LAST COPY SERVICES

What are the opportunities and benefits of collaboration?

An Innovative Conversation by David Kay, Owen Stephens and Annette DeNoyer   APRIL 2014

In late 2013 and early 2014, we spoke to library leaders in the UK and US, all of whom have an interest in 'last copy' services, to discuss how they operate in a consortial or national context and what benefits participating libraries hope to see.

David Clay, Associate University Librarian Learning & Research Support at the University of Salford

Dr. Clem Guthro, Director of the Colby College Libraries

Bart Harloe, Executive Director of ConnectNY

Sara Marsh, Director of Learner Support Services at the University of Bradford and SCONUL Chair

While serving as head of Academic Liaison at the University of Liverpool, David Clay saw the opportunities and challenges presented by participation in the early phases of the UK Research Reserve project. In his current position at the University of Salford, David is able to reflect on the differences between the two institutions and the effect on motivations and benefits in relation to last copy and shared collection management activities.

Clem Guthro and Bart Harloe bring experience with shared print management arrangements in the northeast US from the Maine Shared Collections Strategy (MSCS) and the ConnectNY Shared Print Trust, respectively. In both cases, all libraries involved share a common library management system (Innovative).

Responsible for library services at the University of Bradford, as well as chair of SCONUL, Sara Marsh brings both a local and national view to the potential of last copy and shared collection management services in the UK.

SOME BACKGROUND

Libraries have a strong tradition of working collectively to ensure materials are preserved. For some libraries, such as National Libraries, preservation of materials is a core part of their mission. The British Library has made 'guaranteed access for future generations' one of the five themes within its current vision, while the Library of Congress's Preservation Directorate has the mission 'to assure long-term, uninterrupted access to the intellectual content of the Library's collections.'

Even for those libraries where preservation is not central to their purpose, it is standard practice to consider the implications of disposing of materials, including whether the material is unique, valuable, and which other libraries (if any) hold such material.

The last decade has seen the creation of more formal agreements between groups of libraries to ensure that collectively they don't dispose of unique materials and that there is always a 'last copy' within the group to guarantee access to the materials now and in the future.

BOOKS AND JOURNALS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The 'last copy' agreements covered in this conversation focus on either books or journals, but not both. The question of how 'last copy' differs when considering these two different types of material are considered by the interviewees.

David Clay notes that journal usage suggests researchers are no longer interested in using the physical copy of journals, even where they serve as 'backup' for ceased online subscriptions.

Recent work by Jisc[1] suggests that the widespread use of PDF, with no digital rights management (DRM) applied for online journal articles, is another factor in making these more accessible and acceptable as a replacement for printed items. Library access to eBooks compares very unfavourably because DRM is often applied, and eBooks cannot be relied upon to work across platforms and devices.

1   http://knowledgebaseplus.wordpress.com/ebooks-co-design-project/

David goes on to state that for books, there is much more concern about immediate access to printed copies, making a remote 'last copy' much less attractive. David feels this attitude might change as more material is either digitised or born digital, but he expresses a concern that book materials printed between c.1920 and c.2000—not yet public-domain and not born digital—will not be digitised.

Sara Marsh emphasises the differences between books and journals, noting that typically demand for journal materials is for small parts of the whole (articles), and these either already exist in digital format or can be digitised on demand. She contrasts this situation with the typical requirement to access large parts of a book, or indeed the whole book, where a just-in-time approach to digitisation is less practical.

Sara also notes that students still often request access to printed books either in preference to, or alongside, the electronic copy.

Large-scale digital collections of books are starting to be considered part of the 'last copy' picture now. Clem Guthroe describes how, within Maine, they are now able to offer 'print on demand' services in relation to digital materials within the Hathi Trust collection. This approach may provide a way of exploiting digital copies while serving an ongoing preference for print, expressed by both researchers and students as related by David and Sara.

THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Clem makes several points about the success of the Maine Shared Collections Strategy (MSCS) to date, including:

- **The need to carry out collection analysis across multiple libraries, aided by the use of the same library management system by all partners;**
- **The focus on preservation, not stock disposal; and**
- **The pre-existence of resource sharing agreements and mechanics to transfer physical items between libraries quickly and efficiently.**

The last of these points is picked up by Bart Harloe, who emphasises the need to think in terms of a 'resource sharing service' rather than a stock retention or collection management project. For the CNY Shared Print Trust, Bart states that having a common platform and direct consortial borrowing arrangements in place are key.

Sara describes the challenge as providing 'effective access' to materials that might no longer be held in printed form at a local library. This access may include electronic versions, document delivery agreements, or shared access schemes between libraries—the SCONUL Shared Access scheme in the UK being of particular relevance.

