

IDENTIFICATION, SELECTION AND LICENSING OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES WITHIN LIBRARY CONSORTIA: THE CASE OF GERMANY-BAVARIA (SUMMARY)

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Introduction

Identification, selection and licensing of electronic resources increasingly takes place within the framework of library consortia, i.e. groups of libraries aiming at the collaborative acquisition of access rights for databases and electronic journals. Consortia building generally aims at centrally coordinated and thus more efficient negotiations, significant price reductions for databases and electronic access to journal content not previously subscribed to.

Library consortia in Germany

Due to the federal structure of the country, there are a number of different regional consortia throughout Germany. At the (inter)national level the so-called *German, Austrian and Swiss Consortia Organisation* (GASCO) with representatives from all German-speaking consortia meets regularly to exchange information about consortial offers and to cooperate in supraregional agreements.

Identification, selection and licensing of electronic resources within the Bavarian consortium

The regional consortium of Bavaria consists of those research libraries which also form the core members of the Bavarian library network with its joint cataloguing database, namely the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, 10 university libraries and 17 universities of applied sciences. So far the consortium has negotiated deals for 21 databases and with six publishers of electronic journals.

Within the Bavarian consortium, the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* as the central regional library assumes the role of chief negotiator. This implies monitoring the market for the identification of relevant consortial offers, selecting and evaluating offers on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis as well as expert group content evaluation, negotiating deals with both publishers and potential library participants, cooperating with other regional consortia, representing Bavaria in GASCO and administering electronic journals for the consortium in the so-called *Electronic Journals Library*, a joint access system run by the University Library of Regensburg. Although the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* is obliged to fulfil this time-consuming role solely with its own staff, centrally coordinated, direct negotiations have so far been preferred to appointing an external agent.

The future of consortial models: the case of electronic journals

While it is undisputed that the joint acquisition of databases can lead to significant price reductions, it is less clear whether the additional content e-journal consortia provide is really needed by the participating libraries. Usage statistics from the Bavarian consortium confirm the added value of those additional journals, if only within the framework of a particular consortial structure on the one hand and an appropriate journal package on the other.

At the same time, consortia building in the field of electronic journals has to be seen against the background of the crisis of the scholarly journal and in the light of the gradual

transition from print to electronic form. Current consortial models are therefore subject to further modification and development.