SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMIC LIBRARY CONSORTIA: CREATING VALUE TOGETHER

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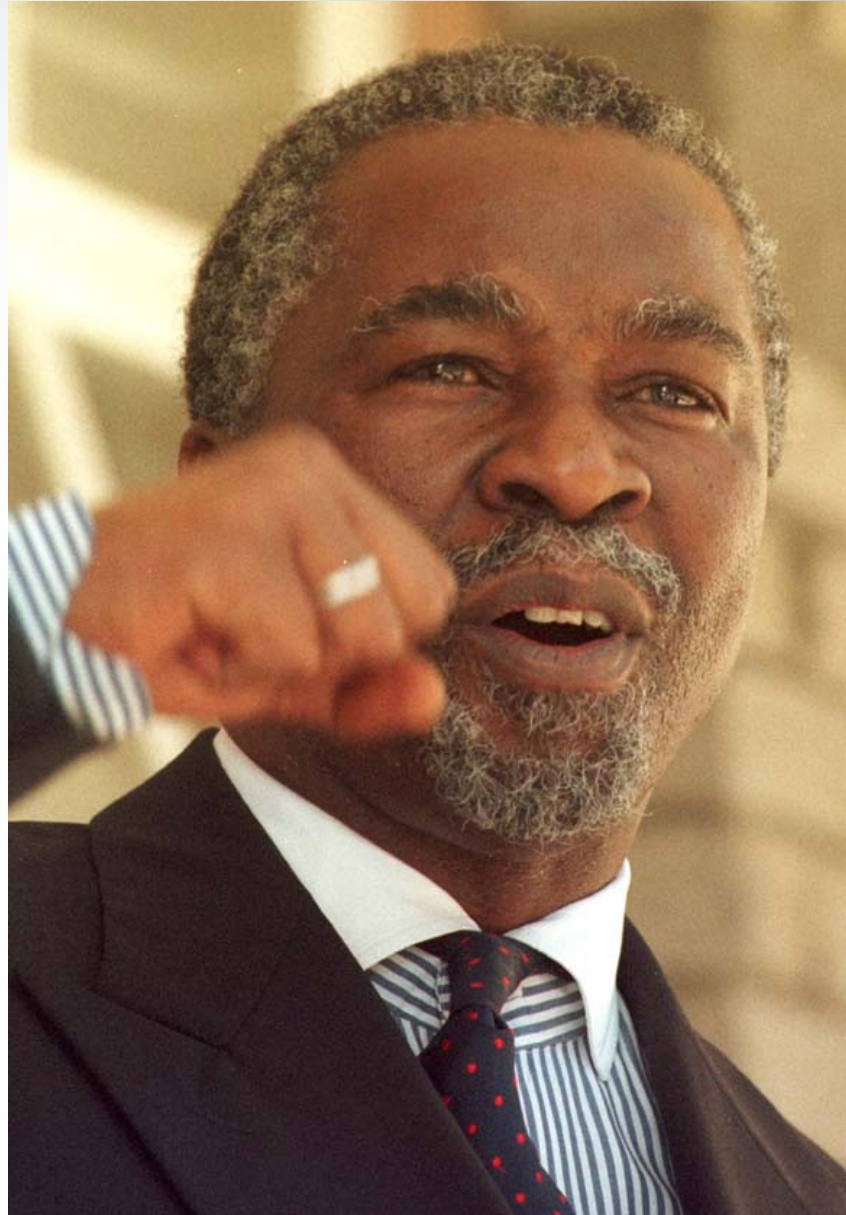
SOUTH AFRICA

2004

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Context Setting

Context Setting: Thabo Mbeki

Context Setting: Nelson Mandela

Context Setting: Flag

Proudly South African

South African Higher Education Landscape

Five Higher Education consortia:

- CHEC   Cape Higher Education Consortium
  Western Cape Province

- ECHEA   Eastern Cape Higher Education Association
  Eastern Cape Province

- esATI   Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions
  KwaZulu-Natal Province

- FOTIM   Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis
  Provinces of Gauteng, North-West & Limpopo

- FSHFETT   Free State Higher and Further Education & Training Trust
  (to become FSHEC: Free State Higher Education Consortium)
  Free State Province

South African Academic Library Consortia
A decade of development

Three phases:

- establishment of consortia - the power of connecting
- consolidation and growth - creating value in the mind of the member
- strategic leadership - creating value together

South African Academic Library Consortia
Establishment

Phase 1:   **1992 - 1998**

- CALICO (1992)   [CHEC]

  Cape Library Cooperative

- GAELIC (1996)   [FOTIM]

  Gauteng & Environs Library Consortium

- FRELICO (1996/7)   [FSHFETT]

  Free State Library & Information Consortium

- eSAL (1997)   [esATI]

  Eastern Seaboard Association of Libraries

- SEALS (1998)   [ECHEA]

