



**The OCLC-AMICAL RESPOND project:
Leveraging WorldCat to connect international American
universities**

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Abstract

AMICAL is a consortium of American-modeled, liberal arts-oriented universities in Central and Western Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia. AMICAL members – who share educational frameworks, use of the English language, and key elements of their institutional missions – are trying to collaborate on the development of their library and information services and their curricular resources. In partnership with OCLC, AMICAL is implementing a pilot project called RESPOND (Resource Sharing Project for Network Discovery) in order to make AMICAL libraries' holdings more visible to each other and to the world, to help them analyze their collections, and to increase their ability to fulfill ILL/DD requests using library resources worldwide. By partnering with OCLC and leveraging WorldCat and other existing infrastructure, RESPOND has been able to introduce a wide variety of related services in a relatively short time. The newness of all these services, as well as libraries' diversity of locations, languages, and professional practices, has introduced many challenges. Benefits will be measured over the coming year as libraries experiment with the integration of RESPOND services into their workflow, but indirect effects such as increased communication and general cooperation are already appearing.

Introduction

Insofar as scholarly inquiry knows no national boundaries, there has always been good reason to expand the breadth of participation, and depth of cooperation, in international resource sharing. Globalization is leading universities to increasingly internationalize not only their resource sharing, but also their curricula and the general scope of their cooperation and exchange with other

institutions. Frequently compelled by financial advantages of cooperation, but with fundamental goals of advancing educational missions and human knowledge in general, international consortia in higher education have experienced constantly accelerating growth in numbers since the mid-20th century. Resource sharing is one of the most common goals of these consortia, along with the facilitation of student exchanges, international research, internationalization of curricula, and faculty exchange and development (Denman, 2002).

AMICAL, the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries,¹ is a new academic consortium working toward inter-institutional cooperation in a combination of these and other areas. With a unique organizational identity, AMICAL is building bridges between libraries and institutions from 15 countries across Central and Western Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia. Conceived in 2004, AMICAL is the first organized attempt to bring together American-modeled universities through the collaborative development of their library and information services and their curricular resources. One of AMICAL's most active projects is RESPOND (Resource Sharing Project for Network Discovery), a pilot project led jointly by AMICAL and OCLC² that leverages participation in OCLC's WorldCat database in order to bring these institutions closer together – and closer to their colleagues in the rest of the world. This paper will describe the background for RESPOND, its key features and interesting challenges, and some of its direct and indirect benefits for the discovery and sharing of resources at AMICAL libraries.

The AMICAL consortium

AMICAL first began to take shape as an organization in 2004 after a year of planning led by the American University of Paris (AUP) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Generous financial support from the Mellon Foundation has allowed the consortium to hold yearly meetings since then, hosted in Paris (2004), Beirut (2005), Cairo (2006), and most recently in Ifrane, Morocco (2007). Although these meeting sites happen to be grouped around the Mediterranean, AMICAL is unlike the typical consortium in that its basis for membership has very little to do with geographic grouping, nor with research specialization or participation in a pre-existing organizational structure. To correct a common misunderstanding: while AMICAL members typically have “American University” in their name, they generally do *not* have a direct organizational relationship with the American University in Washington, D.C. AMICAL's members are diverse in terms of geographic location, demographic setting (e.g. urban vs. rural), organizational structure and even the languages used in the work environment.

Why did these institutions decide it was worth their while to join together? There are plenty of obstacles to collaboration between these institutions, but there are some key commonalities that have given rise to the possibility of fruitful cooperation. AMICAL's members are institutions outside the United States offering bachelor's and higher-level degrees under an American model, where the liberal arts figure significantly in their curriculum. Full members must be accredited with a North American accrediting agency. These “American” universities are all so different from their immediate neighbors in their own countries, and yet they have some very meaningful similarities as institutions and libraries. Because they are often locally isolated in terms of language – generally using English as the principle language of both instruction and library collection – and isolated in terms of educational framework and mission, they have fewer opportunities and reasons for collaborating with local institutions. AMICAL members' peers, in fact, are spread around the globe. They include colleges and universities in the United States, but there are particularities of providing an “American” education in a “foreign” context that makes their closest peers these other American universities outside the U.S.

