

## Sharing Electronic Resources Among Three Institutions

Ellen Sayed<sup>1</sup> and Alice Burnett<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

<sup>2</sup> Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

**Abstract.** This paper discusses the co-operation between Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, and Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. The University in Ithaca was founded 147 years ago in 1865, the College in New York began in 1898, 114 years ago, and the College in Qatar was established in January 2001 in a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. Co-operation and communication between the three partners is essential to make the partnership work successfully. The actions, procedures, and problems encountered along the way are presented, along with metrics for the collection in Doha.

**Keywords:** Electronic resources, consortia, collection development, medical libraries

### 1. Introduction

The campus of Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) was established in January 2001 in partnership with Qatar Foundation. The Weill Cornell Medical College in New York (WCMC) opened its doors in 1898, while Cornell University in Ithaca, New York was founded in 1865. With the long and rich history of Cornell University, the three libraries in Ithaca, New York and Doha are distinctly different. The Ithaca campus has more than 20 libraries, which started primarily with print collections, converting to electronic resources over time. Similarly, the library at WCMC has added electronic content over time. The collection in Qatar, however, has had an electronic focus from the beginning, maintaining a small, relatively constant print collection of less than four thousand items in a Reading Room.

With the establishment of the Qatar campus, it was decided that the shared access to the electronic library resources in the Cornell University libraries in Ithaca and New York would be extended to the Qatar campus. For the two medical colleges, this decision was rooted in the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) requirement that the medical curricula in Qatar and

New York should be the same. To ensure that the students have the same experience on both campuses, it was decided that this principle should also apply to medical information resources available to the students, faculty and staff. Although the two medical campuses offer the same curricula and information resources, the Qatar campus offers a Foundation and Pre-Medical Program, which require non-medical information resources, such as physics, chemistry, calculus, statistics, biology and English. The library WCMC serves as the library for the New York Presbyterian Hospital, which requires a suitable collection of clinical resources. These differences in information needs are reflected in the collections and budgets. In addition, each library has its own setup for Integrated Library Systems and servers. Cornell University Libraries in Ithaca (CUL) uses ExLibris, WebBridge and Serials Solutions; WCMC shares a catalog with the local consortium, using Innovative Interfaces Inc, and SFX; WCMC-Q uses Innovative Interfaces Inc., WebBridge, ERM and Encore.

This paper discusses the cooperation between the three libraries at Cornell University described above, in building a shared electronic collection, building relationships, and strive for relevant alignment, with a main focus on the working relationship between Weill Cornell Medical College in New York and Qatar.

## **2. Key Reasons for Collaboration**

The primary reasons for collaboration between the three libraries are centered around the practicalities of electronic versus print resources in Qatar, the LCME accreditation, the size of collections, the broad range of subjects available, and shared costs.

The focus on electronic resources when setting up the Distributed eLibrary (DeLib) at WCMC's branch campus in Qatar was a sensible decision in many ways. It saved time and money by not having to order and ship print materials to Qatar; It saved shelf space and staff time from not having to manage a print collection, shift the collection, manage bindery shipments and so on. It would follow that it also impacted job descriptions and staffing and the management of library operations.

The decision that access to the electronic collections in Ithaca and New York should be extended to Qatar is relevant to the shared mission in medical education at the two campuses and that the LCME accreditation of the medical program in New York is extended to the program in Qatar. Providing the students with access to the same information resources would ensure that the students have the same experience in both locations to the extent possible.

The need for alignment in medical education and information resources drove the planning of the DeLib in Qatar. The collections at all Cornell University Libraries provide all Cornellians with access to large collections, providing a vast array of information, covering a broad spectrum of subjects. For the Qatar campus this diverse information is important for its academic and research programs.

A large portion of the subscriptions to electronic resources are acquired through the NorthEast Research Libraries (NERL) consortium, which has 28

core member research libraries and approximately 80 affiliate member academic and/or research libraries. The two New York libraries are members of the NERL consortium, while Qatar is a branch of the New York campus. A smaller portion of shared resources are acquired through a consortium in New York City, which WCMC belongs to.

