

The AAU/ARL Global Resources Program: Both Macrocosm and Microcosm

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Established early in 1997 with generous funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the [Global Resources Program](#), a joint initiative of ARL and the Association of American Universities (AAU), quickly set an ambitious course. Building on the achievements and findings of the ARL Foreign Acquisitions Project and the AAU Research Libraries Project, and responding to the crisis identified in Jutta Reed-Scott's *Scholarship, Research Libraries, and Global Publishing* (Washington: ARL, 1996), the Global Resources Program has broad goals: to improve access to international research resources for scholars and students, especially through cooperative structures and new technologies, and to help libraries contain associated costs. The Program represents a multifaceted approach to a complex problem that will only be solved through innovative strategies that require changes in behavior (individual and institutional), increased reliance on a variety of partners, and a new system of financial incentives. The AAU has shown a persistent interest in the issues affecting research libraries, and recognizes in the Global Resources Program a model that may be broadened and applied to other areas of library acquisitions and access.

The Global Resources Program as Macrocosm

A globally oriented program is by definition ambitious, especially when it is focused on information and its dissemination. Despite an increasing reliance on electronic information, print book and journal publishing worldwide continues to expand dramatically. Accordingly, the strategies adopted to tackle the goals of the Global Resources Program are multiple and varied:

- providing seed money for an initial set of six diverse regional projects (on Africa, Germany, Japan, Latin America, South Asia, Southeast Asia);
- gathering information into a clearinghouse on ARL libraries' linkages with institutions abroad;
- building bridges to scholars who use international materials, and to the scholarly associations to which they belong, in order to develop a better understanding of the research resources they need and how libraries can facilitate access to them; and
- helping to create new models for recruiting and training future area specialists who have strong subject knowledge, initiative, and the right skill set.

The systematic identification of collection strengths of North American libraries will be another important step toward the Program's full implementation, and the launching of other area- and subject-specific projects as they are designed is an ongoing objective. The overarching strategy for the Program is to scale up from the projects by selecting, from among the models they are testing, the elements that will contribute to a comprehensive, cooperative, distributed program of access to international resources, regardless of their format or location. The eventual goal is to move beyond a set of discrete, area-specific projects to an interconnected, globally oriented program in which "lead institutions" provide users throughout North America with both physical collections and access points to diverse resources published in or relating to a given world area. Another long-term goal of the Program—essential for making the vision into reality—is to develop a system of financial incentives that will benefit a broad range of institutions, as well as sustain the Program well into the future.

The Global Resources Program as Catalyst

The six regional projects currently underway offer an impressive array of approaches to addressing some of the most urgent information needs of scholars researching individual world regions. These approaches range from the creation of a web-based union list of sub-Saharan African newspapers to an international document delivery service between North American and German research libraries, from a Latin American table-of-contents database with direct, user-initiated article requesting capability to the digitization, in India, of South Asian reference works and periodicals, and the creation of an image database of Thai journal literature.

The full impact of the Program, however, extends beyond this set of projects. For example, awareness of the factors that negatively affect the ability of libraries to provide the materials that users need, that litany of pressures with which librarians are all too familiar, has been heightened among faculty and within scholarly associations. Librarians with responsibility for one region of the world are finding common ground with those whose principal focus is another. The Overseas Offices of the Library of Congress are key participants in many of the projects and are uniquely prepared to address directly the key issue of access through the expansion of the services they provide in Cairo, Islamabad, Nairobi, New Delhi, Jakarta, and Rio de Janeiro. The Center for Research Libraries has launched the International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON), an ambitious and much-needed effort to identify, preserve, and make accessible as wide a range of foreign newspapers as possible. Collaboration with institutions outside North America, both formal and informal, has been stimulated by the identification of reciprocal relationships for collection development, interlibrary lending and borrowing, and document delivery. In short, the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program has been a catalyst in stimulating interest and action to strengthen international library resources.