¹ <http://amicalnet.org>

² Online Computer Library Center: <http://www.oclc.org>

Goals of AMICAL

As a relatively new consortium, AMICAL and its organizational goals continue to evolve. But despite the “Libraries” in its name, AMICAL is more than a library consortium. It is increasingly mixing traditional library consortial goals, such as e-resource licensing and resource sharing, with broader goals that try to bridge the missions – and members – of the library, IT and instructional technology units, and faculty, on their campuses. AMICAL members want better resource sharing; they want better deals on electronic resources; and they definitely want to have greater opportunities for professional development as librarians. But they also want to share with each other resources for information literacy instruction, to learn about new technologies for both libraries and learning, and to create resources and opportunities for faculty and students to work with each other across member institutions.

AMICAL’s need for enhanced resource sharing

Resource sharing was one of the first key consortial goals identified by AMICAL members, and therefore it was a natural starting point for building a network of cooperation that might later be expanded upon. A 2004 survey of AMICAL institutions established that more members were interested in resource sharing than in any other area of consortial activity. This was not surprising, since AMICAL's members often have a locally unique educational environment and an independent administrative status, and are therefore frequently isolated from existing resource sharing networks in their own countries. Part of the institutional survey focused on libraries’ collection size and composition, revealing that 82% of members' collections are in English, with the median percentage of English-language materials being 85%. Other languages such as Arabic and French are also widely represented. The survey also showed that members' access to the tools of automated and networked resource sharing were severely limited, with only three institutions making use of a networked utility for ILL messaging: one with OCLC and two with RLIN.

In general, the survey data suggested that AMICAL members' common use of English in instruction, their common tendency towards the American liberal arts curricular orientation, and their diverse collections might together mean that their libraries have great potential to share relevant resources with each other. Given their needs and relatively limited tools, AMICAL members stood to benefit immensely from automated access to a global resource sharing network with rich English-language resources, and OCLC – with its highly developed and reliable network, used by tens of thousands of libraries in North America and worldwide – was an obvious partner to choose.

RESPOND: Resource Sharing Project for Network Discovery

The basic elements for a pilot program of services in support of resource sharing were outlined in the summer of 2005 by Arthur Smith and OCLC, who named the pilot RESPOND: Resource Sharing Project for Network Discovery. Through discussion with AMICAL members and in consultation with resource sharing experts such as Mary Jackson³, the pilot was further developed by Jeff Gima over the next six months. When enrollment for the pilot was opened in spring 2006, 14 of AMICAL’s 18 members opted to join (Table 1). Those that did not join cited their current lack of staff resources available to devote to developing new interlibrary loan services. Preparatory services began in July 2006, with the pilot originally planned to run for one year.

³ then Director of Collections and Access Initiatives, Association of Research Libraries

Table 1
AMICAL institutions participating in the RESPOND pilot

Institution	Country
1. Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane	Morocco
2. American College of Greece	Greece
3. American University - Central Asia	Kyrgyzstan
4. American University in Bulgaria	Bulgaria
5. American University in Cairo	Egypt
6. American University of Armenia	Armenia
7. American University of Kuwait	Kuwait
8. American University of Paris	France
9. American University of Sharjah	United Arab Emirates
10. Central European University	Hungary
11. Franklin College	Switzerland
12. John Cabot University	Italy
13. Lebanese American University	Lebanon
14. Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus	Spain

The goals of RESPOND included enabling access to OCLC's global network, facilitating resource sharing within AMICAL, and broadening awareness of the diverse materials owned by AMICAL libraries. RESPOND comprises six core services and activities:⁴

1. Unlimited site-wide access to WorldCat via FirstSearch
2. Unlimited access to WorldCat Resource Sharing
3. Contribution of local catalog records to WorldCat
4. Local catalog creation from WorldCat records (to replace local records if desired)
5. Creation of AMICALcat (AMICAL Group Catalog via FirstSearch)
6. WorldCat Collection Analysis (for individual institutions and for the consortium)

