Ohio County Law Library Consortium  
Goals of Participation

Due to the impact of the cuts to County Law Libraries in the 2005 biennial budget, a committee made up of ORALL County Law Library SIG members is investigating the creation of an Ohio Law Library Consortium (OLLC). It is a certainty that all 88 county law libraries will be facing increased expenses in the form of librarian salaries and/or rental costs. The Task Force assigned to revamp the way we do business has assured us that it will no longer be business as usual. By creating this consortium, we may not only be helping ourselves through this uncertain time, but this proactive move could possibly show members of the Task Force our willingness to work with them and each other.

The events of the last 13 months (HB 66 was introduced on February 15, 2005) have shown us that as a professional organization we need a better, more uniform way of communicating with each other. Since most of us will be facing cuts to our budget either voluntarily or due to a regional restructuring, it is going to be necessary to share what resources we do have. And for the first time, it has become necessary to regain control over “mega vendor” and negotiate statewide contracts in order to get the best deals possible.

While we will open this consortium to the Supreme Court of Ohio Library and all 88 County Law Libraries, regardless of whether they are a member of ORALL or not, we understand that a consortium is not right for every library and will create this body on a strictly voluntary basis. However by establishing levels of participation we hope that every library can find some benefit to its creation. In the early stages of development we have identified four levels of participation, with additional levels entirely possible in the future.

**Level One**  
**Consortium Web Page with Unlimited Email Addresses**

In order to address the issue of a better, more uniform way of communicating we will develop a Consortium Web Page. Included on this site will be links to all 88 County Law Libraries with contact information, hours of operation, and online catalogs if available. We would also use the domain name to give each library a consortium email address. According to the surveys conducted in 2005, 14 libraries reported not having access to email and 45 libraries reported not having an online catalog.

Thanks to the great work of David Whelan, Law Librarian at the Cincinnati Law Library, we have reserved a domain name (ohiolawlibrary.org) and found a host that could handle 1000 e-mail accounts for $60 a year. It looks as though a small group of County Law Libraries will agree to make the first year’s purchase and hopefully this web site will be up and running very shortly. After its creation, we invite all 88 county law libraries to join this page.
This web page will be a great place for all of us to visit to find up to the minute information on the Task Force, meetings, issues affecting law libraries, as well as a way to check another library’s online catalog.

Level Two
Pocket Part Exchange

This level began in 2003 with the Akron Law Library and has five northeast Ohio libraries participating and eager to open it up to more. This level revolves around libraries sharing the pocket parts for titles that they agree to keep with libraries who choose to cancel. Current policy is in place that requires the sender to notify receiving libraries when a publisher issues a new volume so libraries can determine whether to purchase that volume. As for document delivery charges, shipping is paid by the recipient, with participants using the Library rate. This service is a great idea for libraries facing cuts to their print budgets.

Level Three
Inter Library Loan

Once a consortium web site is established and librarians are able to communicate with each other electronically, the next logical step is to initiate a statewide Inter Library Loan Policy. Obviously our first attempts at sharing should be electronically, but each individual library will be able to designate which items in their collection they will and will not share. Ideally, in order for this to be accomplished, each participating library would need an online catalog. Using Z39.50 technology, libraries will be able to do a single search with results from all the participating catalogs. Again, David Whelan has taken the initiative and gathered much information on what libraries will need in order to participate at this level.

Since updating hardware and software may be a burden for some libraries, we felt that this level would provide us with a great opportunity for applying for grant money. Money could be applied to purchasing new or upgrading current computers, servers, and software that will be Z39.50 compatible, equipment such as scanners, fax machines, and copiers necessary to share documents, as well as supplies such as envelopes, boxes, postage, etc. for document delivery. If we are successful in getting grant money it would be our intent to ensure that for the first year, no library would be monetarily responsible for any document delivery costs. In this way, any library wishing to participate can do so knowing that there will be no cost burden on them. This will also give us one year to gather usage statistics in order to develop a document delivery policy for the future. It is our hope to continue with a no or low cost exchange of documents even after any grant money is used.

While it is obvious that this level is going to take some time to get up and running, we encourage you to share this information with your Board of Trustees to gauge their level of interest. Anyone wishing to be included in any grant money received should let one of the committee members know by April 21, 2006. This does not mean that libraries
cannot participate in the ILL activities beyond April 21; this is simply the cut off date for asking for grant money to get your library involved. Members of the committee can assist you in figuring out what technology, equipment, or supplies you may need and be eligible for grant money.

**Level Four**

**Statewide Purchasing**

For years, vendors have charged County Law Libraries whatever they wish for online and print resources we all purchase. When we librarians get together for professional meetings, it is always interesting to see the divide between what one library pays for a product versus what another library pays for the exact same product. We all know that buying in bulk can save a library significant amount of cash. It is then a major goal of this consortium to work with as many of our common vendors as possible to negotiate statewide contracts. This process may prove to be the most difficult since we all purchase different levels of service or different print titles, but we are willing to start small with such titles as the *Baldwin's Ohio Practice* titles or Lexis’ All Ohio Practice Library. Obviously, this level will not be available for members immediately, but we are going to begin contacting vendors to gauge their interest and ideas for working with us.