A New Department of Education Title VI Program

An exciting new initiative that is linked to the Global Resources Program was launched this year. Lobbying by ARL and other proponents of the Program led to the authorization in 1998 of Section 606 of Title VI of the Higher Education Act. This new program, "Technological Innovation and Cooperation For Foreign Information Access," is managed by the U.S. Department of Education and makes available \$1 million per year in support of projects that utilize technology to gain access to resources that are not readily available in the United States. The recent competition for Section 606 resulted in three-year funding for a set of eight projects, including the Digital South Asia Library (\$180,000/year) and the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project (\$100,000/year), both regional projects under the Global Resources umbrella. These awards are notable for several reasons: both proposals were submitted by ARL member libraries, on behalf of a group of libraries (the Center for Research Libraries for South Asia, and the University of Texas for Latin America), and both attest to the success of the projects thus far. Nearly all of the funded projects were initiated by ARL libraries either independently or in partnership with academic programs, most represent creative consortial initiatives, and all promise digital access. In addition to the two mentioned above, funded projects include:

- "Russian Periodical Index Digital Project," Indiana University (\$80,000/year);
- "American Overseas Digital Library," the American Institute for Yemeni Studies, on behalf of the American Overseas Research Centers (\$175,000/year);
- "The Digital Asia Library Initiative," the University of Wisconsin, in collaboration with Ohio State University and the University of Minnesota (\$175,000/year);
- "Global Window on China," the University of California–Los Angeles (\$100,000/year);

- "Central Eurasian Information Resource," the University of Washington (\$100,000/year); and
- "Accessing African Scholarly Journals," Michigan State University (\$100,000/year).

This new Department of Education program has stimulated the development of projects that bring together librarians and faculty in creative joint undertakings whose goal is exactly consistent with that of the Global Resources Program: to expand access to international resources through the use of new technologies. Thanks to this additional platform for collaboration, new players are entering the game, and efforts that are complementary to those of the Program are suddenly more in evidence. At present, the competition is only triennial, but even in its first year Section 606 has stimulated a great deal of new thinking around issues of access to global information. This is, of course, all good news for the Global Resources Program, for ARL, and for AAU. The Department of Education's Title VI program has long provided opportunities and support for campus-based language and area training; now, with Section 606, that knowledge is supplemented by long-distance access to resources for research and teaching about the areas, and the development of new technologies to ensure this access.

From Distributed Collecting to Document Delivery

The initial focus of the Global Resources Program was on cooperative collection development. This is arguably the necessary first step toward a distributed network of interdependent collections, and yet the Program has since shifted focus within some of the regional projects to concentrate on document delivery. At first glance, this would seem to be a major change; however, they are part and parcel of the same theme. For years, at meetings of collection development librarians and other conferences, inadequate document delivery and interlibrary loan capability has been pinpointed as a major obstacle to successful cooperative collection development, whether it be on a relatively small, regional scale, or at the national or North American level. Is it a chicken and egg dilemma? Which comes first, the strong, distributed collections, or the ability to move items around quickly, efficiently, and at low cost? Certainly, to gain faculty acceptance of a distributed collection it is critical to guarantee rapid access to needed materials that are not held locally. And since engaging faculty as supporters of the premises of the Global Resources Program and illustrating for them the potential of structured interdependence are among the Program's original goals, a focus on rapid delivery of the resources they need seems logical. It is important to demonstrate to faculty that the Program and other cooperative collection-building structures will expand access, not decrease it. They are gaining, not losing.

An acute awareness of the importance of building collections cooperatively still characterizes the Program, although several current efforts focus on disseminating information about what is held where rather than on orchestrating firm cooperative agreements. In order to distribute responsibility for collecting, it is important to know who has what, a need that has promoted the development of projects to establish union lists of journals and newspapers, or periodical indexes, for example. Nevertheless, the Program will only achieve its goals and realize its full potential when participants take the difficult steps of redefining collecting policies to focus on local strengths and reallocating resources accordingly, while simultaneously moving toward a more inter-reliant network of research libraries.

An emphasis on cataloging and preservation is inherent in all of the activities of the Global Resources Program. Without attention to rapid and long-term access to the materials that form the core of a distributed collection, the Program goals cannot be met. With collecting responsibility comes a commitment to make specialized materials available as rapidly as possible, as well as a commitment to preserve them.

A Next Step: Topical Projects

In April 1999, the annual meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) featured a

special session on the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program. Executive directors of area studies scholarly associations and delegates to each organization, along with other interested participants, responded to a presentation about the Program and expressed their views on its future development. Comments revealed enthusiasm for the Program's goals and means of achieving them, and conveyed several suggestions, as well. One of these ideas, which was echoed at a June 1999 meeting of the Program's Director with Library of Congress staff, is to devise cross-regional projects that focus on a subject or topic rather than a geographic area. The environment, human rights, migration, popular culture, ethnic studies—these are examples of areas of scholarship with a significant international dimension, in which research requires access to a multiplicity of resources that may be ephemeral, difficult to locate, poorly preserved, and undercollected in North America. A Global Resources project that takes a topical rather than a regional approach would encourage links among library collections that are not based on the traditional area studies model, that span national boundaries, and yet still address the core challenges of the Reed-Scott book and the studies that preceded it.