These elements were to be implemented in phases over the course of the pilot year, roughly in the order shown. The order of implementation was obvious for some elements, since the creation of a group catalog, for example, required first contributing records to WorldCat. Other elements had to

⁴ General information from OCLC on:

FirstSearch/WorldCat: <http://www.oclc.org/firstsearch/content/worldcat>

WorldCat Resource Sharing: <http://www.oclc.org/resourcesharing/default.htm>

Batchloads: http://www.oclc.org/support/documentation/batchprocessing/using/concise_guide/default.htm

Local database creation:

http://www.oclc.org/support/documentation/batchprocessing/using/concise_guide/default.htm

Group Catalogs: <http://www.oclc.org/groupservices/about/groupcatalog/default.htm>

WorldCat Collection Analysis: <http://www.oclc.org/collectionanalysis/default.htm>

be reordered, however, as the preparatory work required at OCLC or among AMICAL libraries was in some cases more complex than anticipated. Staff access to WorldCat Resource Sharing, for example, turned out to be more quickly arranged than site-wide access to WorldCat via FirstSearch, since the administrative accounts used to manage the latter could only be created after a library had begun the process of loading their records into WorldCat.

Unlimited site-wide access to WorldCat via FirstSearch

This provides a simple but powerful search interface to the world's most comprehensive union catalog, allowing for the discovery and location of over 60 million unique bibliographic records in tens of thousands of libraries worldwide. The interface can be customized in many ways by each library, to allow for linking into the local catalog, for example, or integration with WorldCat Resource Sharing for patron-initiated ILL requests.

Unlimited access to WorldCat Resource Sharing

WorldCat Resource Sharing provides a web-based, ISO-ILL compliant system for automated transmission and management of current requests between tens of thousands of libraries and document suppliers worldwide. The web interface is intuitive but also provides rich functionality and configurability for advanced users; batch processing is available for higher-volume ILL units. Statistical reports are available that are useful for both ILL operations assessment and for collection development. The integrated ILL Fee Management allows AMICAL members to have lender/supplier fees lumped into their OCLC bill, without having to worry about invoicing, payment mechanism, or currency conversion.

Contribution of local catalog records to WorldCat

Part of the goal of RESPOND is to provide a simple, unified way of identifying the materials held in AMICAL libraries. A "retrospective" or "reclamation" batchload of each library's records is integrating much of AMICAL holdings into WorldCat and will allow the creation of a core union catalog on this basis (see "Group Catalog" below), including all holdings for which existing WorldCat records can be matched.

After performing the initial batchload, RESPOND participants choosing to contribute ongoing (original and copy) cataloging during the pilot may do so via either Connexion (OCLC's integrated cataloging system), or periodic ongoing batchloads. Connexion, which can be used via either a web interface or a Windows-based client, facilitates libraries' viewing, creating, updating and exporting of bibliographic and authority records. Of particular importance to AMICAL libraries is the fact that Connexion provides integrated access to Library of Congress authority files, partially automated copy cataloging from the 60-million record WorldCat database, and extensive multilingual support.

Contribution of original cataloging will benefit the entire OCLC cooperative and users worldwide; it will also allow our Group Catalog to provide an accurate and complete view of AMICAL holdings, which include a significant number of items previously unrepresented in WorldCat. Ongoing contribution of cataloging data allows a library's holdings to be represented in Open WorldCat, permitting users to discover a library's resources through Google and other participating search engines.

Local catalog creation from WorldCat records

One of the purposes of RESPOND was to offer each participating library the OCLC "master" record as a replacement for a library's local catalog record while retaining the local (classification, etc.) information. This can only be done for WorldCat matching records, of course: OCLC cannot improve a library's record that is not found in WorldCat. Six AMICAL libraries have opted to

retrieve this batch file of records back from OCLC to reconstruct or improve upon their local catalogs.

