

THE LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

A library consortium is a group of libraries that works together to pool resources and coordinate activities so that each library gains more than any individual library could achieve on its own.

Library Consortia may focus on:



LICENSING

Libraries often save money through group licensing of resources and/or products.



SHARING RESOURCES

Sharing materials through interlibrary loan is one way to scale resources. Libraries also share expertise and staff time.



ADVOCACY

By combining efforts and coordinating activities to address library-related issues, library consortia have a stronger impact.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Examples of shared infrastructure include technology (e.g. a shared catalogue) and services (e.g. centralized invoicing)



SERVICES

Many services, like cross-library training, regional virtual chat, or shared institutional repositories, may be run consortially.



There are many benefits to library partnerships:

- **Lower costs** (e.g. on group licenses, savings on staff time when efforts are de-duplicated)
- **Increased impact** (e.g. through unified action)
- **Greater efficiency** (e.g. through centralized staffing, scaling infrastructure)
- **Shared expertise** (e.g. innovation through communities of practice)
- **Equity across a system** (e.g. when smaller, rural libraries can offer the same resources as larger, urban libraries)

A library consortium could consist of:

A SINGLE TYPE

e.g. Ontario Council of University Libraries (Canada)

MULTI-TYPE

e.g. Couperin includes a variety of institutions as members (France)



And may pursue:

A SINGLE PURPOSE

e.g. HathiTrust is focused on digital preservation (International)

MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES

e.g. OhioLINK offers a range of services (US)

A library consortium might be:

