

Texas Resource Sharing: Examining the Present, Envisioning a Vibrant Future

Part 3: Recommendations

Commissioned by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission
Revised Final Report Submitted January 31, 2008
by the Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PART 1: BACKGROUND	5
TexNet Site Workflow Analysis.....	5
TexNet Site Visit Discussion.....	5
TexNet Center Time-Cost Study Evaluation.....	12
Directors Background Discussion	17
Workflow Improvement Recommendations.....	18
Texas Resource Sharing Culture.....	20
Texas Resource Sharing Data and GIS Analysis	23
Literature Review and Bibliography	24
Interlibrary Loan Best Practices and Protocols	37
Overview of Major Resource Sharing Options with Selected Case Studies	41
Patron Survey	56
Library Staff Survey	61
PART 2: MODELS FOR CHANGE	64
Solutions A: Modifications to Current Structure.....	65
Model One: Elimination of Local Patron Subsidy at TexNet Centers	65
Model Two: Reduced Number of TexNet Centers	69
Model Three: Regional System-TexNet Center Consolidation	76
Solutions B: Comprehensive Change	81
Model Four: OCLC WorldCat Resource Sharing.....	81
Model Five: Stand-Alone Centralized	85
Model Six: Circulation-Based	89
PART 3: RECOMMENDATIONS	93
Goals for a Statewide Resource Sharing Service	93
Achieving New Goals.....	96
Suggested Transition with Pilot Recommendations	97
Selection of New Resource Sharing System.....	100
APPENDICES	101
Appendix 1: Resource Sharing Program Grid (Excel Spreadsheet)	
Appendix 2: Texas ILL and Resource Sharing Maps	
Appendix 3: TexNet Center Workflow Diagrams	
Appendix 4: TexNet Center Site Visit Questionnaires	
Appendix 5: TexNet Center Time-Cost Study Worksheet	
Appendix 6: TexNet Center Time-Cost Study Raw Data (Excel Spreadsheet)	
Appendix 7: TexNet Center Time-Cost Study Detailed Analysis	
Appendix 8: Union Catalog Based Resource Sharing System	
Appendix 9: Circulation-Based Resource Sharing System	
Appendix 10: Distributed Virtual Union Catalog Model	

- Appendix 11: Patron Survey
- Appendix 12: Library Staff Survey
- Appendix 13: OCLC Membership Data (Excel Spreadsheet)
- Appendix 14: Feasibility Analysis Key

Part 3: Recommendations

Recommendations for TSLAC related to statewide interlibrary loan and resource sharing are based on the results of the literature review, best practices and protocols review, analysis of the current TexNet Centers, and the feasibility of the potential models presented.

It is clear that if the current funding restrictions in Texas persist (i.e. no significant increase in LSTA funding and no increased funding support from the state) while at the same time the volume of interlibrary loan requests continues to increase each year, TSLAC will be unable to continue to support the current model of funding staff that provides interlibrary loan service for a significant number of public libraries in the state. The combined challenge of improving service to patrons and reducing the service cost offers the Texas library community an opportunity to set new goals for service and to implement a new resource sharing model.

Goals for a Statewide Resource Sharing Service

The statewide resource sharing model selected to replace the current system, in addition to being cost effective, should strive to meet goals for improving statewide resource sharing initiatives. The research team developed the goals outlined below from the review of best practices and documented literature described in Part 1. These goals were factored into the feasibility analysis in the previous section under the “Success Measures” criteria. A service that seeks to develop these goals will find success as an innovative, comprehensive model. The research team recommends that TSLAC consider the following criteria as it creates its next steps for statewide resource sharing in Texas.