Creation of AMICALcat

OCLC Group Catalogs use the FirstSearch interface to provide a customizable union catalog of all consortium holdings represented in the WorldCat database. AMICALcat, the AMICAL Group Catalog⁵, has been customized with its own logo, colors, accessibility policy (public/private), and interface preferences. For users at participating libraries, a search initiated within AMICALcat can be broadened to a global WorldCat search.

WorldCat Collection Analysis

WorldCat Collection Analysis will provide a detailed and customizable analysis of both participant libraries' collections and of the AMICAL consortium as a whole. A variety of dimensions are available for analysis, including OCLC Conspectus (division > category > subject; using Dewey, LC or NLM classifications), publication date, language, format, etc. Such analyses will be useful not only for local collection development and reporting, but also for strategic planning for consortial resource sharing on many levels – in ILL, collaborative collection development, and possibly other areas.

A major goal of the RESPOND project, after all, is to better understand what these libraries have in their collections. Are their collections diverse enough in their shared languages to be useful for ILL purposes? Perhaps these small libraries, with limited collection budgets, are all collecting roughly the same core materials. For example, if only a small fraction of their English-language collections are unique among RESPOND libraries, rare will be the occasion when they are useful to each other as suppliers of such materials. If, on the other hand, it turns out that, among RESPOND libraries with a large Arabic-reading user community, there is a large percentage of Arabic titles that are held uniquely by one library, then the visibility of these materials – and their access through intra-AMICAL ILL – would be of potentially great interest to other AMICAL users.

Preliminary statistics indicate that RESPOND libraries hold at least 9000 titles⁶ for which no other library in WorldCat lists a holding (Table 2). A large number of additional titles having no matching record in WorldCat remain to be processed and possibly added as unique records. RESPOND libraries are in most cases from countries poorly represented as WorldCat contributors, and there seems to be much potential here for capitalizing on librarians' familiarity with, and collection of, material published locally or in native languages. Though we do not yet have data for a complete and detailed collection analysis by language, or other criteria, it appears that AMICAL's holdings have already added to WorldCat a small but significant collection of rare or hard to find items. This could be as important for researchers worldwide as it is for researchers at AMICAL institutions.

⁵ Guest (public) access to AMICALcat is available at:
<http://firstsearch.oclc.org/WebZ/FSLogin?sessionId=0&autho=100320209&password=amiguest&done=referer&loginmethod=direct>

⁶ Note that some of these may be different editions or manifestations of works already represented in WorldCat.

Table 2
Holdings counts for RESPOND libraries
as represented in WorldCat (June 2007)⁷

Institution Name	Holdings	Holdings unique in AMICALcat	Holdings unique in WorldCat
American Univ In Cairo	170,735	139,388	7,608
Lebanese Am Univ ⁸	169,189	(not available)	89
American Univ Of Sharjah	87,168	61,807	593
American Univ In Bulgaria	67,830	49,433	99
American Univ Of Paris	66,753	48,824	49
Al-Akawayn Univ	55,553	40,211	723
American Col Of Greece	36,756	25,157	0
Franklin Col	28,127	18,148	5
American Univ Of Kuwait	12,856	9,154	17
Cent European Univ	6,960	5,070	1
American Univ Central Asia	1,613	1,206	8
American Univ Of Armenia	379	273	1
John Cabot Univ	120	112	5
Saint Louis Univ	0	0	0
Totals	704,039	398,783	9,198

Advantages of partnering with OCLC

The idea of sharing library holdings data among AMICAL members to facilitate resource sharing was first discussed in 2004. The idea discussed at that time, however, was to create in-house some form of union catalog, using a Z39.50 portal, or simply to aggregate serials data in tabular form. Partnering with OCLC, however, is allowing a much wider range of possibilities for resource sharing than AMICAL could have achieved on its own.

The OCLC vision

With the inclusion of their bibliographic records in WorldCat, AMICAL libraries have "lifted" their resources into a generalized discovery landscape. AMICAL resources, although still visible at the local ILS level, are no longer tied to a particular catalogue or ILS, but are available in the users' Googlized search and discovery workflows. Similarly, AMICAL libraries now enjoy a worldwide

⁷ Data in some cases are absent or incomplete since not all participants have yet completed the initial batchload of their records or processed those that were unresolved with matching records in WorldCat. The number of unique AMICAL holdings is likely to be much higher once this is completed for the initial batchloads.

