The task set for the Collection Building Task Force was to provide direction for continuing the remarkable OhioLINK revolution in collection development, in particular to facilitate a process for identifying and prioritizing OhioLINK collection development issues with specific recommendations for moving ahead. Bringing together a selection of library directors with collection development staff from all major constituencies (OhioLINK original members, community colleges, private institutions, and the specialized libraries of the legal and medical community) the Task Force identified a set of ten initiatives which they felt would significantly advance collection development in Ohio academic libraries. The two most important underlying assumptions of the Task Force were:

1) that joint, coordinated action by the Ohio library community has been the key to past OhioLINK success and will continue to be the most important element in any collection development strategy for the future, and

2) that active buy-in to the new paradigm must take place at all levels in the local library – bibliographers, collection development heads, and most especially, directors, who will continue to be key in providing motivation, direction and vision for the OhioLINK collection development revolution.

With the assistance of Task Force members these ten proposed initiatives were widely disseminated and discussed at the local level in the late Fall of 2001. The idea was not to just broadly bring these initiatives to librarians’ attention, but also to begin to locally surface a sense of priorities and concerns for state-wide review and discussion. On November 19, 2001 130 members of the OhioLINK community gathered in Columbus at the CBTF Summit. After a review of collection development progress to date by Tom Sanville, the attendees divided into 15 groups of 8 to 9 members each to: 1) determine whether the initiative should be undertaken, 2) establish priorities for those initiatives which should be pursued, and 3) raise any concerns they might have regarding implementation of those initiatives.

Once the groups finished their tasks, the whole group was re-convened to review the totaled results and to allow brief discussion of the initiatives with the larger audience. While all ten initiatives received some support (see charts), five clearly had the most community support and interest. In descending order they were:
1) Expand the amount spent on cooperative central purchases, e.g. war chest, and increase the types and formats of the material considered for such purpose.

- The enthusiasm for this initiative is obviously based in the success OhioLINK has had to date in increasing the “bang for the buck” of library collection dollars. A number of comments revolved around the idea that central purchasing was just a “more powerful” or “more effective” way of spending collection budgets.

- Some concern was raised by a number of people regarding the funding formula. Unfortunately, there was no consensus on how the formula should be changed. Both large and small libraries expressed concern that they were being disadvantaged by the current formulations. The most positive aspect of this concern was the low level of emotion with which it was raised. Possibly people were primarily concerned that the formula not be further shifted to their disadvantage, i.e. the comments were defensive in nature rather than indicative of a true wish for change.

Specific recommendations:

i. Expand the war chest operation in both dollar amount and type of material purchased, including the possibility of such non-electronic materials as books and microform sets

ii. The war chest formula should not be changed for local libraries, although for the near term (next 1-2 years) central money should be a part of new purchases

iii. A study be undertaken to see what part of local collections’ budgets presently goes to cooperative purchases

iv. OhioLINK should not let rebalancing of cooperative collections purchase (due to fiscal constraints) preclude new purchases, hence CIRM should actively continue to identify new electronic products for cooperative purchase, particularly journals

v. Continue the “big deal” approach to journal purchases as a general strategy

vi. Explore the possibility of cost savings by eliminating ultra low use journals from the “big deals”

vii. Actively seek to reduce unnecessary duplication of print materials in order to free funds for increasing the depth and breadth of the collection

2) Continue exploration of new approaches to collection development, e.g. mass purchase of e-journals, patrons selection of e-books.

- There is clearly an ongoing and fundamental commitment to communal exploration of new formats and styles of collection development. The recent problems with IT Knowledge and NetLibrary have not dissipated this commitment, but have added a new element of caution to the exploration process. Perhaps like the Supreme Court’s school
desegregation decision we should move ahead to explore new formats with “all deliberate speed.”

- Specific recommendations:
  i. Evaluate current and new ebook acquisitions from a strategic perspective, i.e. what new value are they adding to the collections
  ii. Continue to actively investigate purchase of non-textual (e.g. audio, video and graphical) materials of interest to significant elements of the OhioLINK community, e.g. Heart and Lung Sounds, Films for the Humanities and Naxos recordings
  iii. Preserve the journal collection in the EJC, except as in “vi” above
  iv. Establish model contracts and practices for non-textual materials

3) Undertake a major publicity and lobbying campaign designed to increase local understanding and support of local library budgets by the Provosts and faculty on OhioLINK library campuses.

- The present financial crisis in the state of Ohio in higher education is putting great pressure on Provosts/Chancellors to see OhioLINK services as an excuse for a reduced commitment to local libraries. It is very important to get the message out and clearly understood that OhioLINK is only as strong as its individual libraries and that central funding should serve as a mechanism for encouraging/leveraging the use of local collection dollars, not as a replacement for investment in the local library.

- Specific recommendations
  i. Convene a “summit” meeting of the Provosts to discuss these issues
  ii. Prepare publicity and information which can be used at the local institutions to publicize and explain the interdependence of the OhioLINK budget and college/university library budgets
  iii. Begin state-wide tracking and reporting of at least six measures of local support for libraries
     1. absolute annual library budget
     2. library budget as a percentage of university/college budget
     3. absolute annual library collections budget
     4. library collections budget as a percentage of college/university budget
     5. library dollars per student FTE
     6. collection dollars per student FTE
  iv. Investigate and make recommendations on how OhioLINK can do a better job of educating the legislature on the value of OhioLINK, including both central initiatives and increasing the ability of local libraries to serve as OhioLINK advocates
4) Increase involvement in and coordination of local collection development activities, e.g. state-wide meetings and list server activities of subject/bibliographer groups, participation in state-wide approval program, etc…

- The central issue here is the tension between local collection development autonomy and the advantages/leverage of coordinated action – both in terms of collection development and collection sharing. Finding the right balance between local autonomy and collective action is a core and highly charged issue. The solution will likely not be a single resolution so much as a process of continued negotiation and adjustment in a constantly changing environment. Hence developing a process rather than a single solution is likely to be the appropriate goal.