David and Bart both note that coordinated approaches to last copy services may help convince researchers that deci-

sions about stock retention and disposal are not being made without due consideration of continued access to stock, and thus it may be easier to reach agreement on otherwise difficult decisions to dispose of stock.

Sara and David note the need to avoid last copy and collective stock management projects that put an undue cost onto individual institutions, saying that it is difficult to justify participation in schemes that are not, at worst, cost-neutral to the institutions involved.

Perhaps underlying all successful initiatives in the last copy area is trust between participating institutions. This point is made by both Clem and Bart, who see a trusted relationship between partners as absolutely key to a successful collaboration around shared print management.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Bart Harloe outlines a number of challenges that he associates with shared collection management and last copy services. Bart stresses the need for more intelligent metadata management and better algorithms to enable the matching and de-duplication of records across multiple library management systems.

While eBooks usage will be part of the solution for print management and last copy services, there is some way to go before digital copies are trusted as a 'last copy.' Clem describes how MSCS is using the presence of materials in the Hathi Trust collection as justification to not retain the print, but Bart notes that there are still questions regarding what materials an institution can access and how quickly access can be offered. Bart emphasizes that, where eBooks may be used to provide the 'effective access' described by Sara, these eBooks must be available to all participating institutions, which meant coordinating negotiations for eBook access across all partners in the CNY Shared Print Trust.

In the UK, the prominence of the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC) for document supply leads to particular challenges. Sara suggests that if the BLDSC didn't exist, we might need to invent it, and yet we know that the BLDSC is seeing an ongoing drop in requests[2], in part due to the widespread availability of materials in electronic format.

No matter what the impact of eBooks, it seems highly likely that there is going to be an ongoing need to manage print collections for the foreseeable future. Bart believes the transition to 'electronic as default' will take 5-10 years, with the relevant standards developing over the next 3-5 years.

SERVICE EVOLUTION

A number of existing shared services and national initiatives in the UK already exist that relate to the concept of 'last copy.'

2   http://www.forumforinterlending.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/future-document-supply-service.pdf

Here we explore the potential for the evolution of three existing services and projects to further support Last Copy services in the UK.

- **The UK Research Reserve (UKRR)**[3]
- **Copac Collections Management Tools**[4]
- **The UK National Monograph Strategy**[5]

THE UK RESEARCH RESERVE

UKRR is a well established 'last copy' service for journals which helps participating libraries de-duplicate print journal holdings while ensuring that three print copies of each journal are retained across the collaboration, including one copy at the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC).

Currently in its second HEFCE funded phase, UKRR's efforts have led to over 77km of shelving space being released across participating libraries. A third phase of the service is now being planned, which is designed to move central funding from HEFCE to a sustainable, grass-root collaboration between participants.

Despite funding available to UKRR participants, Sara and David both note that there is overhead involved that can make it difficult to build a local business case for some institutions. One particularly resource- intensive part of the process is the 'scarcity check' carried out at the level of specific journal issues, to make sure that no materials are lost during de-duplication and stock disposal. The process has already been significantly improved through integration with the SUNCAT Serials Union Catalogue. It has been proposed that, in order to reduce the UKRR cost to participants, the scarcity check be removed completely in phase 3.

The involvement of the BLDSC, which libraries across the UK rely on for document delivery services, has been key to ensuring libraries and their members have confidence that materials will continue to be accessible when stock is no longer held locally. UKRR membership includes access to a premium 24-hour electronic delivery service for requests to the BLDSC.

There seems little doubt that UKRR has offered significant benefits to participating institutions. David notes how it helped convince academic staff at Liverpool of a strategy to free up space for other purposes and to move out of local print journal management as far as possible.

UKRR now faces the challenge of building a sustainable service that continues to serve existing members while making membership an attractive proposition for a wider range of institutions across the UK.

COPAC COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Copac is a union catalogue of approximately 90 UK and Irish libraries, including many university libraries. In 2011, collaboration between Copac, Research Libraries UK (RLUK), and the White Rose Consortium was set up to find ways to exploit Copac data for the purposes of collection management.

One of the six key use cases addressed by the project is 'identifying last copies among titles considered for withdrawal.'[6] The tools developed in this project clearly have the ability to inform decisions on print stock management and are designed to enable institutions to see how far their print holdings overlap with those of other institutions and how such holdings are distributed geographically across the UK.

In 2013, the project released 'beta' versions of the collection management tools to RLUK members, conferring with libraries to understand how the tools worked in practice and to consider how the tools might be taken from a project to a service basis.

As the project moves into 2014, it faces the challenge of delivering 'service ready' tools that integrate smoothly with institutions' local systems and workflows. There is also the question of what value such tools might offer to libraries not yet included in the Copac Union catalogue.

