

American Library Association (ALA) Mid-Winter Meeting 2004 – San Diego, California:

**Speaking notes from a speech given by Bethany Hedley, CNSLP,
as part of a joint presentation with Fred Ziegler, University of Alberta,
to the**

**Chief Collection Development Officers (CCDO) of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group
Saturday, January 10, 2004**

The following speaking notes were used for a brief presentation to the CCDO to offer insight into the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP). Many thanks to Fred Ziegler for both a great presentation on the consortial landscape in Canada, and for allowing me to speak on behalf of CNSLP.

Brief History of the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP):

www.cnslp.ca or www.pclsn.ca

- Initially implemented in 2000, with roots stretching back much further, the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP) is a ground-breaking initiative established by the Canadian research library community to increase the capacity for research and innovation in Canada.
- The project is a 6-year inter-institutional agreement supported by Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and 64 member universities.
- It is comprised of a total budget of \$100M, with 95% of funding devoted to purchasing content.
- It is one of the first projects of its type in the world to license electronic publications to multiple universities at a national level.
- CNSLP's mandate is to license publications primarily in the fields of science, technology and medicine.
- Our mission is to expand the universe of digital information to Canada's academic researchers through the co-coordinated services and expertise of academic libraries.
- At its onset three primary goals were established:
 - Firstly, to build Canada's research capacity by increasing the quantity, breadth and depth of published scholarly content available to academic researchers throughout Canada;
 - Secondly, to transform the research environment by speeding the transition from print-based to digital and value-added forms of scholarly content;
 - And lastly to develop new and advantageous business and service models by leveraging the buying power of Canadian universities and by influencing the international scholarly publishing marketplace.

Defining Characteristics of CNSLP:

- One of CNSLP's distinguishing characteristics is its model license agreement.
- This is combined with an innovative procurement process to provide member institutions with:
 - The option of purchasing e-journals independently of their print versions,
 - Lower prices for e-journal subscriptions,
 - Lower caps on annual increases in e-journal costs,
 - Exchange rate fluctuation protection,
 - And, multi-year contracts.

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- The value added for publishers enabling CNSLP to successfully negotiate these licenses are threefold:
 - Their income at risk through renewals is lower when dealing with a consortial body due to multi-year deals, which offer stability.
 - Their cost of sales is substantially lower by having to work with only one organization as opposed to multiple institutions.
 - Canada is small in population; however, there is a prestige for publishers by signing a national license.
- Additionally, the Canadian political agenda often revolves around equity. For research journals this equity is achieved through the creation of accessibility and affordability.
- Therefore, online access to academic journals becomes a public policy issue. It's not about lowering costs by excluding low use journals; it's about making low use journals affordable.
- As well, the issue of accessibility includes making journals available to institutions regardless of their size or financial means.

Present Status and Future Direction:

- As it enters its fourth year, CNSLP has faced its challenges in the implementation and evaluation period and is now establishing a sustainable business model.
- Our concentration is now on three main objectives: credibility, sustainability and leveraging success for the future.
- CNSLP has recently completed an evaluation phase. The outcome is a report from an independent group to corroborate success, establish credibility and meet CFI's funding requirements.
- It is a synthesis of 2 studies, one from university researchers, and one from university library directors, commissioned to assess the impact of CNSLP against the project's original goals and objectives.
- The reasoning behind using 2 studies with different measurements was to address the needs of a diverse community in order for members to see the project as successful on their own terms. An example of this would be increased content versus lower costs. (Researcher vs. library director criteria)
- The success of the evaluation phase also lays the groundwork for sustainability and further CFI funding.
- To complement this, CNSLP is in its final stages of incorporation to non-profit status.
- Building on these successes, a new proposal has been submitted to CFI for funding for the social science and humanities disciplines. Research Knowledge Network represents a project with a larger scope and CFI is expected to return a decision in early March.
- Although perhaps daunting, CNSLP has many strengths to leverage. One of the greatest is commitment and collaboration of its member institutions. The final words of the recent evaluation report are as follows: CNSLP's most important impact may lie not in the details of its activities, outputs and impacts, but rather in the spirit of cooperation that CNSLP fostered among 64 universities, 11 governments and other sponsors and supporters. For the first time, university libraries and administrators and their partners and stakeholders came together to effectively tackle a national challenge.

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