⁸ The most recent data for Lebanese American University were not available at the time of writing.

fulfillment option. The available catalogue becomes essentially the universe of those thousands of libraries participating in WorldCat.

ILL workflow & turnaround

The existing infrastructure of OCLC's WorldCat database and interlibrary loan system is allowing AMICAL members to adopt a new system for doing ILL without having to build the bibliographic database and messaging infrastructure themselves. For a large number of ILL requests, in particular for English-language non-returnables, AMICAL members are able to tap into a preexisting system of ILL messaging and potential suppliers for nearly any requested item.

The scale of the OCLC ILL network, and its extensive coverage of English-language library collections, provides the possibility for consolidating previously splintered ILL workflows adapted to individual suppliers. Our analysis over the coming year of WorldCat Resource Sharing statistics will tell us the breakdown of AMICAL-originated ILL requests by language, supplier and many other criteria. In the meantime, anecdotal evidence suggests that the vast majority of requests are for English-language materials, and AMICAL libraries request these from a wide variety of sources that may or may not participate in the OCLC network. Central European University borrows the majority of their materials from suppliers in Hungary; John Cabot University requests most of their items from Italian university and public libraries; Lebanese American University requests primarily from a combination of Lebanese libraries and international document suppliers such as BLDS; the American University of Paris requests from a small number of preferred French and American libraries, along with BLDS.

In most cases, the local (in-country) libraries are poorly or not at all represented in the WorldCat database, so the degree of potential consolidation of request workflow will depend in part upon the extent to which AMICAL libraries find it advantageous to route their requests to OCLC suppliers, even when that means that the supplier may be more distant geographically than their traditional local partners. For copy requests deliverable by electronic means, such as Ariel or fax, the geographic distance of the supplier is not necessarily a disadvantage; indeed, in cases where the time difference between requester and supplier allows a request placed in the late afternoon to be received in the morning of the same day, the geographic distance may even be advantageous. The American University of Paris has noticed that even for returnables, items requested via OCLC, typically from libraries in the United States, are delivered faster than those requested from French libraries; the only drawback in such cases is the higher cost of return postage. In cases like AUP's, where the library has been able to route the majority of its requests through the OCLC system instead of managing individual requests with local libraries, there has been a clear benefit of workflow automation and consolidation. There has also been an increase in performance. Our plan is to measure the performance and cost of AMICAL ILL operations over the coming year, in part to determine the circumstances in which use of the OCLC system is advantageous for such libraries.

A group catalog based on WorldCat

Motivations for sharing AMICAL libraries' holdings in a joint catalog were discussed earlier, but there are many reasons for which it was advantageous for AMICAL to build such a catalog specifically with OCLC. Most of the reasons have to do with the simplicity of building on OCLC's existing infrastructure without having to create this just for AMICAL.

OCLC has considerable experience building customized group catalogs on the basis of WorldCat holdings data, and the administrative process for this has become routine. Documentation and support for the configuration of the catalog was exceptionally thorough and effective,⁹ and the only glitches in the creation of the catalog had to do with delays in the batch uploading of libraries'

⁹ thanks in particular to Bridget Dauer (Product Specialist, Consortia Services, OCLC)

records, a separate issue. The resulting interface allows for guest and authenticated views, the latter allowing users to switch easily to the full WorldCat database or make use of any FirstSearch functionality that has been enabled, including patron-initiated ILL.