Such a cross-regional, topically oriented project would benefit scholars who are conducting research on regions with which they were not previously familiar by highlighting resources that are "off the beaten path." It would also facilitate interaction among a wider group of collection development librarians, beyond the area studies specialists. A meeting of librarians and scholars is being planned for late 1999 to identify and map strategic resource needs for the coming five to ten years and to develop ideas for subject-based global projects.

A Choice of Models

To meet its broad agenda, the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program has had to select initial projects and areas of concentration carefully. The first three, focused on Germany, Japan, and Latin America, were originally recommended by the AAU Research Libraries Project's Task Force on the Acquisition and Distribution of Foreign Language and Area Studies Materials. Three other projects, on Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, were subsequently proposed by groups of bibliographers and received seed money from the Global Resources Program. Proposals for additional projects are welcome at any time, provided that they are cooperative in nature and offer expanded access to international resources through the use of technology.

The regional projects, though focused very explicitly on a single country or part of the world, are nevertheless paving the way for the development of new models with potential applications beyond the immediate project. Both the German Resources Project and the Japan Journal Access Project are testing international document delivery systems, along with all that such systems entail: interfaces, payment mechanisms, communication among very different libraries, and user acceptance of the model. These projects have also created a new common agenda for collection development and interlibrary loan departments. Similarly, the kind of collecting agreements that are being devised within the "Distributed Resources" component of the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project can be extended to other fields including, perhaps, the sciences. And the table-of-contents database that was established four years ago as the central element of the Latin Americanist project offers lessons for other fields in which the capability to offer unmediated user requests for journal articles is desirable. Furthermore, the table-of-contents database is an example of a value-added function that resulted from new thinking about how to connect users with the materials they need.

The regional projects of the Global Resources Program also present collaborative elements that lend themselves well to emulation in other areas. Partnerships with the Library of Congress and the Center for Research Libraries are basic to the work of the Union List of African Newspapers (ULAN), the Digital South Asia Library, and the Southeast Asian Journals Project. And these projects have counterparts abroad. For example, the digitizing of South Asian materials is being carried out in India by staff at the Roja Muthiah Research Library (Madras) and the Sundarayya Vignana Kendram

(Hyderabad), and the Technical Information Access Center (TIAC) in Thailand will play a role in the Southeast Asian project. The Latin American project will expand in collaboration with a bookseller in Bolivia who has created a major library for Andean studies.

There are many nonaffiliated projects underway that bear a relationship to the Global Resources Program, and it is our intention to learn about them, give them visibility, and build connections between them and other related projects, when desirable and appropriate. Similarly, any distributed collection development structure will take advantage of existing consortia and work in progress. Links among libraries and scholars, and the active involvement of faculty in helping to imagine and anticipate future needs, will be critical to the Program's continued success. Just as important will be a practical vision of a new interdependence among libraries.

The Global Resources Program as Microcosm

Although it has focused on projects that expand access to international research materials, in many cases vernacular resources, the lessons of the Global Resources Program are not limited to the acquisition and distribution of foreign materials. The Program is also raising issues with broader, more general implications. In this way, the Program contains a microcosm of the newest challenges and concerns for research libraries, issues that are not peculiar to area studies. These include, of course, the creation of cooperative structures for collection development and document delivery services that are rapid, efficient, and international. The Program is built on the need to discover ways to stretch budgets so that libraries collectively can offer access to more than they currently do individually.

But in addition to these familiar topics, the Global Resources Program has called into question just what it means to "build a collection." The Program has stimulated new thinking about service to users, especially those who are remote but rely on specialized collections held in our libraries, and has shifted focus to a user-based model of distributed collection development and away from an emphasis on amassing collections locally. Participation in large-scale collaborative endeavors requires a significant commitment of staff time and energy, and this in turn requires a re-thinking of the collection development librarian's job description. The success of the Global Resources regional projects would have been impossible without the ideas, initiative, and action of a number of area studies librarians. Such energy and creativity will continue to be prerequisites for achieving the goals of multi-institutional collaboration, whether international or not.