Patron-Centered

The importance of creating patron-centered services is well-documented throughout library literature. Customer service models which provide online ordering and instant downloads create expectations for faster turnaround times. Patron needs should drive the development of a new model of resource sharing in Texas. The patron study completed for this report demonstrates that patrons desire the ability to request items of various formats and to make those requests electronically. The typical user has higher level skills in technology and looks for more and more “self-serve” options. Consequently, permitting patrons to initiate requests allows ILL services to meet patron expectations and to improve automation opportunities. (See the discussion in Part 1—Literature Review: The Climate—Libraries, The Climate—Patron; see Part 1 – Patron Survey)

Unmediated Requesting

As demonstrated in the Time Cost Study, the mediation of ILL borrowing requests requires around 20% of the time spent on borrowing tasks. This percentage would be even higher without the use of OCLC's unmediated requesting service which is implemented at 7 of the 9 TexNet Centers. Several studies have documented the cost savings for ILL services after moving to unmediated models. (See discussion in Part 1—Literature Review: Automation and Patron Initiation)

Maximized Use of Technology

Automated services that are now available for patron initiation and unmediated requesting are readily available in the market. Often, it is local policy that can inhibit using technology to its maximum. Wherever ILL management tools (e.g. ILLiad) provide paperless processing options, libraries need to employ them to their fullest, eliminating redundant paperwork. ILL performance studies have repeatedly demonstrated that high ranking practices use the most technology available to them (See the discussion in Part 1—Literature Review: Technology).

Enhanced Reciprocity and Increased Visibility of Library Holdings

In order to make the most of resources available within Texas libraries, a new resource sharing model needs to expose the holdings of as many libraries as possible. When holdings are widely exposed, opportunities for sharing are more accessible. Additionally, the investment in Texas resources is available more widely to all Texans. An ideal system would allow libraries to reach an equal rate of lending and borrowing. Contrary to popular belief, when libraries of all sizes have their holdings widely exposed in a request system, the larger libraries are not overburdened with requests. Instead, the resource sharing load is leveled across all library collections in the system. No one library is particularly overburdened with demand for resources. (See the discussion in Part 1--- Literature Review: Impact on Collections).

Flexibility for ongoing change in technology and patron expectations

A new resource sharing system should allow relatively seamless updating for new technologies and resulting patron expectations. Systems which are highly proprietary may limit the ability to make changes at the rate that current technological advances require. Having a flexible system will promote a library culture that can continue to anticipate and to respond to the rapidly expanding options in the information access environment. (See the discussion in Part 1— Literature Review: Standards of Measure; Part 1—Interlibrary Loan Best Practices and Protocols)

Shared funding responsibility at local, state, and federal levels

ILL services will be encouraged by distributing the costs of the service throughout the resource sharing system. Prioritizing interlibrary loan within local budgets will help establish a more equitable system for meeting the needs of all Texans. Creating shared fiscal responsibility for interlibrary loan develops wider ownership of the service across the stakeholders in the system.

Encourages the view of resource sharing as a core service

The concepts of resource sharing are core to librarianship and the mission of libraries. No one library can meet the ever-growing needs of its patron community in a global environment. Consequently, the need for ILL service will be even more essential. A statewide resource sharing system should further this value within the state by creating service benchmarks, protocols, and leadership which supports new initiatives.

Increased value of training and continuing education for library staff

Since the highest performing ILL operations maximize the use of technology for cost-efficiencies, an ideal resource sharing system will make the continuing education of staff a priority in order to keep up to date with functionalities as they become available. Leadership by professional librarians within ILL units allows the ability to create services that embody the goals discussed above.

Promotes Efficient Delivery

A network of courier services may provide the most cost-effective delivery method for physical items. The success of any resource sharing model will be dependent on the delivery system available to it. Promotion and funding of broad scale participation in a statewide courier system allow inclusion of all libraries particularly those that struggle to cover the cost of delivery of materials through more traditional delivery mechanisms. A tiered-fee reimbursement structure based on volume might be considered. Strategic development of courier routes would be an integral step in designing a statewide resource sharing model. (See Part 1 – Staff Survey)

Based on the patron survey, public library patrons are less inclined to expect electronic delivery though academic users more often find it critical to their research needs. However, broad cultural trends indicate that demand for electronic delivery will become more common place among all users. Therefore, a statewide resource sharing system should continue to promote programs such as the Library of Texas and the TexShare database program as well as the delivery of other formats electronically. (see Part 1 – Literature Review: The Climate – Libraries; Part 1 – Patron Survey)

Achieving New Goals

The goals for a statewide resource sharing service outlined above clearly require a new approach to providing service to Texans. A wide array of options have been described above and offer several paths for change.

Feasibility Analysis

Each of the potential resource sharing models outlined in Part 2 received a Feasibility Score. These scores were based on giving legal, political/social, and fiscal aspects equal weight with success measures (see Appendix 14 Feasibility Analysis Key).

The Feasibility Scores for the six potential models examined ranged from 10 to 14 out of a possible score of 16 and are shown in the table below. Model 6 ranked the highest with a rating of Highly Feasible. Models 1, 2b, 3, 4, and 5 all ranked in the Feasible range. Models 2a fell into a lower range rated Possibly Feasible.

Feasibility Scores Comparison

Program Criteria	Model 1	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Legal	3	4	4	3	4	4	4
Political/Social	2	3	3	3	3	2	3
Fiscal	3	1	3	4	3	3	4
Success Measures	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
Total Score	11	10	13	13	12	12	14

Consideration of Models 1 and 2a was discarded based on their low rating of Possibly Feasible. Model 1 and Model 2a both related to continued use of the current TexNet Center model with some modifications. Their low scores were due in part to a low rating on Success Measures, indicating that they did not take advantage of new advances in resource sharing practices. In addition, Model 2a, which involves a reduction in the number of TexNet Centers from nine to three, did not offer significant cost savings.

Model 2b, which involves a reduction in the number of TexNet Centers from nine to one, received a rating of 13 based in part on its significant cost savings and low disruption to service to Area Libraries. However, as noted in the Assumptions section of the model description, continued high growth in interlibrary loan volume could cause this solution to become untenable in as little as five years.

For this reason, Model 2b is recommended only as an interim solution while a longer term solution is implemented.

Models 3, 4, 5, and 6 all received relatively high scores between 12 and 15. They all received scores of 3 in the Success Measures category, and Models 4, 5, and 6 received the highest available score in terms of working within the current legal framework. Scores in the area of Political/Social factors varied among the different models.

As a group, the models scored in median ranges for most criteria. This reality demonstrates that each model has its strengths and weaknesses, affecting the library community, patron community, and TSLAC to various degrees. No one model stands out against the others as the best choice.

Consequently, in order to adequately evaluate the true potential of Models 3-6, the research team recommends that pilot projects be set up with various products for groups of Texas libraries. The cost savings gained from implementation of Model 2b as an interim solution could be used to fund the pilots and later on, to fund the one-time implementation costs of moving to a new model. The long term on-going costs of Models 4, 5, and 6 is significantly less than TSLAC currently pays for annual TexNet Center contracts. In addition, they are scaleable and should support many years of continued growth in resource sharing. These models also embody many of the best practices gleaned from the resource sharing literature.

Suggested Transition with Pilot Recommendations

The current resource sharing model has created an interlibrary loan culture that is unique to Texas. The models previously outlined and analyzed represent a major shift in those cultural mores. Adoption of any of these models has the risk of disenfranchising significant stakeholders in the statewide system. Consequently, the research team is recommending a phased approach to ease the change that will be required for shifting the TSLAC budget, library budgets and reallocating or adding library staff.

The first step is to free up funds to allow for experimentation of other resource sharing options. Because the TexNet Center system is not viable in its current form, steps should be taken to move to Model 2b—Reducing TexNet Centers to one. TexNet Centers which will close will require at least a year's notice in order to plan to absorb the costs of staff for service to their own patrons. The remaining Center will also require sufficient advance notice in order to prime the operation to handle the significant increase in interlibrary loan traffic.

In order to determine the viability of different service models within the Texas resource sharing culture, it is proposed that TSLAC initiate one or more pilot programs. Any pilot program should include well-documented measures for success in order to facilitate further decision-making processes and to promote the benefits of a new model. Monies now freed from TexNet Center operations could be used to fund such pilot programs. Additional funding for pilots may also be re-directed from the Project Loan reimbursement program.

The following are suggested pilots.

Pilot 1: Library of Texas with Relais

The Library of Texas (LOT) represents significant effort in the creation of a federated searching service for statewide database purchases and 145 library catalogs. The addition of an ILL requesting service to LOT would leverage this investment. Relais International's stand alone ILL product complements LOT with its use of a Z39.50 search function that would allow automated request services between libraries in LOT. The Relais product also has ISO-ILL features which allow referral of requests to OCLC if items are not found in the holdings of participating libraries.

