Grants, and Evergreen, an open source ILS. JCPL is in district six of ILF, and like Hanover College and Ivy Tech libraries, is a member of MCLS. The main branch is open 69 hours weekly during the school year and in 2013 there were 141,612 annual visits to both branches.

There is a Friends of the Library (FOL) staffed by volunteers and funded by membership fees. The FOL operates the spring and fall (Chautauqua Festival of Art weekend) book sales that bring in several thousands of dollars which are used to benefit library collections and operations. In addition to print and digital collections, the library's programming is a unique and important component. In 2013 the library held 253 children's programs for children 0-11 years old, 58 programs for young adults (12-18 years old), and 186 adult programs. Types of programs run from story times for infants to computer lab training for adults along with belly dancing, knitting, princess parties, chess club, Saturday morning cartoons, Riverbend Writers group, and many more. Total 2013 program attendance at all library sponsored programs was 11,743.

An important component of the county's vitality has been its libraries, each serving a different primary patron base. Not surprisingly, the libraries have a history of collaboration. In order to maximize resources, services, and programs for the community during recent financially challenging times each

has committed to working even more closely together in ways heretofore not considered. These activities are detailed in the following sections.

Collegial Collaborations

Hanover College Duggan Library, Ivy Tech-Madison Library, and Jefferson County Public Library have a proud history of collegial collaboration rooted in the relationships formed by the current directors' respective predecessors. For example, longtime Duggan Library director, Walt Morrill, served for years on the public library's board of trustees as has the former Ivy Tech-Madison Library director, Margaret Seifert, who in her role as a Hanover town council member was a driving force behind the formation of the Hanover branch of the public library. And, former public library director, Charlene Abel, for a time operated a library council that included county librarians from the local school systems, historical society, academic institutions, and other organizations so that each could stay informed of ongoing activities. These examples helped to set a foundation for our current practice of working closely together.

The three libraries worked in partnership in support of the ILF District 6 Conference which was held at the new Ivy Tech building on Friday, April 4, 2008. Co-chaired by Margaret Seifert and JCPL's Donna Errett, the event was well attended and received, with Duggan Library paying for brochures and the staff of all three libraries helping to facilitate the event. A couple of other examples include the Duggan Library borrowing from the public library's computer use policies for minors, and upon the opening of the nearby Hanover branch, the college was able to eliminate its expensive recreational reading subscription without adversely affecting area residents, allowing those funds to be used toward academic titles.

As is likely the case with many Indiana counties and communities, our libraries continue to provide ongoing support of each other's libraries and patrons. One such important agreement is reciprocal borrowing privileges. JCPL offers Ivy Tech and Hanover College students the ability to obtain a borrower's card. Hanover College and Ivy Tech provide reciprocity through ALI, and Duggan Library provides community patron cards to non-college borrowers for a nominal annual fee. All three libraries welcome guests to use their public computers to access resources in-house.

Book sales remain an important revenue generator for many small libraries. Duggan Library routinely provides unprocessed gift books to both the public library for their semi-annual sales and to Ivy Tech which has held AAUW (American Association for University Women) book sales. Our libraries also support each other's guest speaker events through shared publicity, often through each other's social media outlets via Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. Examples of recent speakers include a Bob Dylan expert who spoke at the Duggan Library that was well attended by the wider commu-

nity and noted Kentucky author and poet Wendell Berry who gave a talk at the public library in support of the One Book One Community program. Several Hanover College and Ivy Tech employees and students attended. Also, the Ivy Tech-Madison library supported Madison's La Casa Amiga Hispanic Society's Summer Reading Program for the second year in 2013. This successful event including a story time and craft activity was offered once per week over a six week period and was attended by more than twenty children (ages 3-12).

Investing in our Community

If the collegial collaborations outlined above were all that we were able to accomplish together we could certainly be proud but such activities are not unique to Jefferson County. It was the very tactical shift from collegial collaboration only to a strategic alliance that made our informal, yet purposeful, partnership atypical. This transformation came about as a result of our investigation of a jointly provided subscription to ebrary Public Complete and the subsequent, more intentional, approach to shared resources and consultative services that redefined our efforts. In fact a review of Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts provided by INSPIRE, indicates only a few relevant articles that touch on non-merging joint ventures between multi-type libraries. We've been given support and trust from our various administrations and this makes us agile and free to explore possibilities without burdensome bureaucracy that is inherent across different types of libraries with their unique fiscal years, funding sources, business offices, governing bodies, and stakeholders.

As mentioned, ebrary Public Complete became the first joint venture of our three organizations. While any of the partnering libraries could have subscribed on its own, either directly to the vendor, or perhaps through an existing consortium membership such as MCLS, the incentive to work together on behalf of our community while saving each library some money and consolidating technology requirements (such as authentication of users) were driving forces. This product was of particular interest to Hanover College Duggan Library because it had yet to capitalize on the burgeoning e-book market. At first, it may seem that an ebrary Public Complete subscription may not fit the mission of a college library but upon closer glance one finds that included subjects such as career development, interviewing, and personal finance are very much germane to college students. Ivy Tech's interest in the product was also understandable as most of their resources are in electronic format and that best fits the needs of their mobile student body. The public library's interest was rooted in the database's targeted market of community patrons.

