



**Submission to the Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel on the Future of Libraries & Archives  
from the Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL)**

submitted by Jonathan Bengtson, COPPUL Chair

**What is the nature and make-up of your organization?**

COPPUL is a regional consortium of university libraries in Canada's four western provinces. We provide leadership in the development of collaborative solutions addressing the academic information resource needs, the staffing development needs, and the preservation needs of member institutions.

The consortium is comprised of 23 university libraries located in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Founded in 1991 and formally incorporated in 2000, COPPUL has a history of more than 20 years providing a platform for collaboration between the university libraries in western Canada. COPPUL also works cooperatively with counterpart consortia in the other regions of Canada: The Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) in Ontario, Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI, formerly CREPUQ) in Quebec, and the Council of Atlantic University Libraries (CAUL) in Atlantic Canada. Likewise, COPPUL works with the Canadian Research Knowledge Network at the national level, and with provincial consortia in our region, such as the BC Electronic Library Network, The Alberta Library, and the Manitoba Library Corporation Inc. In all cases, the goal is to create efficiency for member libraries and to conduct programs on a scale that is appropriate to the activity.

**Does your organization provide service directly to users or to members who make up the organization?**

As a consortium, COPPUL provides programs and services for member libraries, rather than direct service to users.

**Describe the services provided directly to users, and if they are consortial in nature please describe the mechanisms in place to define, refine and measure the impact of the services, particularly as they relate to Canadians.**

COPPUL's activities fall into three broad categories, as follows:

### *1) Collections and access*

COPPUL licenses electronic resources on behalf of member libraries, leveraging the group's collective buying power to achieve discounted pricing and other advantageous terms such as liberal usage rights. In 2013 COPPUL licensed 170 resources for the 23 full and 15 affiliate member libraries. Total dollar value of these renewals was between \$8-9million, saving participating libraries over \$500,000 collectively. By centrally negotiating renewals and licenses, the consortium also saves member libraries hundreds of hours of labour that would otherwise take place at the local level.

COPPUL coordinates interlibrary lending between member institutions by way of policy, service agreements, and centralized invoicing for items that are provided for a fee. COPPUL participates with counterpart consortia in other regions of Canada (OCUL, BCI, CAUL), to extend ILL policies between university libraries from coast to coast.

COPPUL coordinates reciprocal in-person borrowing between member institutions by way of policy, and provision of cards that students can present to gain borrowing privileges at any member library. COPPUL participates with counterpart consortia in other regions of Canada to extend reciprocal borrowing rights to students and faculty at university libraries from coast to coast.

### *2) Preservation of print and digital resources*

COPPUL's Shared Print Archive Network (SPAN) is a distributed retrospective print repository program. SPAN's main goals are to provide access to shared print archives, create opportunities for the reallocation of library space, and preserve the print record for its members in a cost-effective way. This partnership emphasizes the role of the archived print as part of an optimal copy network that includes print archiving initiatives in other jurisdictions across Canada and beyond. Implemented in 2011, SPAN includes 21 member libraries and has archived approximately 170,000 volumes of print journal backfiles to date.

COPPUL coordinates a Private LOCKSS Network (PLN) to preserve digital collections of local interest to COPPUL members that are not being preserved elsewhere, other than local backup. In this case digital preservation means ensuring the long-term viability of digital materials through geographically dispersed servers, protective measures against data loss, and forward format migration. Digital materials such as small university press publications, open access journals and other electronic journal collections, born digital government publications, and locally created digital collections that are at risk of being lost are preserved as part of the program. This network is also used as a backup server in cases where the main server is unavailable, and it acts as a means of restoring lost data. The COPPUL PLN currently preserves 754 Archival Units, comprising 138 GB of data.

COPPUL's newest collaborative preservation program is in implementation in early 2014 with six pilot members. It is a shared and hosted Archivematica implementation, undertaken in partnership with vendor Artefactual Systems Inc. Archivematica is a free, open-source digital preservation system that is designed to maintain standards-based, long-term access to collections of digital objects. The COPPUL

program provides a comprehensive solution to member organizations who wish to preserve digital holdings but who are unable or unwilling to install and manage local Archivematica instances. The program offers a cloud computing service allowing self-management from a web portal and self-deployment from templates.

COPPUL facilitates a consortial license for Archive-It, for member libraries that use this service for web archiving. Participating libraries also populate a COPPUL Archive-It user group, to curate the collections they are archiving and provide mutual technical support. Participating libraries are archiving an array of web domains including local library and university sites, government sites at all levels, local historical societies, news outlets, event-based collections, and more.

### *3) Staff development at member libraries*

COPPUL facilitates staff development for member libraries, both by developing local events on topics of interest across member libraries, and by bringing to our region events from elsewhere that will serve this purpose.

