Resource Sharing Definition and Vision

The *Illinois Administrative Code* defines resource sharing as follows:

> "Resource Sharing" means making the collections of one library available to the patrons of another library efficiently and effectively. Resource sharing encompasses the technical capabilities, staff expertise and policies necessary to achieve that objective. Resource sharing incorporates activities related to automated discovery tools (including bibliographic library databases), collection management, bibliographic description, delivery, interlibrary loan, reciprocal access and reciprocal borrowing. Resource sharing is a core system service. (ILAC 3030.110; ftp://www.ilga.gov/jcar/admincode/023/023030300A01100R.html)

While sharing collections remains a core aspect of library resource sharing, a broader view of resource sharing includes collaboration with other libraries and/or other agencies to share other types of resources as well, including expertise, staff, facilities, and benefits of group purchases. Examples include:

- Sharing knowledge and expertise through email lists and at continuing education events
- Participation in group purchases, resulting in larger shared collections and/or deeper discounts
- Intergovernmental agreements between public libraries and school districts for exchange of services
- Shared digital repositories
- Shared cataloging services
- High-density storage facilities shared by academic libraries to preserve valuable but low-use physical collections
- Joint-use facilities, such as a joint public/school library or meeting rooms shared by a public library and a school district
- Shared staff, when two or more libraries need in-house expertise but not full-time at any one library

Resource sharing is not always an equal exchange, but overall should be mutually beneficial for all participants.

RAILS encourages libraries to participate in resource sharing to the greatest extent possible while also meeting the needs of their primary clientele. Most RAILS services directly support resource sharing; these include, but are not limited to:

- Delivery of library materials statewide in cooperation with Illinois Heartland Library System
- Providing opportunities to share expertise through RAILS email lists, the RAILS website, networking events, and continuing education events
- Obtaining and sharing legal expertise for issues of common interest, including a template for intergovernmental agreements and the FOIA/OMA hotline
- Support for shared e-book collections, including eRead Illinois and BiblioBoard Library
- Support for shared catalog consortia
- Arranging and managing group purchases

- Find More Illinois for searching and requesting across multiple library catalogs (currently in pilot phase with 21 libraries in three consortia)
- Explore More Illinois to connect library patrons to deals and discounts from museums and other cultural attractions (currently under development)

Additional Perspectives

Hugh Atkinson

"This multi-type library network [Illinois LCS network] was founded on Atkinson's realization that larger libraries do not simply own all the books smaller libraries have and more, but that smaller libraries often have their own unique collections that larger libraries would also benefit from having access to. His goal was to have the diverse composition of the network supplement each library in ways that were beneficial to its own users' needs. He wrote, 'My point is that one should not try to reach some kind of theoretical balance or fairness, but to build a network that will provide, by its services and arrangement, the library activities that will satisfy each of the participants, although not necessarily in the same way.'"
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Craig_Atkinson

Orbis Cascade Alliance

The Orbis Cascade Alliance (a nonprofit consortium of 39 colleges and universities in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho) "is an exemplar of the 21st century library consortium. We join together in the spirit of innovation and combined expertise, seeking efficiency and productivity to strongly promote the success of students, faculty, staff, and researchers. We bring multiple perspectives together to challenge traditional thinking and elevate our ability to deliver outstanding services, programs, and collections."
https://www.orbiscascade.org/about

Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI)

"In August 2014 and again in February 2015, PALNI library directors committed to 'deep collaboration' between PALNI member libraries. PALNI libraries have been collaborating on a shared software system since 1992 and have continued to expand to new areas and methods of partnerships. In order to provide the evolving services that our users need, while containing costs, PALNI is becoming more deliberate in approaches to working together. PALNI has moved from sharing an ILS, expertise, and the occasional project to more broadly sharing resources, including staff. By reducing duplication of effort, this deeper collaboration can allow PALNI libraries to enable staff to focus, explore, and innovate to more effectively address needs and provide better service to students and faculty.… Deep Collaboration uses the partnership of PALNI to do more together than any institution can do alone. It is a deliberate attempt to handle issues at a larger scale than a single institution could do alone, allowing each institution to benefit from the work of the others."
http://www.palni.org/about-palni/commitment-to-deep-collaboration