To: OhioLINK CIRM

From: OhioLINK Collection Building Task Force

Date: 3.26.2003

Subject: Duplication in the Central Catalog Discussion Document

The Collection Building Task Force offers the following document as a beginning step in discussion of the rates of duplication in the central catalog of OhioLINK, along with the corollary of bringing the duplication to a more defendable level within the state, while perhaps enriching the catalog with more lightly held titles. The document’s method is to discuss and suggest a minimum percentage of available copies of a title that could be a threshold to help in a decision to buy or to rely on copies within the state.

The document is offered as a discussion piece. We hope it stimulates real discussion about duplication in the central catalog. We assume its method and numbers will be questioned, and welcome this. We would like the discussion to be entered into broadly across the state. We could see this document presented at a fall meeting of collection development people and discussed among subject groups, for example. The particular methods and numbers presented could be tested and proven or be replaced by other suggestions. We would welcome growth in the document, as in disciplines or subject groups taking the suggestions, and massaging them to the experience of their groups. Eventually and perhaps ideally, it might be backed up with some tests of number of titles and availability within the state by different types of material in different subject areas.

Eventually it might lead to some communal thought by type of material and by subject area of what might be seen as an acceptable level of duplication. While any guidelines discussed and developed from the document would never be a requirement in purchasing, they could be a guide for librarians trying to make purchase decisions balancing local need and statewide availability.
Duplication of Holdings Among OhioLINK Libraries

Rev. 3/26/03

The development of the OhioLINK consortium has reached a stage where practical cooperative collection development can be realized. A long-standing obstacle to cooperative efforts is the time-consuming and somewhat complicated process of getting materials from one library to another (or interlibrary loan). Patron-initiated circulation or PCIRC has enabled OhioLINK to provide a stable and reliable system for getting materials from library to another in 2-3 working days. This level of efficiency provides the foundation for member libraries to begin actively pursuing cooperative collection building projects. One of the issues that needs to be addressed as cooperative ventures are implemented is duplication of holdings among OhioLINK libraries as reflected in the Central Catalog. This document serves three functions:

1. It describes the level of duplication for current purchases among OhioLINK libraries reflected in the Central Catalog
2. It suggests an appropriate level of duplication from the consortium perspective
3. It provides guidance in practical ways to avoid excessive duplication

Excessive Duplication of Holdings Indicated in the Central Catalog

A study conducted in 2002 of a sample of 415 current publications (books published 10 months prior to the study) revealed that there was an average of 8.46 copies purchased per title. Of those copies, an average of 5.9 of them were available for PCIRC. This sets the level of duplication, measured as the available number of copies, at 70%. A second sample tested in the same manner six months after the first sample also set the level of duplication at 70%. In addition, a second test of the first sample six months later showed that duplication increased by 4%.

OhioLINK collections are a shared resource. Holdings of member libraries are listed in a central catalog, and a reliable, efficient delivery system (PCIRC) permits effective sharing of monograph collections. Data collected in 2002 however indicate that significantly more copies per title of currently published monographs are available for circulation than are actually in use. This suggests unnecessary duplicate purchasing of current imprints by member libraries. Moreover, studying circulation of retrospective imprints indicates that as imprint age rises, the level of unnecessary duplication (the percentage of available copies) increases.

Appropriate Level of Duplication

Deciding on an appropriate or acceptable level of duplication is difficult. Collection development is a subjective activity that is conducted at the local library. The primary concern is the local collection and the needs of the member institution. Still, when materials are being considered for addition to the library, if the content does not suggest a
specific local need for the material, the library should consider the number of copies available for PCIRC in the Central Catalog. If a significant number of copies have a status of AVAILABLE, the library should avoid purchasing a copy to avoid unnecessary duplication. Saving the money that would have been spent on the duplicated title, the library could invest in similar materials not widely available in the Central Catalog.

Since it is difficult to determine the expected use of any title at a particular point in time, there is little justification to prescribe a fixed number of copies purchased. However, it is fair to expect a certain amount of duplication to accommodate those times when a specific title will be in high demand.

Each OhioLINK library is urged to consider this issue and develop guidelines for purchasing duplicates of titles held by other members. Levels of duplication in monograph purchasing will depend on a variety of factors including type of library, subject area(s) collected, patron demands and collection use, and the local materials budget.