Examples from the past few years include the following:

- Workshops on research methods for librarians, with N.Busch & J.Giesecke
- Workshop on digital preservation, for library directors plus one individual from staff
- Workshop on digital preservation, for staff working in library systems
- Workshop on assessment and return on investment metrics for library directors plus one
- ACRL scholarly communication “roadshow” —Scholarly Communication: from Understanding to Engagement
- Planning Assessing and Communicating Library Impact: putting the ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education into Action

COPPUL members populate a number of committees and working groups that provide a venue for training, sharing best practices, and developing and monitoring collaborative projects:

- Return on Investment Task Group
- Scholarly Communication Working Group
- Digital Preservation Working Group
- Collections Committee
- ACCOLEDS (data librarians)

### **Would Canadians know of, or understand, the contribution you make to library/archival service in Canada?**

Canadians would understand the savings, in both time and money, achieved through consortial licensing of online information resources. In so far as university libraries are regarded as important repositories of research, scholarship and information, and our member institutions are publicly funded, these savings

would be appreciated by taxpayers and community members, as well as by university students and faculty.

Canadians would also understand the value of comprehensive preservation programs for both print and digital resources housed in university libraries. Citizens and scholars alike recognize this as a critical role for research libraries in preserving Canada's documentary heritage, and stewarding the scholarly record. Recent media attention around the closure of federal libraries and the uncertain fate of the unique research collections from these libraries, illustrates the importance of this role.

### **What inhibits you from providing services that ultimately would improve library/archive services to Canadians?**

COPPUL's work on preservation, both print and digital, would be more effective if undertaken in the context of a comprehensive national strategy for preservation of documentary heritage in Canada. In the print realm, COPPUL is actively working with other regional and provincial groups involved in these activities (BCI, CARL, Novanet, OCUL). We are also working with Library and Archives Canada as they plan to extend their Last Copy Initiative in coordination with regional archiving activities. While LAC has volunteered to coordinate print archiving activity nationally, progress to date has been slow and fragmented. On the digital front, LAC's Pan-Canadian Documentary Heritage Network has also proved challenging and unproductive. Likewise, a national approach to digital research data in all formats (text, numeric, image, video, audio, quantitative, qualitative, etc.) is badly needed. We are encouraged by, engaged with, and supportive of, CARL's developing work in this area.

In terms of COPPUL's activity licensing electronic resources, the changing environment for consortial licensing and acquisitions is currently an inhibitor of equitable access for academic libraries. Many commercial publishers continue to expect annual price increases for their renewals, in the face of significant reductions in the budgets of university libraries in our region. A significant portion of our online resources are still licensed based on historic print spending more than ten years after most libraries have cancelled the corresponding print subscriptions. Exerting pressure on the market by supporting open access and other forms of sustainable alternative publishing is one of the most effective strategies for academic libraries. Academic librarians also have an important role informing researchers about the business practices of the publishers in their fields.

Most students arrive at university, and therefore into university libraries, with a background in information-seeking skills and digital literacy gained in high school libraries. We also know that university students use local public libraries for course research and study space as well as personal needs. Greater cooperation and collaboration between school, public and academic libraries would greatly enhance service delivery for all.

### **What do you see as the challenges for libraries and archives in the forthcoming years?**

University libraries must respond to changes in the post-secondary education environment: increasing presence of online educational resources and social media, need for research data management, the

trend to interdisciplinarity and multi-institutional research teams. These changes open up new opportunities for libraries and librarians to collaborate directly with faculty and researchers to build research platforms that exploit the full potential of the digital medium. As players in the cycle of academic publishing, university libraries must also take up our place in a revised publishing landscape that features increasingly expensive toll-access resources, the rise of open access, and a profound shift from print to digital collections. Library involvement in exposing university research to the community, for example via hosting open access publishing ventures and institutional repositories, are a step in this direction.

Whereas the locus of management for library collections in the past has been the local library, the viability of a vast corpus of digital resources is shifting this above the local level. Mass digitization projects and commercial electronic resources are now pushing libraries to think about the appropriate role and scale of local print collections. The internet, online resources, and linked open data introduce opportunities for libraries to become more woven into the online life of students, researchers and citizens. Collaboration between library sectors (e.g. public and academic) is also opened up by these developments. Collectively licensed online resources push libraries toward a sameness of collections; the special collections housed in university libraries represent gems of unique scholarship and culture. The challenge of digitizing and sustaining these collections in the future will be substantial.

Information-seeking skills and digital literacy are now critical life skills for students and citizens. Libraries of all types, including university libraries, have a role to play here. Libraries provide free community gathering spaces for study and inspiration, training resources for online literacies, and well-preserved collections of the scholarly record and cultural heritage. In this environment, education about copyright, online publishing services, and high-tech spaces for group collaboration are just a few of the invaluable services that university libraries can provide.

