Cost-Effectiveness and Use Continue to Rise

The Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK), the nation’s leading academic library consortium, began providing a statewide library catalog and two online research databases to participating universities in 1992. Today, OhioLINK is a robust program which supports instruction and research with a diverse array of online resources and services, including a statewide catalog of 40.2 million items, research databases, scholarly journals, a multimedia archive and electronic books. The program now serves 600,000 students, faculty, staff and researchers at 17 public universities, 23 community/technical colleges, 44 private colleges and the State Library of Ohio. Twelve years after the program began, both the use and the cost-effectiveness of OhioLINK resources and services continue to increase.

Sharing Resources Statewide Via the OhioLINK Library Catalog

In 1992, six universities installed OhioLINK systems and began the ongoing process of building a statewide library catalog. The catalog launched in November of that year. During the 1993 fiscal year (July 1992 through June 1993) there were 236,490 searches of the catalog. That number has grown drastically; the catalog was searched 4.73 million times in fiscal 2004.

The OhioLINK Library Catalog is utilized by all potential user groups. In FY2004, undergraduate students used it to make 37.8% of the more than 700,000 total online borrowing requests for OhioLINK materials, graduate students placed 35.3%, and faculty and staff placed 26.9% of the requests. Through the years undergraduates have continued to account for a greater percentage of overall activity and use of the catalog. Their use of online borrowing is a significant achievement of the OhioLINK program as undergraduates rarely used traditional interlibrary loan.

Online Research Databases Link Users to Citations and Full-Text

Prior to 1992, the year OhioLINK began offering research databases statewide, most campus library users were lucky to have access to a limited number of databases on CD-ROM. Then the program began offering ProQuest’s ABI/Inform and Periodical Abstracts to users via the Internet. There were more than 207,000 searches conducted on those two databases in fiscal 1993. Today, students, faculty, staff and researchers at member libraries have online access to more than 100 citation and full-text research databases. Users conducted 21.6 million searches on the research databases in fiscal 2004, an increase of 32% more than in fiscal 2003.

In 1995, the OhioLINK program first delivered electronically stored, full-text general interest articles to users via library print stations. Document downloads have continued to grow as the presence of the World Wide Web has increased and OhioLINK has expanded full-text resources and desktop delivery. In FY2004, more than 13.9 million electronic documents were downloaded from the research databases. OhioLINK member institutions of all types use the breadth of available databases, as the graph above illustrates.

Electronic Journal Center: Delivering Scholarly Articles to the Desktop

The Electronic Journal Center (EJC) provides immediate desktop delivery of documents directly to users’ workstations, allowing users to conduct research anywhere at any time. It debuted in 1998 with complete journal collections from two publishers: Elsevier Science and Academic Press. Roughly 1,400 journal titles were initially available in the site. Users downloaded 570,000 documents during the EJC’s first full year of service.

After reaching two milestones this summer, the EJC now contains more than 6,000 journals and 5.3 million articles from 80+ publishers. Increased functionality options, including RSS feeds for new issues’ tables of contents and e-mail alerts, help users keep up with this rapidly growing resource.

Demand for EJC materials remains high. University students and faculty use, on average, 80% of the available journals, a much wider range than what is available on each campus through individual library purchases. Currently, there are 4.2 million downloads from the virtual stacks of the EJC each year. There have been more than 13.5 million downloads since the EJC’s inception.

Delivering Multimedia Collections through the Digital Media Center

OhioLINK began delivering images through the Digital Media Center (DMC) in August 1999.
Cost-Effectiveness and Use Continue to Rise (continued from page 1)

The first two DMC collections were commercial collections of art images from Saskia and AMICO. The DMC was searched 53,000+ times in FY2001.

Today the DMC is a thriving and diverse multimedia archive which supports instruction and research. Full-text, digitized text, and audio, video, and image collections are made available to anyone worldwide. In fiscal 2004, the DMC collections were searched a total of 344,000 times and more than 143,000 files were downloaded.

Expanding Information Access Through Electronic Books

The OhioLINK program is a leader in expanding information access through electronic books. The program began offering e-books from netlibrary in 2000 and there were 75,000 downloads in fiscal 2001.

Today, OhioLINK offers a diverse e-book collection of 19,000+ e-books from five publishers. There were more than 1.02 million downloads from this collection in the last fiscal year.

Delivering Cost-Effective Services and Resources

OhioLINK has been a leader in delivering information services and resources for the past 12 years. The program has also proven that cooperation and statewide licensing of information resources can greatly reduce the cost of increase in library costs (see figure 2), but also extend the buying power of individual library budgets. OhioLINK allows large universities to buy more research materials and small institutions to gain access to resources that were formerly beyond their means.

By creating and delivering resources statewide, OhioLINK is able to provide a package of resources that no library could afford independently. For example, the total cost of the EJC in FY2004 was $23.9 million (see figure 1), but it would cost an estimated $95.2 million dollars to duplicate this vast resource in print just at the universities. The research databases cost $8.1 million in FY2004, but it would cost an estimated $24.5 million to fund these databases through individual library purchases.

Future Plans

In order to meet the needs of today’s higher education community, the OhioLINK program must keep expanding the amount and depth of resources that are available to support research and instruction. OhioLINK’s future plans include:

- Adding research databases, publishers to the EJC, educational videos to the DMC, and e-books for statewide use.
- Transforming the Digital Media Center into the Digital Resource Commons of Ohio, a new resource that will include expanded institutional archival and video collections from participating OhioLINK institutions.
- Conducting pilot programs with nonacademic libraries and the corporate sector to examine how combining resources can benefit OhioLINK users and help further leverage the state’s information resources.

