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Resource sharing in university libraries: A tool for information interchange

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Abstract

Experience developed in two university libraries, Advertising and Marketing School of Rio de Janeiro library and Medicine Faculty of Petrópolis library, members of CBIES/RJ-resource sharing consortia of Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil, with the aim of identifying benefits for both institutions through their participation in the consortia. The main results are as follows: scientific and technological knowledge sharing, cooperative acquisition of software and databases, and the development of a cooperative online serials catalog; facilities to search for and access information. This experience shows how library consortia are efficient tools to information resource sharing and can contribute to increase the quality of academic education.

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1. Introduction

Information technology has extended the availability of information. Due to this reality, libraries are rethinking old practices related to acquisition, storage, organization, and dissemination of this growing quantity of information and knowledge.

The organization of libraries into resource sharing consortia and networks are alternatives to address the former problems.

According to da Silva [1] “due to problems like cost of acquisition, of bibliographic processing and storage of documents and the astonishing grow of information produced, resource sharing can, besides a solution to daily problems, optimize library as a service provider to users.”

Marcondes and Sayão [2] assure that, with the information overload, the quantity of information produced and made available brings crescent difficulties to search for and to access it; the alternative to libraries is cooperation.

The first initiative to develop library networks came about in the United States, in the middle of 19th century, with the foundation of the American Library Association [3] and the start of a cooperative cataloguing program.

The delivery of catalog cards by the Library of Congress [4] was the next step towards the development of library networks and consortia.

At the end of the 1960s, the Library of Congress developed the Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) format. MARC uses a set of special characters, numbers, and letters to identify bibliographic information recorded in a computer file. According to Vosgrau et al. [5], MARC started a new concept in standards and resource sharing.

Pioneering initiatives in Brazil were the Bibliodata network, which developed a centralized cataloging bank; the national cooperative program to university libraries (PNBU), and the Biomedical Library and Information Group of Rio de Janeiro, which, since its start up, developed cooperative activities.

The Academic Resource Sharing Consortia of Rio de Janeiro (CBIES/RJ) started its activities in 2000. This organization had the aim of developing cooperative activities between academic libraries of Rio de Janeiro.

This paper relates the experience of two libraries in joining CBIES/RJ. Their own holdings are compared with those of the consortia and point out the advantages of participating in the consortia.

2. The Academic Resource Sharing Consortia of Rio de Janeiro (CBIES/RJ)

The need for access to information to support academic activities has shown libraries that this need could not be supplied with their own holdings due to money, manpower, and space. As a consequence of the perception of this situation, libraries started organizing networks and consortia with the aim of resource sharing.

The Academic Resource Sharing Consortia of Rio de Janeiro (CBIES/RJ) started its activities in 1999, following international networks and consortia models. Its objectives

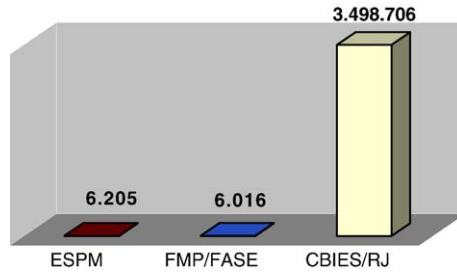


Fig. 1. Monographs.

went beyond resource sharing, encompassing the collective funding and collections development.

According to Souza et al. [6], CBIES/RJ was built up on the following principles: “any university or research center can not provide everything to the others; together, these libraries could have a more consistent development than each one by itself, overcoming individual limitations; and voluntary cooperation promotes effective progress to each library, without affecting institutional autonomy.”

CBIES/RJ network encompasses 34 institutions, both public and private—universities, faculties, research centers—a total of 164 libraries. The consortia give information support to graduate and postgraduate students of different knowledge areas.

The main services supplied by CBIES/RJ consortia are interlibrary loan, search in Web catalogs of each library, serials collective catalog, provision of photocopies or digitalization of journal articles and theses, and access to full-text databases, without any fee.

Besides those services, CBIES/RJ also provides meetings, conferences, and workshops to librarians, commercial contacts between editors, information providers, library services providers, and the library members of the consortia to promote planned acquisition and collections development.