One advantage of a consortium of libraries is that it gives the members leverage in negotiating licenses and subscriptions with vendors, providing access to large collections of information resources. Notable disadvantages are loss of control for individual member libraries and difficulties in separating IP ranges in user statistics and reporting.

The DeLib has been able to benefit from consortia memberships in extending its collections to its patrons in Qatar as a member of the Cornell University library community. DeLib patrons benefit from the broad and deep collections available to them as a result of this collaboration.

A cost sharing structure between the three campuses was agreed upon from the outset. This has allowed for purchasing content that otherwise might be cost prohibitive for one library. This structure has served all parties involved well, but it has not been revisited since its introduction.

### **3. Working together**

Medical information resources are shared between WCMC in New York and Qatar. However, since WCMC-Q supports a one-year Foundation program and a two-year pre-medical program, while WCMC supports a hospital library, there is an understanding that the information needs in the two libraries differ somewhat. Specific resources and access are discussed and negotiated as they arise. On occasion, each campus subscribes alone.

From an operational standpoint, the libraries are closely connected regarding payment structure, select policies, shared positions, virtual reference services, systematic review services and evidence-based medicine. Alignment between the libraries ensures a unified approach to patrons on both campuses; Shared reference service provides service around the clock. Sometimes services evolve to meet the unique needs of patrons or circumstances on campus. Shared positions meet specific needs. A liaison librarian has been in place since early in the Qatar program when it was determined that a full time professional librarian would benefit the process for both libraries. Funded by Qatar, this position liaises with the vendors and publishers in the United States, organizes the purchasing of titles in the United States between Ithaca, New York, and Qatar, and keeps track of the licensing issues. A shared position of instructional design librarian has come about more recently. This position is also based in New York, but works actively with the information literacy program in Qatar.

Broad collaboration builds relationships, which is beneficial to staff in the two libraries. Communication is essential to make the partnership work successfully and to form successful working relationships. The liaison librarian in New York and the Manager, eAccess Services in Qatar schedule weekly Skype sessions to discuss areas of concern or bring each other up to date on purchases, resource links that are not working properly, and what is being planned for

future purchases. They discuss how to share items, that are not necessarily needed by one library or the other but is required by the other campus. Agreement is worked out on who pays and how much, whether to get single user licensing or multiple users or perpetual access. Where possible, the liaison sends vendor MARC records for items in collections purchased mutually. Sharing the financial SAP system helps to cut down on questions on budget issues and speeds up the payment process. Skyping and sending many emails is essential for success!

In addition, the Manager, Library Systems and the Manager, Information Services have also met with their peers in New York or Ithaca to address shared issues or concerns. The library directors meet weekly via Skype to discuss relevant topics, such as budget issues, staffing, purchases and similar issues.

Besides communicating via email and Skype, library staff from New York City has traveled to Doha on several occasions, and staff from Doha visits the library in New York when possible.

This ongoing communication helps both campuses stay abreast of changes and relevant issues in both libraries.

#### **4. Problems Encountered and Resolutions**

A primary concern with consortia is loss of individual control for members. This is true for DeLib as it is not a member of any consortia it benefits from. This may seem like an unreasonable concern given the obvious benefits that DeLib and its patrons enjoy from the consortia membership of the parent institution. However, as the program in Qatar evolves, unique needs have become clear over time. Not participating in negotiating the resources requires strong collaboration and communication within the institution.

The difference in programs served by the libraries in New York and Doha deserves attention. While DeLib supports a pre-medical program, the library in New York serves as a hospital library and supports the information needs of a residency program. These differences are reflected in the library collections and subscriptions, but typically require more discussion and evaluation than other resources.

Usage statistics for shared subscriptions can be a challenge. The New York libraries are the account holders for most licenses shared with Doha. Usage statistics reported by the vendors are sent to the account holder. There is no easy way to get a clear picture of where the users are, since in many instances, the usage is not reported by IP address. Naturally, accurate usage statistics would be a useful tool in analyzing the collection for planning purposes. However, due to the complex nature of the subscriptions, the current situation is likely to continue for some time to come.