Current and Future Services Require Continued Financial Support

While OhioLINK continues to strive to be the best academic library consortium worldwide, the program also struggles to maintain current levels of service, let alone more for the present budget environment. Annual operating funds for FY2005 total $68.9 million, after being reduced several times from a peak of $76.7 million in FY2001. The program has been fortunate to have received increases in the OhioLINK capital appropriation, which have helped keep combined operating and capital funding flat for the past three years. Even with the increases in capital funds, however, total OhioLINK funding today is $400,000 less than the peak of $111.4 million recorded in FY2001.

The vast majority of OhioLINK funds are used to purchase electronic resources and content (see figure 3). In concern with library funds, $7.5 million out of the total $8.2 million current capital biennium appropriation will be spent on the purchase of information content. The projected impact of all capital licenses will total $8.75 million in the FY2005-2006 biennium. Additionally, the program periodically expands hardware and software platforms for statewide benefit. For the next operating and capital biennium, OhioLINK needs appropriations of $15.4 million and $9.4 million respectively to maintain services.

In the meantime, Ohio academic libraries and OhioLINK are considering how to best utilize our combined funds within budget limitations. Together with Ohio academic libraries, OhioLINK staff will need to consider what makes the most long-term sense in meeting our prime objective—providing increased access to information at sustainable economic rates.

First Public Library Shares Books Via OhioLINK During Pilot

The OhioLINK program is now able to deliver an even richer array of library materials during a one-year pilot project between the Cuyahoga County Public Library (CCPL) and OhioLINK. This yearlong pilot project will provide an opportunity to define how expanding the OhioLINK program to nonacademic institutions can benefit Ohio’s higher education community and the state as a whole.

Records for 3.6 million library items owned by CCPL have been added to the OhioLINK Library Catalog and users may request items online. Required materials are delivered in just two to three days and may be picked up at any of the 28 CCPL locations or any participating OhioLINK library.

"This pilot will provide an opportunity to define how expanding the OhioLINK program to include public libraries can further leverage the state’s information resources and benefit both Ohio’s higher education community and all Ohioans," Tom Sinyi, director of OhioLINK, said.

This winter, OhioLINK will begin a similar one-year pilot program with the Upper Arlington High School Library in central Ohio. The pilot will give high school students the chance to access scholarly materials from OhioLINK libraries.

Read More OhioLINK News Online: http://olc7.ohiolink.edu/whatsnew
OhioLINK Member and Participating Institutions with Installation Dates

Antioch College, 1999
Ashland University, 1999
Auburn University, 1999
Baldwin-Wallace College, 1999
Belmont Technical College, 1995
Bluffton University, 1999
Bowling Green State University, 1992
Capital University, 1996
Case Western Reserve University, 1992
Cedarville University, 1996
Central Ohio Technical College, 1994
Central State University, 1992
Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary, 1999
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, 1995
Clark State Community College, 1995
Cleveland Clinic, 2002
Cleveland State University, 1994
College of Mount St. Joseph, 1996
The College of Wooster, 1996
Columbus College of Art & Design, 2000
Columbus State Community College, 1994
Cuyahoga Community College, 1994
Defiance College, 1999
Denison University, 1996
Edison Community College, 1993
Franciscan University of Steubenville, 1999
Franklin University, 2002
Heidelberg College, 1999
Hiram College, 1997
Hocking College, 1995
Jefferson Community College, 1995
John Carroll University, 1998
Kent State University, 1994
Kenyon College, 1996
Lakeland Community College, 1995
Lorain County Community College, 1995
Lourdes College, 2002
Malone College, 1999
Marietta College, 1999
Marion Technical College, 1994
Medical College of Ohio, 1993
Mercy College of Northwest Ohio, 2004
Miami University, 1992
Mount Carmel College of Nursing, 1999
Mount Union College, 1999
Mount Vernon Nazarene University, 1996
Muskingum College, 1999
Myers University, 2002
North Central State College, 1994
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, 1993
Northeast State Community College, 1996
Notre Dame College, 1999
Ohio College, 1995
Ohio Dominican University, 1997
Ohio Northern University, 1995
The Ohio State University, 1994
Ohio University, 1994
Ohio Wesleyan University, 1996
Otterbein College, 1999
Owens Community College, 1995
Rhode State College, 1994
Shawnee State University, 1994
Sinclair Community College, 1994
Southern State Community College, 1994
Stark State College of Technology, 1994
State Library of Ohio, 1994
Terra Community College, 1995
Tiffin University, 1999
University of Akron, 1993
University of Cincinnati, 1992
University of Dayton, 1994
University of Findlay, 1999
University of Rio Grande & RGCC, 1995
University of Toledo, 1994
Urbana University, 2000
Usauline College, 1997
Washburn University, 2004
Washington State Community College, 1996
Wilberforce University, 1999
Wilkes-Ralston College, 1990
Wittenberg University, 1997
Wright State University, 1992
Xavier University, 1996
Youngstown State University, 1993
Zane State College, 1994

OhioLINK Update

The OhioLINK Update, published semiannually, provides information on the developments of the OhioLINK program.

The Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK) is a consortium of Ohio’s college and university libraries and the State Library of Ohio. OhioLINK serves more than 600,000 students, faculty, staff and other researchers at 85 institutions.

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