



**Better Together:
Some Reflections on Library Cooperation
and Consortia with Special Reference to
ANZTLA Consortia**

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ANZTLA Conference, Perth, July 2010**

CONSORTIUM

An agreement, combination, or group (as of companies) formed to undertake an enterprise beyond the resources of any one member.

(Merriam-Webster OnLine)

LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

A formal association of libraries which is established to develop and implement resource sharing among the members and thereby improve the library services and resources available to their respective target groups.

(Rod Library, University of Iowa Glossary)

Six key cooperative activities in academic library consortia in the USA

1. Reciprocal borrowing privileges
2. Expanded interlibrary loan services
3. Union catalogues and lists of services
4. Photocopying services
5. Reference services
6. Delivery services

(Ruth Patrick, 1970)

A primary challenge of library development will be to foster a vital diversity within systems and structures of cooperation. ... In the library community increased reliance on computer technologies and especially the large bibliographic utilities has established a climate, indeed, the fact of cooperation far beyond that which was reasonably anticipated a decade ago. The electronic environment into which we have moved forces libraries in the direction of an interdependence which requires a posture of concentrated cooperation. The urgent task now is to harness the means of effective library cooperation to achieve goals which sustain excellence in theological library service.

(Stephen L. Peterson, 1984)

Four New Challenges Facing Libraries in the 1990s


1. Escalating number of publications
2. Massive increases in the prices of many scholarly journals
3. Rapid technological change
4. Rising user demands

(Thomas A. Peters, 2001)

Online Aggregators	Vendors
Cambridge Scientific Abstracts	Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
EBSCO	EBSCO
OCLC First Search	OCLC First Search
Ovid	Ovid
SilverPlatter	Ovid

Libraries participating in ANZTLA Online Databases Consortia with EBSCO

	ATLA	ATLAS	RPC	CPLI	NTA	OTA	Total Libraries	Total Databases
2003	20						20	20
2004	27	11	18				31	56
2005	30	12	28	7	4	4	37	85
2006	32	12	34	8	4	4	41	94
2007	32	14	36	9	6	6	44	103
2008	34	15	32	9	5	5	44	100
2009	37	18	34	8	6	5	48	108
2010	35	23	32	9	6	5	46	110



The lure of consortial activity is not efficiency, but cost avoidance and capitalizing on opportunities that would be difficult or impossible to realize if libraries acted unilaterally.

(Thomas A. Peters, 2003)

	New Libraries joining ANZTLA Consortia	Libraries leaving ANZTLA Consortia	Total Libraries
2004	13	2	31
2005	8	2	37
2006	4	0	41
2007	4	1	44
2008	2	2	44
2009	4	0	48
2010	0	2	46

2008 CAUL Statistics

	Number of Universities	Number of Libraries	EFTSU (Equivalent Full Time Student enrolments)
Australia	41	221	778,156
New Zealand	8	47	128,043
TOTAL	49	268	906, 199

Consortia efforts are time consuming, frustrating and difficult to build and sustain. But still, they are potent, social, economic and political forces in reducing the unit cost of e-information and increasing the resource and user base and help libraries to achieve more collectively than they could accomplish individually.

(Rama Nand Malviya & Anil Kumar, 2006)

No theological library exists unto itself; no institution exists without the help of others. Through thoughtful and intentional collaboration, strategic alliances between libraries ... can not only take us through these difficult economic times, they can take us to places we could never have gone alone.

(Ann Hotta, 2004)