The difference in time zones can present problems when scheduling conference calls or joint events and when emailing. There is a difference of 7-8 hours between Doha and New York depending on daylight savings time. In addition, Qatar's work week is Sunday to Thursday and New York's is Monday to Friday. There can be as much as a three day time lag between

correspondence. To facilitate an effective workflow, good communication is essential. Library staff moves the work forward in a timely manner to avoid delay due to differences in work week and holidays. If needed, Qatar staff stays late or New York staff comes early to accommodate the time difference at meetings or Skype sessions.

Similarly, some of the holidays are not shared between the two sites. For instance, the library in New York is closed for Memorial Day in May and WCMC-Q is closed for three days for Eid. This situation will continue, requiring library staff to develop workarounds.

Many resource providers do maintenance and upgrades on Sundays, which does not affect the libraries in the United States as much as it does in Qatar. The library is open on Sunday and resources are not always accessible because of the maintenance. On occasion, a vendor may be able to modify the upgrade schedule. Most of the time, however, library staff sends out an alert email and posts the upgrade on the DeLib's home page.

Budget needs are also different in some instances. New York has more of a print journal collection than Qatar has. Qatar agreed to pay part of the cost for the print with the agreement that for interlibrary loan purposes articles would be shared with the users in Qatar. Distance between the two regions is a major time factor in getting the items sent through regular mail or express shipping. Electronic transmission of articles is more timely, but creates more work for the library personnel filling the requests. When possible, the license agreements should allow interlibrary loan privileges for Qatar. DeLib is currently using OCLC ILL service along with the British Library and Cisti for timely delivery of articles not obtained from within the institution.

## **5. Unique Needs for the Distributed eLibrary**

WCMC-Q offers a Foundation year and a two-year pre-medical program to prepare some students for admission to the four-year medical program. This program digresses from the New York medical program because their students normally begin their medical studies after attending a four-year undergraduate program. The students in Qatar normally come straight from high school into the pre-medical program. The Foundation and pre-medical programs act as a bridge into the medical side of the college. The focus of these programs is a writing seminar, mathematics, basic sciences biology, chemistry, physics and ethics. While it is not unusual for a medical library to support basic science programs, an active and growing fiction collection may be harder to find. Information Services Librarians liaise with pre-medical faculty on collection development and instruction especially. As the Writing Seminar plays a large role in the pre-medical program, the teaching faculty has recommended a number of fiction titles for DeLib's collection. In an effort to stimulate reading among the students, senior medical faculty have also recommended specific items for DeLib's collection, notably the "100 Great Books", which was a collaborative faculty/librarian project. The list contains titles such as: Catch 22, Don Quixote, and Alice in Wonderland.

In addition to the fiction collection, DeLib has also received requests for DVDs, such as the ER series, House M.D. and others. Requests for movies with medically significant content, such as Lorenzo's Oil, Awakenings and Rain Man have also been received.

In 2012, it was noted that the circulation of DeLib's print collection was declining. Upon closer inspection, our patrons check out more noise cancelling headphones than monographs. To remedy this situation, the print collection was updated with the most recent print editions or replaced with an ebook that would in most cases, be shared among all three sites. In July 2012, DeLib also introduced Yankee Book Peddler (YBP) to allow our patrons to guide the collection development process. YBP is used for the print collection since the New York libraries do the ordering for the electronic resources.

