



July 26, 2018

Anne Ruggles Gere  
MLA President

Paula M. Krebs  
MLA Executive Director

Dear Dr. Gere and Dr. Krebs –

Member consortia of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC), representing over 3,900 total libraries and a minimum MLA International Bibliography (MLA IB) expenditure of over \$1.5 million, write to oppose the decision by MLA to create an exclusive licensing and discovery relationship with EBSCO. We acknowledge that discovery is imperfect and challenging, particularly for content without full text, but the goal should be to make information more available, not less, and we urge you to allow customers to elect the discovery experience that is best for their user environment. Barbara Chen, Director of Bibliographic Information Services and Editor of the MLA IB, stated in her June 26th open letter, “Our intent is not to limit options for customers,” but removing MLA IB from all discovery services with the exception of EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) will certainly have that effect, particularly for undergraduate students who are core users of library discovery services. The impact of your resource on your customer base will be diminished, as will its connection to their scholarship.

In her letter, Ms. Chen mentioned that the majority of your customers have already selected EBSCO as their bibliography platform, but Summon, Primo, WorldCat Discovery, and other discovery solutions have significant market share. In fact, 70% of the collective libraries represented by this letter (with an identified system) have adopted discovery services other than EDS, and we have already heard from many libraries who will not be renewing their MLA IB subscriptions because the content is no longer discoverable in their systems. Changes among discovery services are difficult and time-consuming and involve much more than decisions about the collections and content they include, so this change by MLA is very unlikely to result in the move of any libraries to EDS. For the many libraries and consortia that have existing contracts for MLA IB through other sources that extend into 2019, this decision has created an immediate problem with those contracts as the value of the resource to their users will be dramatically diminished.

Perhaps most troubling is that we are not aware of any community discussion that took place before this decision was made. ICOLC and the broader library community welcome engagement about challenges and the cooperative development of solutions that benefit both content providers and libraries. We can all benefit by working on these problems together.

We request a reconsideration of MLA’s decision and call on you to support your entire customer base and the scholarship it produces. This is a valued resource across a diverse range of

libraries and consortia, and the decision to create an exclusive relationship with EBSCO jeopardizes its sustainability dramatically – a result that none of us want to see. What had started out as a banner year with the new full-text version of MLA IB generating a great deal of excitement has now become a year of global reconsideration of the relationship with MLA.

Sincerely,

Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI)	Minitex
Appalachian College Association (ACA)	NC LIVE
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL)	NorthEast Research Libraries consortium (NERL)
Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA)	OhioLINK
Boston Library Consortium (BLC)	Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL)
Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire	Orbis Cascade Alliance
California Digital Library (CDL)	Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (PASCAL)
Cooperating Libraries in Consortium (CLIC)	Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc. (PALCI)
Community College Library Consortium (California)	Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI)
Consortium of Academic & Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI)	Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)
Consortium on Core Electronic Resources in Taiwan (CONCERT)	SCELC
Council of Atlantic University Libraries (CAUL-CBUA)	State System of Higher Education Libraries Council (SSHELCO)
Couperin.org (France)	SUNY Libraries Consortium
Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative (FALSC)	Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN)
Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA)	UKB / SURFmarket
Irish Research eLibrary (IReL)	Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA)
Keystone Library Network (KLN)	Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC)
Lebanese Academic Library Consortium (LALC)	WiLS
LOUIS	
Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS)	



ACADEMIC LIBRARIES OF INDIANA



Appalachian College Association



ACADEMIC ALLIANCE



BOSTON LIBRARY CONSORTIUM



BUREAU DE COOPERATION INTERUNIVERSITAIRE



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California Digital Library



Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois



Council of Atlantic University Libraries

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Conseil des Bibliothèques Universitaires de Recherche pour l'École aux Technologies Numériques



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