The Transformation of Collection Development

How is "collection development" defined in these days when there is so much emphasis on access, and when information may not even exist at all in a physical form? Within the answer to this critical question lies the key to one of the main challenges facing the Global Resources Program: how to bring about a "behavior change" and to motivate libraries to reallocate funds away from areas that are well collected elsewhere in North American libraries and to capture instead the materials that are being collected sporadically and piecemeal, if at all.

To achieve the goals of the Global Resources Program, and any program based on cooperative collection development, we must view "collections" as a wide array of resources, some held locally but many found elsewhere—even outside North America—and not necessarily in libraries, or in print form. We do not need to own the physical object to consider it part of our "collection." Technology makes it feasible to consider remote collections to be local resources as long as it is reasonably straightforward for users to gain access to these materials. It is apparent that university administrators, faculty, library administrators, and collection development librarians need a new vision for their local library collection, and new ways of measuring its strength as part of a shared North American collection.

It was a major step forward when the instructions for submitting proposals to the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI National Resource Center program were amended to include, in the section documenting the strength of the library, information on access to resources and on cooperative programs instead of just a pure volume count. It is not a simple task to adjust one's sights away from a local focus, away from establishing relative status by counting volumes and expenditures on campus resources. The Global Resources Program forces a redefinition of "collections" if we are to meet the needs of current users of our libraries and anticipate those of future generations.

Bringing about the change in perspective that is necessary for distributed collecting to succeed will require progress in several interconnected areas:

- an understanding on the part of faculty that it is in their long-term interest for their university's library to have an interdependent relationship with other institutions, so that someone, somewhere, is collecting the materials that they, and their colleagues within North America, need;
- the autonomy for collection development librarians to craft cooperative policies that share responsibility for collecting and commit their institutions to a particular set of areas, the will and authority to cancel journals that are widely held elsewhere in favor of more specialized acquisitions in their areas of collecting responsibility, and the political sensitivity to explain these decisions to library users in compelling and convincing terms;
- an acknowledgment of the critical role of document delivery and interlibrary loan in making distributed collections feasible, and a commitment to invest in the redesign of systems of access;
- the necessary determination and support for rapid cataloging of international materials, which will not only make these resources more accessible to users but will also provide bibliographers with important information on holdings that may influence their acquisitions decisions; and
- a firm commitment on the part of library and university administrators to a new vision of interdependent collections, acknowledgment of the benefits of the strategy, and adequate, long-term financial support to continue building and preserving the collections for which their institution has accepted responsibility.

The Latin Americanist Research Resources Project is experimenting with distributed collecting responsibilities through its "Distributed Resources" component, in which each participating institution commits to redirecting a minimum of either \$3,000 or 7% of its monographic budget for Latin American materials towards an area of locally established collection strength. By implication, they will rely on other Project libraries for materials they will no longer be acquiring. Participants also agree to catalog these materials rapidly, and make them available through interlibrary loan. Through this effort, which is voluntary (25 of the 43 member libraries have elected to participate thus far, with several others on the verge), the Project has reallocated more than \$170,000, thus deepening access within North America and making available difficult-to-acquire materials. Participating bibliographers have confirmed that, through reallocation, they have been able to acquire items that enrich their local collections in areas of emphasis while also providing access to these materials for users anywhere. In the division of responsibilities among the participating libraries, based on local strengths and local choice, nearly all countries are represented. Thus, the Project is demonstrating broad coverage and balance.

This element of the Latin American project is a significant step towards strengthening North American collections of Latin American publications. The Project has succeeded in large part because it is allowing individual institutions to emphasize local strengths (thereby eliminating the tension between

local program needs and national-level commitments) and because it is focusing on materials that do not generally receive high use.

An Expanded Role for the Bibliographer

An expansion and redefinition of the role of the collection development librarian, or bibliographer, has been underway for some time as the job has required more contact with the public and advanced technological skills. In the Global Resources arena, bibliographers have the opportunity to serve as intellectual leaders in crafting new models for access and new structures for cooperative collection building. Rather than being marginalized, bibliographers have become even more central to the success of complex international projects. They play a visible role in fund raising, including drafting proposals and administering grants. Designing area- and subject-specific projects to address the goals of the Global Resources Program also brings bibliographers together with faculty to think strategically about the variety of future scholarly resource needs. Working with a much broader definition of "collections" than ever before, bibliographers are collaborating with colleagues at other libraries and in other countries to ensure that research libraries are together providing access to the widest range of resources possible. The creation and maintenance of web pages with detailed collection descriptions and links to many other carefully selected and vetted resources is increasingly part of the bibliographer's job. As the Global Resources Program moves toward the identification of a network of lead institutions, bibliographers' knowledge and experience will become even more important.