The main objectives of academic libraries are to promote the availability of information and to make easy access and dissemination of information. To meet these objectives, libraries organize networks and consortia as CBIES/RJ to join competencies looking for collective solutions to common problems.

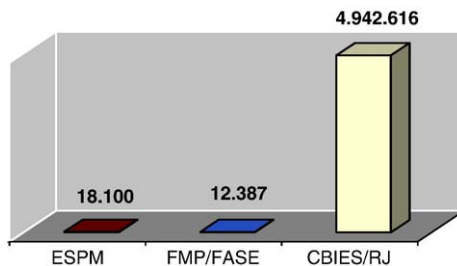


Fig. 2. Monographs.

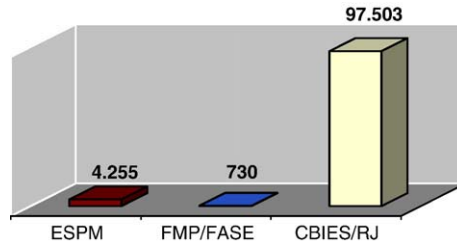


Fig. 3. Serial titles.

CBIES/RJ also promotes an interpersonal relationship network that provides experience and information exchange and personal opportunities.

3. Advertising and Marketing School Library

The Advertising and Marketing School of Rio de Janeiro was established in 1974 offering graduate studies. Since 1980, it offers postgraduate studies too. In 1995 it began the graduate courses on advertising and marketing and in 2003 the Design Faculty was created.

Since 1985, a reading room designed to attend professional and graduate courses evolved into a library. Its organization and services were set up with the aim to promote information access and dissemination in the core areas of interest to the school.

The Advertising and Marketing School of Rio de Janeiro Library has, as its mission, to promote study, research, and relationships to the community and to provide information in the core areas of interest of the School as Business Administration, Communication, Design, and Marketing.

The Advertising and Marketing School Library of Rio de Janeiro integrates the Advertising and Marketing Schools Library system, whose members are libraries of Advertising and Marketing Schools of São Paulo, Porto Alegre, and Campinas, besides Rio de Janeiro. The Libraries members of this system develop information exchange and interlibrary loan activities.

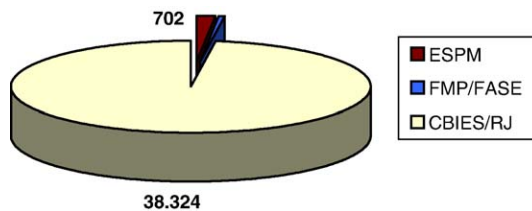


Fig. 4. Databases.

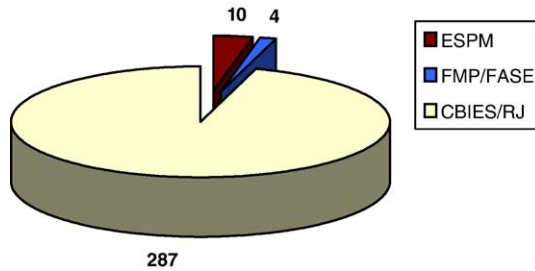


Fig. 5. Videos.

Its collection includes 18,000 monographs titles, 4,225 Brazilian and international serials titles, subscriptions to 10 databases in areas as Education, Marketing, Business, and Communication, and 702 CD-ROM and DVD titles.

The library is automated and its OPAC can be accessed from local and online workstations, providing users with facilities to access information.

The library joined CBIES/RJ in 2001 with the aim of extend the information resources offered to its users and support their development, thus contributing to increase the quality of courses offered by the Advertising and Marketing School.

4. Petropolis Medicine Faculty and Arthur Sa Earp Neto Faculty Libraries (FMP/FASE)

The libraries of FMP/FASE have their collections in areas as Biological and Health Sciences, Engineering, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Linguistic to support graduate courses of Medicine, Hospital Administration, Information System Management, Nursing, and Nutrition.

Its collection is composed of books, theses, CDs, DVDs, and other printing type of publications, in a total of 13,000 issues; 730 Brazilian and international serials are subscribed. Several referential and full-text databases are subscribed, and the two libraries, the Prof. Charles A. Esbérard Library and the Business Administration department Library, have their collections fully automated to support different library services.