- Specific recommendations
  i. Increase involvement of the appropriate elists as CIRM “subcommittees “ to solicit input and encourage discussion on collection issues at the local level, including broadening the assignments beyond purchase/cancellation decisions to such other areas as appropriate duplication rates in subject areas
  ii. Encourage Yankee to more actively market the state-wide approval plan to local institutions as part of a movement to an “all in” OhioLINK approval plan in the future
  iii. Explore expanding the book approval plan to other vendors, including those dealing with non-English and non-US imprints
  iv. Explore the “big deal” with a serials aggregator (e.g. Ingenta, Ebsco) in order to add smaller journal publishers to the collections
  v. Investigate the impact of electronic journal licenses and pricing on our future provider relationships and on vendors of serials in print format

5) Expand Peirc to all significant formats of a library’s collection, e.g. microforms, videos, DVD’s, etc…

- The central issue here is how to find a way for the OhioLINK community to move beyond an agreement in principle that reasonable sharing of the full range of local materials within the OhioLINK community is appropriate and advantageous to all.

- Specific recommendations:
  i. Reaffirm the LAC endorsement in principle that the reasonable sharing of all materials held by OhioLINK libraries is a desirable goal
  ii. Identify significant “collections” and/or sub communities (e.g. music CD’s) and work with them one at a time to achieve community-wide sharing rather than trying to eat the whole elephant at once
iii. Investigate and report on the implications of Pcirc (i.e. wear and tear of shipping) for the long term preservation of the collections

Remaining five initiatives

Although there was less consensus on the value of these remaining items, it was the feeling of the task force that these possible initiatives should not be discarded but simply put on the back burner for the time being. Once progress has been made on the more pressing initiatives it might well be worth while to revisit these initiatives and the issues they represent.

The one exception to this back burner approach may be the issue of increased central staff support. Although this recommendation was not rated one of the top five initiatives, it seems likely that such support may well be a precondition for serious progress on these top five initiatives. Exactly how such staff support should be arranged in terms of assignments or funding is not clear in the present financial environment but may not be possible to ignore the need for such help. The task force did note the success that the five CONSORT colleges had in receiving a Mellon grant to fund a similar position for coordinating their collection activities.

In descending order of consensus (with context):

6) Review the central resources needed to support the OhioLINK libraries collection development agenda, particularly staffing.

- There is widespread concern that the prominent role played by collection development issues in the OhioLINK community requires more staff support if they are to be adequately handled. Would it be useful to have a staff person, either full or part time, whose main assignment is support collection development issues? Given the present funding crisis in higher education how important is such a position and how might it be funded if considered desirable?

7) Continue development and expansion of new central initiatives designed to retain control of and improve access to the academy’s products, e.g. the Dissertations/Theses database

- The Dissertations/Theses database appears to be off to a good start but has very limited participation from OL colleges and universities. Is this a worthwhile OL agenda and, if so, how can we encourage universal participation?

- There is considerable discussion and experimentation in the academic community regarding the general concept of Open Archives for material developed by the scholarly community, e.g. PubMed, the Los Alamos
preprint archive, etc… How important is OL participation in such agendas? Are there particular initiatives or programs which OL should be exploring, either on our own or with other consortia?

- OL has had good success in facilitating the development of home-grown databases by the academic library community in Ohio, e.g. Wright State Wright Brothers Archive, Cincinnati architecture, etc… Participation in such efforts is still limited to a handful of libraries. How important is the development of such databases? If important, how can OL encourage more universal participation? Is there a need for “peer review” of such efforts to ensure continued quality and usefulness of these databases?

8) Develop a clearer and more defined understanding of how individual remote storage usage, access and policies interact with collection development issues on the local campus and in the OhioLINK environment, e.g. last copy policies, Pcirc, microcards, etc…

- There is an almost complete lack of coordination or knowledge of remote storage policies and practices in Ohio and yet these facilities are now housing millions of volumes of materials that are not always visible or available to Ohio academic patrons. Would it be useful to gather information on the degree to which these materials are generally available to the academic community and identify key issues regarding access?

- There is massive duplication of stored items in Ohio’s remote storage facilities. Some may be useful; much is probably wasteful, especially since CRL also holds duplicated items. Would it be useful to explore developing appropriate knowledge and policies regarding last copy retention?

9) Review and/or explore the role of Pcirc loan periods as they affect collection development needs.

- There is uncertainty in how loan period affects collection development decisions. For example, would shorter loan periods allow more access so that there could be less duplication in local collections? Or would longer loan periods, particularly for faculty, allow them to have longer access and so would reduce duplication in local collections? Should there be differential loan periods by patron type or by format type?

10) Define an “official” position regarding commercial products designed to replace library services or collections, e.g. Questia, Big Chalk, or which interact in fundamental ways with library services or collections, e.g. Blackboard, WebCT.

- OhioLINK has taken a position (not to get involved) on its involvement with for-profit academic programs. Would it be important or useful for OL libraries to have a defined position regarding commercial competitors to
the library community such as Questia, Big Chalk, and others? What would the key elements of such a statement be?

- Facilitating access to OL provided materials for such commercial but widely used products as Blackboard or WebCT, can be both expensive and time consuming for OL staff. How important is such facilitating for OL libraries?