  South Eastern Alliance of Library Systems

South African Academic Library Consortia

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 1: Functions & Services

- Purchase of a common library system
- Resource sharing
- Joint purchasing of e-resources & licensing administration at regional level
- Staff development

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 1: Achievements

- Regional consortia established
- Donor funding for common library system
- Improved interlending & document supply services
- Staff skills development programmes
- Committed leadership & staff in member libraries
- Volunteer based
- Improved e-communications
- Joint purchasing of e-resources

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 2: Consolidation & Growth

Phase 2: 1999 - 2003

- Consolidation of consortia services

- Regional consortia - increased membership

- Transformation and change

  - political

  - economic

  - social

  - higher education

South African Academic Library Consortia:
Phase 2: Consolidation & Growth

- National Plan for Higher Education "size and shape" strategy
  - GAELIC   16 → 9 members
  - CALICO   5 → 4 members
  - FRELICO   2 members
  - SEALS   7 → 4 members
  - esAL   7 → 3 members

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 2: Achievements

Regional Level

- Facilitating use and support of common library system
- Resource sharing
- Improved access to e-resources
- Reduced duplication - non core materials
- Project management across member libraries
- Staff training and development
- Building collaborative relationships
  - Regional
  - National
  - International
- Regional consortia offices established

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 2: Achievements

National level

- Coalition of South African Library Consortia (COSALC)
  - National Policy on Electronic Information Development and Access
  - International engagement
  - National site licensing project
- South African Site Licensing Initiative (SASLI)
  - Substantial cost savings
  - Cost-effective use of library staff
  - Technical expertise and guidance
  - Co-ordinated e-resource training
  - Research

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 2: Achievements

National level (cont.)

- Tertiary Education Network (TENET)
  - Agency negotiates with TELKOM to purchase additional internet access bandwidth for higher educational and research sector
  - Customer-specific broad-band transport network
  - Administers the ac.za domain name space

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 2: But….”Winds of change”

- Consortia are under scrutiny
- Membership fee models challenged
- Traditional functions vs return on investment
- Probing questions
  - sustainability
  - parent consortia subsidies
  - innovative services
  - defined deliverables and benefits
- Time to revisit the consortium business strategy

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: Strategic Leadership

Cross-Road

- "low road"

  Relegated to important, but background, roles

- "high road"

  Define space and position we want to occupy in next 3 - 5 years

- Strategic leadership role - create value together

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: Consortia Questionnaire

- **Section 1: Current profile of each consortium**
  - Key services
  - Key financial issues and possible solutions
  - Weaknesses, strengths and opportunities
  - Sustainability
- **Section 2: Retrospective glance at achievements**
  - Regional achievements and challenges
  - National achievements and challenges

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: Consortia Questionnaire

- **Section 3: Strategic direction: regional & national**
  - Environmental factors
  - Likely needs of member base
  - Availability of strategic and/or business plans
  - Main direction of work (2005 - 2007)
  - Main priority (2005 - 2007)
  - What will be different
- **Section 4: Strategic questions**
  - Should focus be on traditional functions
  - How innovative can consortia be
  - How can consortia "create value" in the mind of the member / parent institution

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: What did we find out

Environmental drivers

- Higher education transformation

- New funding formula for higher education

- Government R & D strategy

- Government imperative for academic institutions to collaborate

- E-research environment

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: What did we find out

What is changing in member institutions?

- New funding formula is addressing disparities

- Volunteer base is stretched

- Participation in consortia programmes dwindling

- Tension between institutions and consortial priorities - mergers

- Participation impacted by costs, distances and time

- Consortia programmes in current format are a lesser priority

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: What did we find out

What is changing in the consortia?

- Traditional services no longer sufficient to justify consortium

- Business plans supported by strategic planning - priority

- Integration of national plans with regional consortia planning

- Regional consortia & national coalition have a critical role in determining:

  - collaboration in research library provision in South Africa

  - patterns of researchers' use of information resources

  - collaboration on support for researchers

South African Academic Library Consortia
Phase 3: What did we find out

What is changing in the consortia?(cont.)

- Standards and benchmarking - priority
- IT and common library system management are not+ the only priority
- Pressure for affordability to belong to consortia
- Increased inter-consortial collaboration

South African Academic Library Consortia
Challenges

The "high-road" to the future

- Provide collective strategic leadership
- Find research-centred solutions to common problems
- Provide "incubators" for innovative projects / services
- Motivate members to improve support for researchers
- Assist to promote continuous improvement in member libraries
- Facilitate strategic alliances and collaborative partnerships

South African Academic Library Consortia
Challenges

Opportunities to be grabbed

- Benchmarking library and information services
- Project management for initiatives across member libraries
- Fund development
- Surfacing needs of member libraries
- Facilitating and brokering role services
- Training services
- Facilitate use and maintain common library system
- Research new developments in library and information services field

Conclusion

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."

~anonymous~