Some other small international library groups have had notable success in building their own union catalog and ILL system around a Z39.50 virtual catalog, one recent and particularly effective example being the IAMSLIC Distributed Library (Butler, et al., 2006). The Lebanese American University, in fact, has been trying to add AMICAL library catalogs as targets for their Z39.50-based federated search tool. Compared to the WorldCat-based group catalog, however, a fully-functional virtual AMICAL catalog would require the resources to develop the platform, as well as greater coordination among systems and technical staff at AMICAL libraries, all for a tool with the narrower goal of facilitating only intra-AMICAL ILL. Janifer Gatenby (2003, p. 124) notes other drawbacks inherent to virtual catalogs, as opposed to “physical” union catalogs (with pre-integrated holdings data), including slow or non-existent duplicate detection. She also notes that application of FRBR could help to streamline the identification and location of desired items in a shared catalog environment (p. 125). WorldCat records, and by consequence AMICALcat records, are FRBRized upon inclusion in the database.

Challenges specific to AMICAL and OCLC

The RESPOND pilot promises great improvements in AMICAL members’ resource sharing, but it involves a very extensive set of new tools and workflows to introduce at once to a group largely unfamiliar with OCLC’s services. Implementation has therefore brought many challenges. Communication of project information, gathering of feedback, training, implementation, and overall coordination, have all been made difficult not only because of the breadth of the services offered but also because of geographic distance between participants, logistical hurdles such as differing time zones and work weeks, and differences in language, culture and professional background of librarians. Many of the library staff members may never have the opportunity to meet each other or OCLC staff face to face, meaning that questions and problems must be resolved at a distance or during the few days each year when some are able to meet at the AMICAL conference.

Building the group catalog

If there is a drawback to basing AMICALcat on the WorldCat platform, it may be that the bibliographic data is dependent upon the timely and complete contribution of local records. In a project like RESPOND, the database of holdings is being created through the batch processing and integration of files that ideally contain all of a library’s holdings. Complete contribution of records, therefore, requires getting over at least two major administrative and bibliographic hurdles.

The first hurdle is simply getting all records submitted to OCLC for processing. For reasons ranging from policy issues to lack of staff time to confusion about the batchload process, some libraries may end up not loading certain categories of bibliographic records, which means that there will be a fraction of holdings visible in local catalogs that are not visible in AMICALcat. If the lacuna is the result of policy – materials intentionally omitted, for example, because they are not available for ILL – then some libraries may see this as logical. Others would argue, however, that awareness of where items are held, even if not available through ILL, is itself of potential use to scholars.

The second hurdle is getting records successfully added to the WorldCat database. Records submitted may be held up for a variety of reasons, including lack of an unambiguous access point (title, ISBN, etc.) to link with an existing record, or, in the case of a record new to WorldCat, the need to provide original cataloging according to the relevant standards and guidelines.¹⁰ OCLC is

¹⁰ For example, OCLC’s *Bibliographic Formats and Standards* (<http://www.oclc.org/bibformats/default.htm>).

providing a certain amount of training in the use of its Connexion and batchload cataloging services, but much is dependent on the time and skills of staff available at the participating libraries.

Table 3 shows that AMICAL libraries collect in a wide variety of languages, but this diversity of languages is not expected to pose a significant problem for building the group catalog. RESPOND-participating libraries do use a variety of non-Roman script fields in their catalog records, including Arabic (four libraries) and Greek (one library). One library would like to use Cyrillic as well, but their integrated library system does not support it. The OCLC Connexion client supports full cataloging in all of these scripts, however, so there is no inherent barrier to the inclusion of such data in WorldCat.

Table 3 – Non-English languages for which AMICAL libraries reported having significant collections (2004 Institutional Survey)

Language	Number of Libraries
French	6
Arabic	5
German	3
Russian	3
Greek	2
Italian	2
Hungarian	1
Kyrgyz	1
Spanish	1

Though the tools and training are being made available to contribute these records to WorldCat, regardless of language or script, for most RESPOND libraries this process entails additional tasks for their staff and a modification of their workflow, and the initial batch loading of records for entire collections is where the burden is heaviest.¹¹ Records which may be sufficient for use in local systems may require some preparation for the batchload process in order to maximize the matches found in WorldCat, and a small but significant fraction of RESPOND library records will need post-processing or in some cases manual cataloging in order to match them or add them as original records. Some libraries have specific requests about the way they receive records back from WorldCat to rebuild their local catalogs, and they need help with this process. The conversation with OCLC staff that allows these processes to happen takes time, and as a consortial project where jobs are at least partially grouped together, this conversation and the batch processing itself takes more time than it would as an individual project. Besides the decision to open their records to the world, this commitment of local staff time and energy to making their records visible in WorldCat is perhaps the principle contribution of AMICAL in this collaboration with OCLC. But the return on this investment seems likely to be worthwhile: a net improvement in the bibliographic quality of their records, exposure to training and best practices, and a great expansion of their resource sharing opportunities.