The Global Resources Program has opened positive new lines of communication within individual libraries as well. The implementation of the regional projects, particularly those with significant document delivery components, encourages a closer relationship between collection development librarians and interlibrary loan staff. ILL librarians are in an excellent position to help identify where there may be gaps in local collections coverage. They are also key players in determining the nature and usefulness of new document delivery mechanisms that are at the core of enhanced access. Additional intra-institutional collaboration will flourish as cross-regional projects are developed, and subject and area studies bibliographers begin to work together to implement and publicize the projects and to evaluate their effectiveness.

Benefits to Researchers and Students

No one would deny that there is a genuine need for expanded access to international materials. Not only do studies confirm the decline in foreign acquisitions within libraries, but anecdotal evidence from scholars shows that they have experienced frustration and sometimes failure in their search for this information. To have seen a work cited or otherwise to identify it and yet not be able to locate or read it can seriously inhibit the research process. This has been a frequent problem in area studies, as faculty and librarians alike are aware, and it will be alleviated by efforts underway within the Global Resources Program. As we move along the path to full implementation, library users will discover that they have more and better access to foreign materials, although not necessarily on their own campuses. The access may be through document delivery from another North American institution, or a library abroad; it may be facilitated by a web gateway directly to the information or to the data source. Whatever the means, the goal is to connect students and researchers with the international resources they need, and to alert them to the existence of other resources of which they were perhaps unaware. The interdependence of collections through distributed responsibility offers a promising antidote to the declining ability of libraries to maintain comprehensive collections of foreign materials to meet the expanding needs of scholars.

One major obstacle remains the inherent conflict between local needs and a commitment to the larger community. It is no secret that this apparent incompatibility of objectives has been the major logjam in the development of truly functional cooperative collection development structures. Reflection on this

topic, and on how to fulfill the vision of interdependent collections, leads to a key question: who are our users, and what are our responsibilities to them? If the response is that they are only each university's respective students and faculty, and that the library must develop collections and services strictly to meet their needs, then we are lost. We are lost because we cannot satisfy all their needs locally. No library can. Excellent collections, efficient service, and easy access are a source of pride for a library and the institution of which it is a part. However, our responsibility to provide these resources extends beyond the walls of a single institution to include researchers from elsewhere in North America and beyond who visit our collections, as well as those remote users who access these resources via the World Wide Web. We are already functioning in an interdependent system of access to information, but we have not yet called it by its true name, or developed it in a rational way. Our local users regularly rely on other repositories, and are accustomed to doing so through a variety of means: interlibrary loan, document delivery, travel to collections, the goodwill of a colleague or librarian. And users at other institutions rely on our resources in the same ways. To sustain an interdependent distributed collection program in the long run, each institutional commitment must lead to expanded access and other benefits for both local *and remote* library users.

Conclusion

The impetus of the Global Resources Program is the need to acquire and/or guarantee access to as broad an array of international materials as possible while they are still available. The studies in the Reed-Scott book document in no uncertain terms that collections of foreign-language resources throughout North America have come to resemble each other more and more, as libraries cut back on their acquisitions, particularly of those materials that receive less use (but are nevertheless important research resources). This narrowing of collecting is happening, ironically, just when publishing is increasing worldwide. Primary attention to publications from large cities, major editorial houses, and well-known writers has detracted from our collective ability to provide students and scholars with the full array of resources they need. There is no reason why this pattern of acquisition, which is clearly detrimental to scholarship, need continue in these days of electronic access and a widespread awareness of the benefits of collaboration. The challenge is to move from that point of awareness towards the full implementation of a functional cooperative structure, and to demonstrate to library users what they stand to gain from a distributed system.

It is generally true that a significant percentage of foreign-language materials are not in great demand throughout North America. It is also true that the most successful cooperative collection development agreements have been reached in area studies. Perhaps, just as the issues raised by the Global Resources Program represent a microcosm of the challenges facing research libraries today, the models for cooperation the Program offers can be expanded from foreign-language materials to costlier, high-use collections. The full benefits of the Program will become evident when the means of rapid international document delivery are in place, librarians develop local collections while also focusing on consortial responsibilities, faculty and students experience expanded access first-hand, libraries become more predictably interdependent, and technology has been fully utilized for worldwide access. The road is long, and the goals are ambitious, but the path is open.

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