From the outset, our experience with ebrary's sales and marketing was encouraging as they were eager to customize a quote for our self-defined cooperative as well as develop the site while ensuring authentication for each library constituent. Additionally, they simplified billing for us by invoicing just the public library which then remitted invoices to Hanover and

Ivy Tech for their share of the payment. (In Ivy Tech's case the funds used were made possible by a memorial gift).

By July 2011, we had a fully functioning subscription that made more than 24,000 ebook titles available to every citizen in the county and to every student on both campuses. In the July 16, 2011 edition of the community newspaper our efforts garnered a front page article, Local libraries join to offer e-books in Jefferson County (Madison Courier, 2011, p. A1), and just four days later there was a glowing editorial in the newspaper which stated, "We must say, however, that the new e-book library being offered... is a great service to the communities they serve.... That's the kind of government-education interaction that we need to encourage.... The libraries are to be congratulated for having the foresight to pursue the ebrary concept" (Editorial, Madison Courier, 2011, p. A4). During the first full year there were 21,474 page views from 517 unique titles and during the last fiscal year (July 2012 – June 2013) total page views across all three libraries increased to more than 27,000 (from 477 unique titles). Based on the collective subscription price, a very elementary cost-benefit analysis indicates that each ebrary title accessed cost less than had they been purchased in print. Additionally, the cost per access is less than what charges the respective libraries would have incurred to borrow via traditional Interlibrary Loan. Among the many lessons learned during this first venture is that vendors are willing to work with self-defined groups to provide financial discounts and technical support.

Since that initial joint database subscription, our county-wide cooperative has gone on to subscribe to two more databases. In 2012 we collectively subscribed to Proquest's Ancestry Library edition. While Ancestry may be viewed as primarily a personal genealogical tool (and thus ideally suited to public libraries), it has numerous data sets that are appropriate in academic studies and research. This database has proved to be wildly popular at all three sites. During the 2012-13 fiscal year the public library saw 20,625 searches, while Hanover College searched the database 19,200 times, and Ivy Tech had 12,263 searches. The interesting takeaway with this database is that the most active user group was the colleges, with combined usage statistics that ranked more heavily than the public library (which, due to authentication restrictions, is limited to in-house use only).

The most recent database subscription this local cooperative has investigated is with Mango Languages. Mango provides access to 60 language courses with unlimited users both on and off campus. Initial enthusiasm was curbed however, when Ivy Tech disclosed that it already had an active subscription to the resource.

However, realizing the benefit for program support for the Modern Languages department at Hanover College in addition to students wanting a primer on a foreign language before studying abroad, along with citizens county-wide who are interested in language acquisition skills, the public library and

Duggan Library decided to go ahead and subscribe together as we collectively still realized savings. More importantly we realized that an all-in scenario was not always necessary when considering products of mutual benefit. In other words, the lesson learned with this experience is to remain flexible rather than enforce self-imposed rigidity. Since our subscription commenced in August 2013, the public library has had 149 total database sessions to date (mid-February 2014) while Duggan Library patrons have accounted for an additional 167 sessions.

Our strategic cooperation with databases developed out of ascertaining common needs for our collective population groups. Additionally, due to gaps in critical mass for cost savings to certain products across our collective memberships and consortia we determined that savings, both in database cost and in unnecessary duplication of work such as promoting these new resources, is best achieved collectively rather than individually. One example of promotional activity is our celebrating National Library Week 2014 by placing a quarter-page advertisement in a local monthly paper, *Roundabout Madison*, highlighting our mutual database subscriptions. We have found that our collaborative actions with these subscriptions provide value added benefits to the community (such as Spanish language e-books and language support for our growing Hispanic population) and to our institutions (community goodwill among other things). We have also found that vendors are eager to work with us by providing a custom quote, as well as technical support, invoice consolidation, and marketing tools.

Other Synergies

Early on in our meetings, in addition to cost efficiencies provided by joint database subscriptions, the library director at Ivy Tech urged the group to consider developing a Local Living Authors document. With the input of all three directors as well as involving the owners of a local bookstore we identified authors in the county who had published books (defined as having an ISBN). A PDF document was produced that lists all these authors and it resides on the website of each library. This document reveals that we have a wide array of writing talent in the county, ranging from scholarly titles to local history and interest, poetry, and children's books. This was an eye-opening moment because we realized that the cooperative development of such a resource could be as useful to the community as a collective purchase.

A corollary to the initial ebrary database subscription was providing consultation to teachers in our community schools on the availability of e-books to them and their students, and how they could access these books at any of the participating libraries.

Staff from our libraries provided live demonstrations of the resource to teachers at two different districts during in-service training days. One Duggan reference librarian also made a

separate presentation to teachers attending a staff meeting at her daughter's elementary school. Students who wanted to access these e-books from the public library required a library card. For those students who didn't own a card this new resource offering was viewed as a potential incentive for them to obtain one.