THE UK NATIONAL MONOGRAPH STRATEGY

The UK National Monograph Strategy (NMS) is a collaborative project between Jisc, SCONUL and RLUK, looking at the potential for a national approach to collection, preservation, supply, and digitisation of books. As such, it speaks to many of the issues explored in this conversation and is very much aligned with Sara's view that 'last copy' and similar services must work at a national level in the UK.

At the end of 2013, the project outlined eight high-level ideas, some of which are further reaching and cover the changing monograph publication models and the future of 'the book' as a concept; however, several of the eight ideas are relevant to this conversation on 'last copy' and shared print management, including:

- **National Monograph Knowledgebase: a comprehensive and open bibliographic and holdings database enabling the development of new applications and services for libraries, systems vendors, publishers and users;**
- **Digitisation Strategy: a national strategy that includes a national collection management approach, undertakes analysis, and prioritises collections; and**
- **National Licensing for Monographs: a nationally negotiated agreement for digital monographs.**

These ideas touch on a number of the issues raised by David, Sara, Clem and Bart; however, one aspect missing from the NMS ideas is how document delivery and resource sharing fits into a national strategy.

3   https://www.ukrr.ac.uk
4   http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management/
5   http://monographs.jiscinvolve.org/wp/

6   http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management/use-case-1-identifying-last-copies-among-titles-considered-for-withdrawal/

The scope of these ideas is extremely wide ranging and ambitious, and the challenge to the NMS partners will be how to build on existing initiatives and services (such as UKRR and Copac) to realise the various aspects of a national strategy.

INNOVATIVE RESPONSE

We spoke to Brad Jung (Vice President, Product Management) about how Innovative already supports resource sharing and other aspects of 'last copy' services, how they are building on these services, and the challenges that lie ahead.

Data access and analysis

Brad picks up on comments made by Clem and others that being able to carry out collection analysis is key to the success of 'last copy' services. Brad notes that 'increased access to data and the tools to support analysis of that data are both part of Innovative's long-term strategy,' which will support resource sharing and last copy services across libraries.

Brad describes how Sierra is built on an open database with an accompanying data dictionary, which makes the data stored in Sierra easily accessible for customers. Going beyond simple data access, the new Analytics product, Decision Center, supports institutions in actively managing their collections.

'This goes beyond the need for one-time reports,' Brad states. 'It is about helping libraries make the audit and housekeeping of their collections an ongoing activity in the business of the library.'

Brad says, 'In 2015-216, Innovative wants to dramatically increase what is happening with analytics. The aim is to support libraries in understanding their collections and the mass of data they have available to them.'

Sharing resources and intelligence

Brad sees Innovative as an enabler for sharing between organisations. While Innovative has always supported the sharing of resources between libraries, Brad reflects that an opportunity exists to increase the strength of this support by building on the developments in data access and analysis, in conjunction with the continued support and development of INN-Reach for resource sharing.

Brad states, 'INN-Reach already goes beyond just "document supply" but through to fulfillment, offering much faster responses and increasing usage. Expect to see a host of new reports to support last copy services.'

For Innovative, a key aspect of sharing is that a library can be confident that it remains in control of its collections and how they are used. Brad differentiates between 'shared usage' and 'shared control' and notes it is important that a library can control these two aspects separately. Brad's vision is that Innovative continues to support better and better resource sharing between libraries in the future, but that these enhancements come with the ability to specify who can access resources and who controls the resource.

Building for the future

Brad stresses that Innovative is committed to ensuring that libraries can fulfill their commitment to offering long term access to resources in a cost effective way and that thinking goes beyond existing products and incremental enhancements. He describes how Innovative is thinking ahead now to make sure they are in a position to support the required services in the future.

'The casual observation might be that "last copy print" is the end of the story, but it may just be the beginning,' Brad states. 'We need to consider the digital parallels where the question may not be about the "last copy" but the "authoritative copy."'

The proliferation of digital surrogates, 'born digital' materials, and the methods and devices people use to access resources all bring new challenges to ensuring any particular user can access material in an appropriate and convenient way. Brad notes that, while some users' continued interest in accessing printed materials can be supported by print-on-demand, these services typically only work for textual works that can be delivered on A4 format (or smaller). Brad believes that there may be the need to answer more subtle questions about the delivery of materials in the future, balancing aspects such as immediate access versus quality of experience.

For Brad, it is important that Innovative not only supports libraries with their current needs but works with the whole community to plan for the future. For him, the important question is, 'How do we make sure we are thinking this through and not just taking the first steps but have ideas on the next steps as well?'