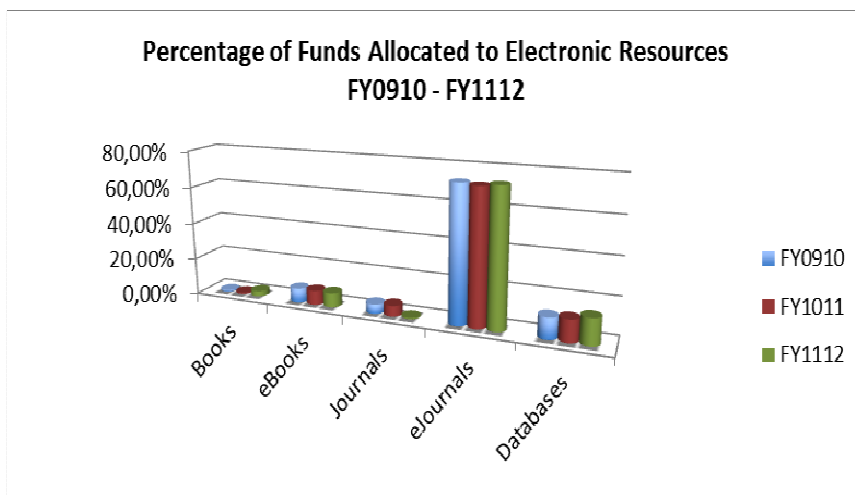
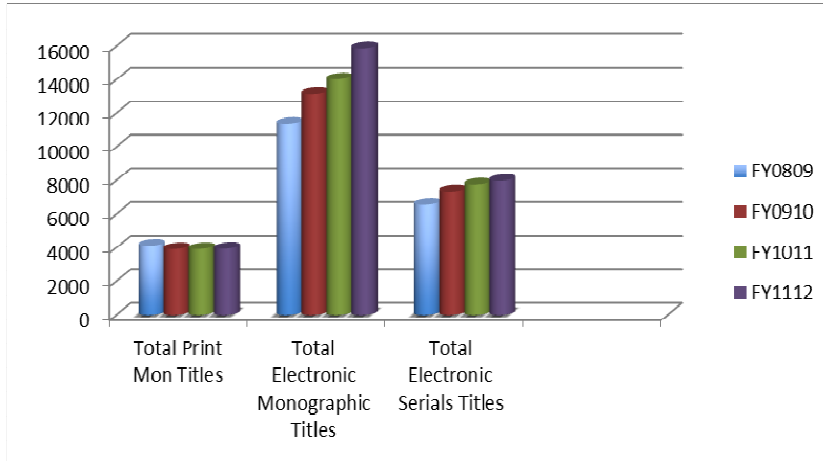
While the Cornell librarians collaborate on the content of their collections, each site has its own Integrated Library System (ILS). In Doha, the DeLib operates its own Millennium system, locally hosted, including the Electronic Resource Management module, which allows us to manage our electronic resources. The Library in New York uses SFX for electronic resources and Cornell University Libraries in Ithaca uses Voyager as their ILS and Serials Solutions to manage the electronic journals.

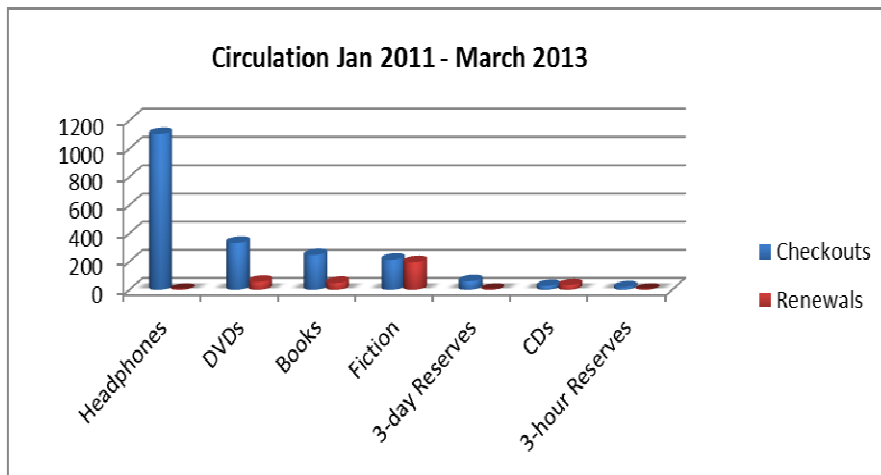
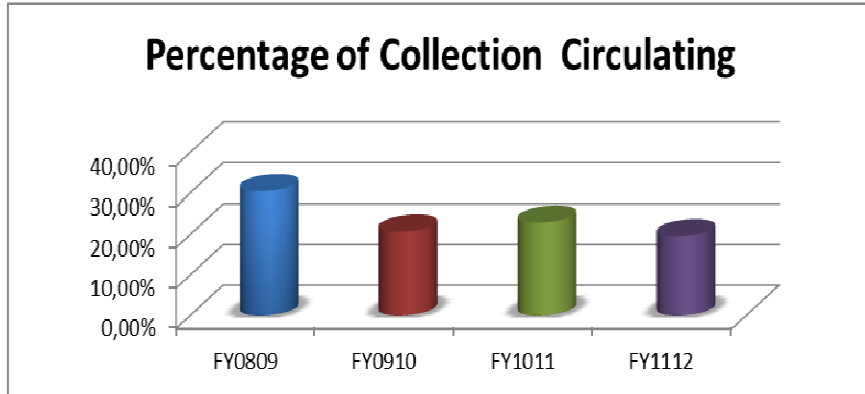
Despite differences, challenges, and unique needs, the libraries are working well with each other to provide patrons with relevant content and strong services.

## **6. Metrics Developed for DeLib's Collections**

Metrics developed for DeLib's collections include the size and nature of the collection; Percentage of collection costs for individual materials types, i.e. Books, ebooks, journals, ejournals, databases, licenses; Cost of materials per FTE student, faculty and staff; Circulation of newly acquired materials; Trends.

The size of the collection as entered into DeLib's catalog is growing steadily, with ebooks seeing the highest growth over time, followed by ejournals. Of the funds allocated to the collection, about 94% is spent on electronic resources with about 74% spent on ejournals. Circulation of new materials is focused on fiction. The circulation of print monographs is declining, while the circulation of noise cancelling headphones is holding steady at about three times that of print monographs!





## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

After more than ten years of collaboration, Cornellians are continuing to benefit from this arrangement. The libraries are able to offer broad subject coverage at a reasonable cost. Communication with the home campus is essential for a successful partnership. To that end, DeLib is funding the position of a liaison librarian in Qatar and key personnel communicate on a weekly basis. Collaboration has expanded over time to include virtual reference services, systematic review service and an instructional design librarian position. Frequent communication is essential to keep the collaboration moving forward.

Some unique needs in Qatar have become evident, primarily due to differences in academic programs. Other practical concerns that have emerged are the time difference and difference in work week. Regarding collaborative collection development, usage data for electronic resources in Qatar needs to be



addressed to allow DeLib to manage and promote its resources effectively. To manage the financial aspect of the collection, it is important to make sure that all invoices are received and carefully tracked.

The different ILS systems are likely to stay in place, allowing each library to be independent and meet the needs of its patrons.

For the future, a factor to consider is the evolution of Education City in Qatar and the maturing of academic libraries in Qatar. Library consortia have been established in the Middle East and the Arab Gulf and could become a reality in Qatar as well. The impact of this on the Cornell libraries is difficult to predict, but so far, the strong collaboration between the libraries has served the libraries well.

### **References**

- Okerson, A. 1996, "NorthEast Research Libraries (NERL) - 1 1/2 decades and counting" in *The E-Resources Management Handbook - UKSG*, pp. 1-7.
- Shearer, B.S. & Nagy, S. 2003, "Developing an academic medical library core journal collection in the (almost) post-print era: the Florida State University College of Medicine Medical Library", *J Med Libr Assoc*, vol. 91, no. 3, pp. 292-302.
- Shearer, B.S., Klatt, Carolyn, Nagy, Suzanne P. 2009, "Development of a new academic digital library: a study of usage data of a core medical electronic journal collection", *J Med Libr Assoc*, vol. 97, no. 2, pp. 93-101.
- Thornton, G.A. 2000, "Impact of electronic resources on collection development, the roles of librarians, and library consortia", *Library Trends*, vol. 48, no. 4, pp. 842-856.