One possible approach is to categorize monographs considered for purchase in terms of levels of availability for local patrons. Below is a portion of a statement from a document, “Purchasing Monographs in View of OhioLINK” in use at one member library:

Since OhioLINK markedly improves access to library resources statewide, it offers an opportunity to rethink how we select books for the library collection. The library's acquisitions budget can be used most effectively if selectors carefully consider when books should be purchased for the collections and when it is sufficient for titles to be accessible through OhioLINK. The opportunity to rely on OhioLINK for some materials that would have been purchased in the past allows us to consider for purchase materials that are less widely available, thereby providing access to a richer and more diverse collection of materials within OhioLINK. Accordingly, faculty and others selecting materials for the collections are asked to assign each book request to one of the following categories:

- **L - LOCAL**
  Books needed locally, regardless of their availability through OhioLINK. Books in this category need to be locally owned and will be ordered for the local collection upon request. Examples are books needed for frequent or prolonged use to support undergraduate teaching and learning, and important books in disciplines taught locally needed to insure the integrity of the library's collections.

- **A - ACCESSIBLE**
  Books that must be readily accessible, either through OhioLINK or through purchase for the local collection.
  Books in this category will be ordered for the local collection within a reasonable period of time as funds permit if they are not readily accessible via OhioLINK.
Examples are specialized scholarly treatises primarily needed for research, books needed infrequently or for brief periods, and books of lesser disciplinary importance.

Another method of defining an appropriate level of duplication is to set it at a fixed percentage, based on the best information available. Arbitrarily, a threshold for duplication may be set at 25%. That is, when the number of available copies exceeds 25% of the total number of copies purchased, unnecessary duplication exists.

Guidelines for Avoiding Unnecessary Duplication

Because the level of duplication is measured as a percentage of available copies, setting fixed limits to the number of copies purchased is problematic. Some titles will not be requested as often as others. So setting a limit of 10 copies per title might be too high for less-used materials. Instead, the best measurement is a determination of the percentage of available copies. If this percentage exceeds 25%, another copy is not needed.

Examples:

- 10 copies of a particular title exist in the Central Catalog. 6 copies are in use and 4 are available at the time of review. The level of duplication is 40% (4/10). Since this is higher than the 25% threshold, the library is advised not to purchase a copy.

- 5 copies of a particular title exist in the Central Catalog. 4 copies are in use and 1 is available. The level of duplication is 20%. The library is advised that another copy is needed.

The 25% duplication threshold is provided as a guideline. Individual libraries may decide to establish their own threshold. An example of this is provided above. In general, the concept is to first consider the local library’s need to purchase a specific title. If the title is not considered essential for the local collection, then the OhioLINK Central Catalog should be consulted. Whether or not the selector uses quantifiable parameters (25% duplication, for example) for deciding to buy the title, the selector should consider the necessity of purchasing the title in light of its availability within OhioLINK.
Oberlin is now a member of OhioLINK, a consortium of 76 Ohio academic libraries sharing over 30 million items and electronic resources via a centralized catalog and networked databases. Oberlin students and faculty can borrow monographs from other OhioLINK libraries by initiating their own requests online. Books are delivered to Oberlin usually within 2-3 working days of a request. Books borrowed through OhioLINK may be used for three weeks and, except in unusual circumstances, may be routinely renewed for an additional three weeks.

Since OhioLINK markedly improves access to library resources statewide, it offers an opportunity to rethink how we select books for the library collection. The library's acquisitions budget can be used most effectively if selectors carefully consider when books should be purchased for the collections and when it is sufficient for titles to be accessible through OhioLINK. The opportunity to rely on OhioLINK for some materials that would have been purchased in the past allows us to consider for purchase materials that are less widely available, thereby providing access to a richer and more diverse collection of materials for Oberlin's library users and those within the OhioLINK consortium. Accordingly, faculty and others selecting materials for the collections are asked to assign each book request to one of the following categories.

**L - LOCAL**
Books needed at Oberlin, regardless of their availability through OhioLINK. Books in this category need to be locally owned and will be ordered for Oberlin's library collection upon request. Examples are books needed for frequent or prolonged use to support undergraduate teaching and learning, and important books in disciplines taught at Oberlin needed to insure the integrity of the library's collections.

**A - ACCESSIBLE**
Books that must be readily accessible, either through OhioLINK or through purchase for Oberlin's library collections. Books in this category will be ordered for Oberlin's library collections within a reasonable period of time as funds permit if they are not readily accessible via OhioLINK. Examples are specialized scholarly treatises primarily needed for research, books needed infrequently or for brief periods, and books of lesser disciplinary importance.
Software Tool to Help Determine the Level of Duplication
Developed by Rob Kairis, KSU-Stark

This program was designed to extract holdings information from the OhioLINK Central Catalog to help determine the level of duplication and assist book selectors in deciding whether or not a specific copy of a title should be purchased based on the number of available copies already existing in OhioLINK.

The general guideline is that if 25% of the existing copies have a status of AVAILABLE and can be borrowed using PCIRC, then additional copies need not be purchased. This guideline uses the shared catalog perspective to make that determination. Local selectors are free to make the selection decision based on any criteria they wish. This program merely facilitates the guideline, performing the calculations for the selector.

To use the program, go to http://www.stark.kent.edu/library/guide25.htm and download the software and readme file.