¹¹ For an overview of the batchload process, see the OCLC Concise Batch Processing Guide: http://www.oclc.org/support/documentation/batchprocessing/using/concise_guide/default.htm

Coordinating with OCLC support structures

From its inception, RESPOND has posed the challenge of being a project that does not fit neatly into the existing administrative and support structures of OCLC. OCLC's regional service providers, semi-independent consortia or other organizational structures, normally contract with OCLC to provide its services to libraries within their geographic territory. Although the RESPOND project has been coordinated through OCLC headquarters in Dublin, Ohio, AMICAL members are spread over two very broad OCLC regions, in countries normally serviced by six different, further localized, OCLC "service centers" and "distributors".

This has led to occasional confusion over administration and support channels, since regional service providers need to be aware of the development of the project but are not always the appropriate channel through which participants should pursue RESPOND-related administrative questions. The project is becoming more clearly defined within the OCLC structure, however, with OCLC staff support time more clearly attributed and communication more regular between staff and participants.

One unavoidable difficulty of working through OCLC headquarters, however, has been the difference in time zones – something especially apparent when trying to organize live online training sessions. AMICAL members are situated in no less than seven different time zones, the closest to Ohio being in Morocco (4-5 hours ahead depending on the time of year) and the furthest being in Kyrgyzstan (11 hours ahead).¹² Clearly, other long term solutions need to be found for assuring quality online training for AMICAL members. As RESPOND graduates out of pilot status, however, this will likely be folded back into the responsibility of the regional service providers.

Encouraging best practices & cooperation

Best practices for group interlibrary loan can be usefully grouped into three categories (Leon, DeWeese, Kochan, Peterson-Lugo & Zillig, 2003):

1. *Conceptual best practices*
(guiding principles for service and cooperation)
2. *Structural best practices*
(dealing with "staff, equipment, technology, and organizational structure")
3. *Procedural best practices*
(recommendations for "daily routines, procedures, tasks, and ways of processing the workload")

These categories came out of guidelines written for a well-established American consortium, building on a history of reciprocally open and preferential interlending and making specific recommendations about things like policies, software, and details of request processing. Resources, infrastructure, and working conditions for RESPOND libraries are quite different from those of their American counterparts, and there are wide differences even among AMICAL libraries themselves. Some RESPOND libraries have been using peer-to-peer ISO-ILL compliant systems to manage their requests (Cairo), for example, while others have been using email and Excel spreadsheets (Paris). And at least half of the RESPOND libraries have not been suppliers of ILL, even to each other. On the surface, RESPOND is about improving AMICAL's resource sharing at the structural and procedural level, with the assistance of OCLC's software, services and training. A more important benefit, and a parallel development necessary for RESPOND to succeed, is at the conceptual level: AMICAL libraries are learning to share.

¹² To her and OCLC's credit, trainer Kathy Kie has managed this predicament as best she can, in some cases offering workshops running from 12:00AM to 2:00AM Ohio time.

As AMICAL libraries begin to see what each other holds, requests are beginning to be sent. The question which perhaps should have been addressed before putting the discovery tools in place is now being quickly pushed to the forefront: Will AMICAL libraries supply to each other on preferential terms? And what will those terms be? The answer to the first question might seem obvious, but the shift to liberal lending policies is difficult for many libraries when their local environments are often characterized by tightly restricted library access and heavy charges for interlending. The 2004 institutional survey showed, for example, that the ratio of ILL lending to borrowing for RESPOND participants was 0.32, with many institutions not supplying at all. For comparison, the bottom 10th percentile of ARL libraries were much more generous lenders in 2004, with a ratio of 0.59 (Jackson, 2004, p. 61).