The current LOT membership provides a variety of sizes and types of libraries, enabling the ability to evaluate how the service might work statewide. The pilot service would route request traffic first to those libraries that do not currently have OCLC borrowing services. Any requests not filled from those libraries would be sent to OCLC through a referral service housed at TSLAC.

Pilot 2: Circulation-Based

The Texas Panhandle Library System is well-positioned to demonstrate the cost-effective nature of a circulation-based model. The Harrington Library Consortium currently has a shared catalog which would allow patrons to place a hold for items that may be filled from any library within the system. TPLS also has courier service to all of its member libraries. Funding from TSLAC for a pilot program would allow for the additional staffing and costs for increased volume.

Other natural consortial groups who share ILS system vendors and geographic proximity may exist within the state. A statewide survey of ILS systems throughout would be useful to identify and promote other possible collaborations among libraries such as those using Innovative Interfaces systems. TSLAC might also consider offering grants for multiple circulation-based pilot programs.

Pilot 3: Stand-Alone

TSLAC should also investigate the possibility of connecting the HLC catalog with the MetroOPAC catalog (Fort Worth area) that is currently employing a circulation-based resource sharing system. While these systems use different

catalog products, both are produced by the same vendor (Sirsi/Dynix), and the vendor may be willing to work with TSLAC to connect the catalogs through the use of URSA. Groups of libraries with a geographic affinity, but who use disparate ILS systems would be a natural fit for an Auto-Graphics AGent pilot.

Pilot 4: OCLC Services

TSLAC currently funds a significant portion of the cost of OCLC services used by Texas libraries. Also, many library staff in both public and academic libraries are familiar with OCLC Resource Sharing as well as the ILLiad product. In addition to their current Group Services product line, OCLC shortly will be releasing solutions that allow their WorldCat Resource Sharing and VDX products to work more closely together. A pilot project would allow TSLAC to evaluate the new resource sharing products as well as capitalize on their current investment in OCLC service and the existing knowledge of OCLC services among Texas library staff.

Pilot 5: Expansion of Courier Participation

Both the library staff and patron surveys indicate a need to improve the courier service. In the ILL staff survey, this idea was mentioned repeatedly as a suggestion for improvement. For patrons, an improved courier service would help to meet the desire for improved turn around time.

In order to develop interest and wider participation in courier services statewide, we recommend a pilot courier project that would connect more libraries within and across regional system boundaries. Using GIS data examination of existing major highways, population growth projections, current courier participation, and lending/borrowing ratios, TSLAC could create several options for pilot projects which would benefit the most libraries.

The I-35 corridor Dallas-Fort Worth to Laredo

Connecting the counties in along this corridor would likely impact the greatest population base with the most demand for ILL service.

Houston Area Library System

Currently, this region has high projected population growth and low percentage of libraries with courier service.

The US-83 corridor from Brownsville to Laredo

At this time, the McAllen area has a high ratio of courier participation. Strengthening these connections along the boarder, particularly if joined with the I-35 corridor project would greatly benefit this rapidly growing population.

Pilot 6: Library of Texas with Index Data

The Library of Texas uses Index Data's Keystone software and represents a significant effort in the creation of a federated searching service. When LOT was

originally designed, Index Data built in NCIP compliance and limited ILL capabilities. TSLAC could contract with Index Data to further expand the ILL functionality and to test the NCIP capability with selected libraries. While at this point relatively few libraries have implemented versions of their ILS software that support NCIP, by the time these pilot projects are considered NCIP capability may be more broadly adopted within Texas libraries.

Selection of New Resource Sharing System

Following the conclusion of any pilot projects, TSLAC should use the information gleaned from the pilots to create detailed specifications for a new statewide resource sharing system. The specifications should be used to create a Request for Proposal and follow the approved State of Texas procurement process. The continued cost savings from the closure of the TexNet Centers can be used to cover the one time software and implementation costs for a new resource sharing system. Once the new system is operational, the ongoing costs should fall well within current budget forecasts.

Comment on the Texas Interlibrary Loan and Resource Sharing Study - Final Report

Go to <http://www.texshare.edu/apps/illstudy2008/index.php> and write your comments in the comments section.