

2009

## Toolkit for Strategic Library Collaboration

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### Recommended Citation

Gaetz, Ivan (2009) "Toolkit for Strategic Library Collaboration," *Collaborative Librarianship*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 1.

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.29087/2009.1.2.01>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol1/iss2/1>

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## Toolkit for Strategic Library Collaboration

### Keywords

Library collaboration

## Toolkit for Strategic Library Collaboration

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The March-April, 2009, issue of *ICOSA: Connection & Collaboration* addresses the important questions of environmental preservation, energy production and sustainability.<sup>1</sup> While daunting challenges mount for reversing the effects of greenhouse gas emissions, reducing pollution and reclaiming the earth's endangered spaces, solutions to these problems are found, not surprisingly, in collaboration. Article after article drives home this point. Neal Lurie, in describing the efforts of the American Solar Energy Society to promote greater use of solar energy and other sustainable technologies, emphasizes the importance of understanding the common thread that binds together the individuals and organizations wanting to make a positive difference in energy production and use. He remarks, "Without that common thread it's easy to lose perspective and slip into tunnel-vision thinking. People often view other organizations exclusively through a competitive lens. This narrow approach can put otherwise good organizations at a competitive disadvantage, precluding the possibility of working with partners. In today's economy, strategic collaboration is critically important and needs to be a part of the organizational toolkit."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, library collaboration depends on how well librarians discern and value the common threads that tie together the missions and operations of libraries. Promoting strategic collaboration—collaboration that is intentional, well planned, and for the long-haul—is a key objective of *Collaborative Librarianship (CL)*. This second issue of *CL* adds to the library's "toolkit" by presenting an article on a support network created through an effective peer mentoring program at New York's Stony Brook University. Another article explores ways and identifies tools to organize a "Library Camp Unconfe-

rence," a new phenomenon that allows librarians to collaborate in more informal settings. This issue also proudly introduces readers to a new regular column by Nicole Engard, a self-declared "open access evangelist." In this column and in those to come, Nicole discusses various networking technologies, such as RSS aggregators, and their uses in helping librarians share ideas and learn together. Adding to the toolkit, Randy Dykhuis' article provides insight on the development in Michigan of "Evergreen," a collaborative open access integrated library system.

Library collaboration unfolds on many fronts and on various levels, and the tools used require understanding and skill, and in some cases, cautions need to be raised. An article on the effects of Western hegemony in library development in Africa draws attention to some of the biases that librarians may bring unwittingly to the noble task of humanitarian outreach. While the topic of Western biases may spark controversy, it is one that needs to be addressed, especially where library collaboration crosses cultural and national boundaries.

This issue of *CL* is wrapped up with a number of reviews and annotations of materials and resources on library collaboration. The *CL NEWS* blog continues to be updated regularly. To keep abreast of what is happening in the world of collaborative librarianship, regularly check our *CL* blog, <http://collaborativelibrarianship.wordpress.com/>

These articles and reviews, some more controversial than others, may prompt you to respond (and responses are always welcomed) or may motivate others to submit articles that also promote, discuss and challenge collaborative librarianship in one way

or another. Please contribute to *CL*; help make it more and more an effective resource for *strategic* collaboration.

### References

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<sup>1</sup> *ICOSA* is a magazine “created to showcase examples of domestic [U.S.A.] and global collaborations and connections.

*ICOSA* (March-April, 2009): [1]. For a free subscription to *ICOSA*, go to <http://www.icosamag.com>.

<sup>2</sup> Neal Lurie, “Collaboration Powerhouse: Lessons from the Largest Grassroots Solar Event in History,” *ICOSA* (March-April, 2009): 78.