Reluctance to provide international ILL services is fairly common, as confirmed by at least one study of RLG libraries (Elkington & Massie, 1999, p. 151). It is not always justified, however, and it can be overcome with the help of good examples and support. Although it was perhaps not a direct goal of their project, UK university libraries' membership in the RLG SHARES program¹³ "changed perceptions and behaviour in regard to overseas loans" (Prowse & Massie, 2002, p. 134). These were libraries that were previously highly averse to participating in international ILL. Participation in SHARES through CURL¹⁴ provided structured support for relatively fast and inexpensive international ILL. With certain reservations based on resolvable workflow issues, the libraries were now increasingly open to international ILL. It is our hope that participation in the RESPOND project will have a similar effect on AMICAL libraries, beginning with international resource sharing within their own consortium. An AMICAL agreement for reciprocally free ILL is now being discussed.

Questions & ideas for future OCLC-AMICAL collaboration

Since the complexity of the project has delayed the implementation of RESPOND's cataloging-dependent services, OCLC has generously extended its pilot status until participating libraries have successfully built the group catalog database and been meaningfully introduced to the pilot services. As issues and problems with the pilot are ironed out, however, new questions and potential developments present themselves.

How can OCLC systems be profitably bridged with other systems used by AMICAL libraries? There are only two non-OCLC ILL management tools now in use by AMICAL libraries: Millennium and VDX.¹⁵ Will interoperability and pricing make it cost-effective to use OCLC ILL services in conjunction with these systems? For libraries such as Central European University that have preferred local ILL networks, what can we do to help enable communication between those systems and OCLC? Is there any way that OCLC's ILL Fee Management could be used in the future for non-OCLC transactions?

In the long term, the focus that RESPOND has brought to AMICAL's traditional resource sharing (ILL/DD) could be shifted towards the cooperative management and sharing of digital resources. One approach to this would be to provide a consortial implementation of ContentDM, helping member institutions to develop, manage and share their locally created digital content, while lowering the threshold and investment required of local technical skills and time for implementation. And WorldCat itself might help in the development of locally unique digital collections, allowing libraries to identify their unique or rare holdings and prioritize materials for digitization.

¹³ the international resource sharing program coordinated by RLG: http://www.rlg.org/en/page.php?Page_ID=7481

¹⁴ Consortium of University Research Libraries in the British Isles: <http://www.curl.ac.uk/>

¹⁵ A third library was using RLG's ILL Manager, but this product is being discontinued following the OCLC-RLG merger.

Conclusion

The RESPOND pilot is only just beginning to take off near the end of its initial 1-year duration. Most of its potential will only be realized in the coming year or so, but this will require several things. Participant libraries will need to further develop the network of trust that has been started through AMICAL, and the project as a whole will need to demonstrate that RESPOND services are cost effective, in some combination of performance, staff time, and financial terms.

But benefits are already beginning to materialize. Libraries' holdings are now discoverable in WorldCat – and hence on the web via search engines and WorldCat.org! Librarians are being exposed to new technologies and best practices for cataloging and resource sharing. Doors are being opened for local users to a much wider world of accessible research material than they ever had access to before. The group catalog is helping to create a sense of affiliation and partnership. And collection analysis will help members to understand better how their own collections, and those of their AMICAL peers, can best be developed and shared for mutual benefit. One of the most important benefits, however, involves a simple change in perspective. RESPOND is bringing the cooperative spirit of the OCLC resource sharing community to AMICAL libraries: AMICAL libraries are enriching their global resources by sharing their own.

AMICAL as an organization is all about building bridges – between libraries, between institutions, and especially between their communities, who represent such diversity of geography, culture and language. OCLC, through the RESPOND project, is helping AMICAL to build some of the bridges and lay the foundation for others. Beyond improving the quality and breadth of libraries' services, a pattern of conversation, cooperation and trust is being established. Resource sharing may mean something very different in 10 years' time, but these characteristics of partnership will surely continue to be part of its foundation.

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