University libraries are actively responding to these challenges by coming together to collaborate on issues of common concern. Library consortia such as COPPUL play a vital role by providing a platform for collaboration, information-sharing, training, and cooperative solutions.

#### **Appendices:**

- A) COPPUL Fact Sheet 2014
- B) COPPUL Strategic Directions Framework, 2012-2015



## COPPUL Fact Sheet 2014

### Purpose

COPPUL provides leadership in the development of solutions that meet the academic information resource needs of its member institutions. Member libraries cooperate to enhance information services through resource sharing, collective purchasing, document delivery, preservation efforts, and similar activities.

### Membership

- 23 university libraries in 4 western provinces, plus 15 affiliate members (see list on reverse)
- full members have AUCC accreditation and their library director is eligible for election to the Board of Directors
- affiliate members are from the west and other regions of Canada; they participate in licensing *only*, do not require AUCC membership, and pay a flat \$500 annual fee

### Current Projects

- licensing electronic information resources (currently 165+ resources)
- coordination of interlibrary loan network, including service standards and centralized invoicing
- coordination of in-person reciprocal borrowing within COPPUL and at most Canadian universities
- operating a Private LOCKSS Network to preserve locally digitized content
- operating a Shared Print Archive for rationalized preservation of print collections in the region (in planning)
- operating a hosted Archivematica service for comprehensive preservation of digital objects

### Benefits of Membership

- discounted pricing and favourable terms on licensed resources
- networking and information sharing for directors and staff of member libraries
- shared expertise to advance collaborative projects (Data Libraries, LOCKSS Network, Shared Print Archive, etc.)
- occasional workshops and continuing education sessions for staff at member libraries
- connecting and coordinating with regional consortia in other parts of Canada
- opportunity to participate in working groups for: Collection Development, Data Librarians, Digital Preservation, Scholarly Communication, Return on Investment Measures in Libraries

### [www.coppul.ca](http://www.coppul.ca)

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## **COPPUL Members 2013/2014**

### **Full members**

Athabasca University  
Brandon University  
Concordia University College of Alberta  
King's University College  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
MacEwan University  
Mount Royal University  
Royal Roads University  
Simon Fraser University  
Thompson Rivers University  
Trinity Western University  
University of Alberta  
University of British Columbia  
University of Calgary  
University of Lethbridge  
University of Manitoba  
University of Northern British Columbia  
University of Regina  
University of Saskatchewan  
University of the Fraser Valley  
University of Victoria  
University of Winnipeg  
Vancouver Island University

### **Affiliate members**

Ambrose University College  
British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)  
Canadian Mennonite University  
Dalhousie University  
Douglas College  
Justice Institute  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)  
Okanagan College  
Red Deer College  
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology (SIAST)  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)  
Quest University Canada  
University College of the North  
University of New Brunswick

*updated: January 2014*



## 2012- 2015 Strategic Directions Framework

### Purpose

COPPUL enables member libraries to achieve their institutional goals more rapidly and efficiently as a result of collaboration. Members cooperate to enhance teaching, learning, and research in western Canadian universities through collective provision of information resources, library resource sharing, preservation programs, shared professional development and related activities.

### Vision 2012 – 2015

Building on its strong core of existing services, COPPUL will add projects and programs on an opt-in basis. Decisions about taking on new activity are shaped by the framing question: *"What do our organizations, faculty, and students need COPPUL to be?"*

*COPPUL supports its members' strategic goals regarding  
Licensing and sharing | Research and development | Transforming the library workforce*

### 2012 – 2015 activity will focus on the following areas

Digital and Electronic Collections – we will work collectively on

- Improved terms for acquiring electronic collections
- Supporting sustainable models of scholarly communication
- Digitization and digital preservation
- Data management and curation

The Library Workforce – COPPUL will facilitate shared training and education on

- Expanding research roles of librarians
- Employee engagement and change management
- Transitioning the library workforce from a legacy print model to the electronic environment

Assessment – COPPUL will enhance members' understanding of best practices in

- Demonstrating the value of the library to the university
- The library's role and value with respect to learning outcomes

### To achieve these goals, COPPUL will...

#### Act as an R&D incubator

Members work together to develop solutions and strategies to address common problems. Acting as a trusted neutral broker, COPPUL exploits the synergy between the academic requirements of faculty at member libraries, and the research needs at (other) member libraries.

#### Pursue strategic partnerships

COPPUL partners with other library, learning and research groups to explore common issues and increase efficiency. In addition to library consortia and associations, other groups are those working in information technology, archives and preservation, learning and writing, and data management.

*based on COPPUL Strategic Planning process, Spring 2012; approved September 2012*