Another consultative opportunity occurred when our local hospital was transitioning to their new facility. We contacted the community relations director to see if there were patient education needs we could fulfill or perhaps provide assistance for their medical staff library. While these offerings were appreciated they were not deemed necessary given the facility and organizational structure. However, we did make the hospital community relations director aware of health-related databases freely available through INSPIRE for patients, family members, and medical staff for which we received thanks. These consultation opportunities reminded us that our collective professional expertise and experience can be beneficial to a targeted segment of the wider community.

Unrealized Endeavors

After the production of the Local Living Authors document we realized that we might be able to parlay that into a celebrating local authors event, complete with a meet and greet book signing, a keynote speaker, and perhaps a publisher-led workshop to provide guidance to would-be authors. As we continued to brainstorm, we talked with a local bookstore owner and a member of the Madison Human Relations Commission that coordinates the One Book One Community program for the area. Quickly, we had gone from a simple idea of getting local authors together to a vision of a full-fledged Book Festival occurring over an entire weekend. Madison, of course, is known for successful weekend activities ranging from the previously mentioned Chautauqua Festival of Art and annual Regatta competition to Soup, Stew, Chili & Brew, Ribberfest, and RiverRoots Music & Folk Arts Festival weekends. However, the bigger the notion became we realized that it would have to involve the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, media, and more. Suddenly, what seemed plausible became something beyond our capacity due to the coordination of outside constituents and resulting time constraints. As a result, we have what we still believe to be a good idea but we have not been able to follow through with it to date. Perhaps we need to scale it back to our original vision of a one evening event.

Another unrealized endeavor was the acquisition of the Foundation Center Cooperative Collection to expand non-profit resources to the community. The public library had received a request from the Community Foundation of Madison & Jefferson County to inquire about the collection.

We thought that collectively we might be able to pursue the database and merge it with the training possibilities offered by the Hanover College Grant Development Officer.

Unfortunately, we could not get clarity on what constituted an area by the Foundation Center (eligibility for the collection requires a minimum of 100 non-profit organizations) and the initiative has since lost steam.

Both the local author event and Foundation Collection illustrate that good ideas sometimes go by the wayside. There can be any number of legitimate reasons, from a mushrooming vision and time constraints, to lack of funds or coalescence of other organizations that might be required. Instead of allowing these to become roadblocks preventing new plans to be considered, we have accepted that this is the nature of an informal coalition and that not having any certain sense of expectation from our respective administrations gives us the freedom to move on without any associated stigma.

Forthcoming Possibilities

In our most recent meeting, one of the issues we discussed was future possibilities to explore. A few items were easy to identify. These included a review and update of our Local Living Authors document, a reconsideration of a joint purchase of the Newsbank Madison Courier Online database which provides an index and full text back to 1997 for our local newspaper, and assessing database statistics to justify their ongoing subscription (databases are presented as a trial offering with their continuation based on use). Another area of consideration is investigation of mutual staff development and training opportunities. There is precedent for this as a Duggan Library staff member a few years back attended a book repair workshop provided by a vendor that was hosted at the public library. One specific opportunity that was discussed was shared training on emergency response to active shooters. We may also want to look at the possibility and need for shared instruction to local high school students. Lastly, at the invitation of the Ivy Tech library director, we were joined at our September 2013 meeting by the library director of IU-Southeast in New Albany. Though this campus is beyond our county lines, we are interested in seeing whether there are plausible benefits to be derived by expanding to a regional mindset, and there is also the possibility of inviting the local historical society librarian to our group. However, we remain aware that any growth may come at the expense of increased complexity in results-oriented achievements.

Conclusion

As we enter a new reality of library funding and staffing, combined with the rapid pace of technological change, and changing demographics, libraries must be attentive to opportunities that encourage community based multi-type library collaboration rather than sustain old silos. To move forward together, it is important to recognize that not all libraries are equal. While there may be some overlap in resources and services, that overlap is small.

Each of our libraries has a distinct mission and focus, not to

mention separate facilities and staff. The Duggan Library seeks to provide access to a diverse intellectual community as users maximize their potential as scholars. Ivy Tech serves as a source of instruction and assistance in the use of its primarily digital resources and services for its students, faculty, and staff. The public library provides collections and services greater in depth and scope in support of children's activities, adult literacy, recreational reading, programming, etc.

Collectively, we believe the libraries to be complementary, not competitive, and proactively working together we can provide cost-sharing benefits, product development, and consultation services, to more effectively and efficiently meet the scholarly, recreational, and literacy needs of our rural community.

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Resources

Ancestry for Libraries: <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/ale.html>

ebrary Public Complete: <http://www.ebrary.com/corp/public.jsp>

Foundation Center: <http://foundationcenter.org/>

Hanover College Duggan Library web site: <http://library.hanover.edu>

INSPIRE: <http://www.in.gov/library/inspire>

Ivy Tech-Madison Library web site: <http://wwwcc.ivytech.edu/library/southeast/index.html>

Jefferson County Public Library web site: <http://mjcpl.org/>
Local Living Authors: <http://library.hanover.edu/pdf/localauthors.pdf>

Mango Languages: <http://www.mangolanguages.com/>

Newsbank: <http://www.newsbank.com/>

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