Both libraries join CBIES/RJ in September 2000, with the aim of offering more information resources to their users.

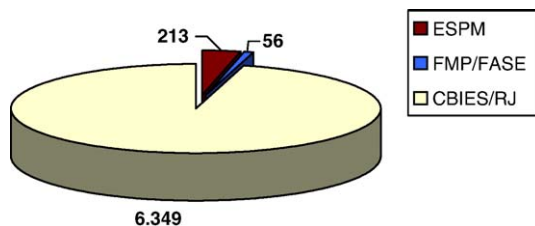


Fig. 6. CDs.

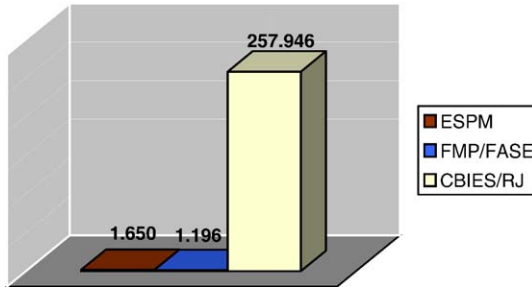


Fig. 7. Students.

FMP/FASE libraries and Marketing School of Rio de Janeiro library have common interest in Business Administration graduate course. This is the foundation of cooperation between the libraries of both institutions.

5. Data analysis

The development of this survey has the following phases: statistic survey each collection and number of users in 2004; statistic survey of the same data relative to CBIES/RJ in the same year; and comparison of both data.

CBIES/RJ data were obtained from works presented in meetings by CBIES/RJ, FMP/FASE, and Marketing School Libraries about their annual reports.

Data analysis and discussion are presented in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 shows how CBIES/RJ consortia made available to users of FMP/FASE and Marketing School Libraries a total of 3.486.485 monographs in different knowledge areas (see also Fig. 2).

This figure indicates that these users now have more publications available to them.

The following figures describe data about serials, databases, videos, and CDs. Full-text databases and serials are available to users of both institutions through interlibrary lending services (Figs. 3–6).

The following figures show the number of users—professors and students—of FMP/FASE and Advertising and Marketing School Libraries whose benefit from information resources made available by CBIES/RJ consortia.

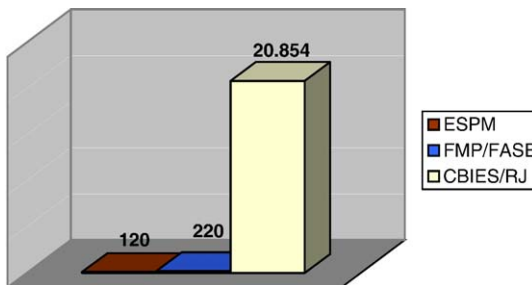


Fig. 8. Professors.

The same figures also show the number of users of CBIES/RJ consortia whose benefit from information resources made available by FMP/FASE and Advertising and Marketing School Libraries (Figs. 7 and 8).

This survey indicates the strengths and weakness of CBIES/RJ consortia, as follows.
Strengths:

- interlibrary loans;
- cooperative acquisitions;
- academic, scientific, and technical knowledge interchange;
- cooperative serials OPAC;
- facilities to interchange information through Web;
- partnerships between library members of the consortia;
- guided visits to libraries members of the consortia;
- information independence of physical location;
- availability of a discussion list discuss experiences and problems;
- stronger position when negotiation with vendors; and
- a forum to interchange experiences, projects, and information.

Weakness:

- lack of juridical experience;
- few support from grant agencies; and
- lack of financial resources to support projects.

6. Conclusions

The benefits obtained by Advertising and Marketing School Library and FMP/FASE libraries in joining CBIES/RJ consortia have impacted the intellectual development of both users community, which now have new and up to date information resources and information services. These benefits confirm resources sharing and cooperation as important tools to library development.

The CBIES/RJ consortia activities also have contributed to increase the quality of graduate education and hence to the social and economic development of Brazil.

The CBIES/RJ consortia enables also close cooperation activities between Advertising and Marketing School Library and FMP/FASE libraries and new cooperative projects between these partners in the near future.

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