"Alone We Can Do So Little; Together We Can Do So Much": Collaborative Library Projects at the University of Divinity

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Abstract

The librarians associated with the University of Divinity in Australia (founded 1910) have a long history of co-operation. These librarians have been formally meeting for over 20 years to discuss and resolve common issues and to advance projects of mutual benefit. Through their shared vision it has been possible to achieve significantly more than would ever have been possible if they had not worked collaboratively. This paper will highlight a number of recent library projects that have required the collaboration of the eleven constituent university colleges and those colleges' fifteen associated libraries. Projects include the development of the Library Hub, enabling all staff and students to access a significantly increased number of online resources. Cooperation among librarians has also been instrumental in enabling the introduction of a single University ID card across all libraries, as well as instituting a collaborative

purchasing model for the ordering of single title eBooks across the university membership. The fifteen libraries are also currently implementing a new combined library catalogue (UDCat) which will give greater world-wide exposure to the collections of all participating libraries. Future projects under discussion include the creation of University-Library agreements that will outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties and the development of a formal retention policy so that no individual library discards any unique title from their collection. This presentation identifies some of the factors that have facilitated the success of recent collaborative projects as well as potential barriers to project success.

Introduction

My presentation today will highlight a number of collaborative library projects undertaken at the University of Divinity (UD) over the past few years. The quote from the title, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much", which is attributed to Helen Keller, is one that seems particularly appropriate to much of the work that I am involved in at the University. I'm sure the sentiment is also relevant in your own theological library communities as well as in the library world generally. Librarians are no strangers to the value of collaboration in assisting us to achieve our shared goals.

This paper provides a brief overview of a number of projects, some completed, some currently in process, and some that I would regard as aspirational, where librarians are still in an initial conversation stage.

What is the University of Divinity?[i]

The UD was established as a single corporate entity in 1910 by an Act of the Parliament of Victoria (the state where Melbourne is located and the University is based).[ii] The Act empowers the University to confer degrees and award diplomas and certificates in divinity and associated disciplines. Originally known as the Melbourne College of Divinity, the legal name of the institution changed to the University of Divinity in 2012 when it achieved University status. The UD is the second oldest self-accrediting Higher Education institution in Victoria, and the sixth oldest in the country, and it is currently the only Australian University of Specialisation.

The UD is responsible for the admission and graduation of all of its students. However, students have a relationship with the University through enrolling in units and courses offered through one of the UD's eleven Colleges. It is a collegiate model like Oxford University or the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley. Since its inception the University has been both collegiate and ecumenical in nature and the eleven Colleges represent the interests of a range of Christian denominational traditions. This includes three Catholic Colleges, as well as Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, Uniting Church, Salvation Army, Churches of Christ, and Coptic Orthodox Colleges.

Despite having eleven Colleges, the overall number of students is relatively small with a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of approximately 700 students. Four of the colleges have less than fifty FTE students, five colleges have between 50 and 100 FTE students, and two colleges have between 100 and 150 FTE students. The University awards certificates and diplomas all the way through to Masters and doctoral degrees. While students have a "home" institution they can enrol in units offered at any of the colleges. There is a single student management system used to record all student data and a single Learning Management System used by all Colleges to provide students with online access to unit course materials.

Where I fit into the picture is that for a little over 4 years I've been the Library Manager at Mannix Library which provides library services to staff and students at Catholic Theological College. I also currently chair the Library Committee for the UD and manage the University's online Library Hub (which we'll hear more about later). My professional career has mostly been in the theological or University library sector, including about 7 years at Whitley College: the Baptist College of Victoria, which is another member college of the UD.

Libraries Associated with the University of Divinity

The relationship between the University and its fifteen associated libraries has historically been through the Colleges.

- Each Collegiate Agreement between the University and a College also must list the library or libraries that are affiliated with that College. All listed libraries must be accessible to all staff, students and other members of the University. Some colleges have more than one library, though some are quite small, specialist libraries that have limited staffing and resources.

- The main multilateral forum for cooperation between libraries is the UD Library Committee – which is an official sub-committee of the University's Academic Board. The Library Committee includes representatives from all college libraries, as well as student and academic staff reps. The Chair of the Library Committee is also a member of the University's Academic Board. This library committee was formalised and made an official university body in 2012 after existing as an unofficial but regular meeting of librarians since the 1990s.
- The University also provides some direct funding for libraries – which is based on student enrolment numbers, and some research grant systems.

However, each library is still autonomous and will have its own rules and regulations, governance and legal ownership arrangements. Libraries have different collection strengths which will often reflect their denominational emphases or more specifically its ownership by a particular Catholic religious order. As well as resource differences individual libraries will also have different budgets, staffing

arrangements, loan periods, and opening hours. Each library has its own website. There are at least five different Integrated Library Systems (ILSs) being used across the network and there more than one classification systems used for the different collections.

Despite these differences, the libraries associated with the UD have a long history of co-operation. Librarians have been formally meeting for over twenty years to discuss and resolve common issues and to progress projects of mutual benefit. Through the shared vision of these librarians it has been possible to achieve significantly more than would ever have been possible if they had not worked collaboratively.

Collaborative Library Projects

1. Library Hub

As the name suggests the University's Library Hub[iii] is a central place where all staff and students of the UD can now access online resources, databases, eBooks and a range of other useful links and academic resources.

Prior to the establishment of the Library Hub in 2016 the extent of access to online resources depended on the home College where one was enrolled or a staff member. There was no consistency of experience for all students. Some college libraries subscribed to a small number of databases and some had no access to online resources at all. In addition, the same core online resource had sometimes been purchased by more than one library.

To help to rectify this situation the Library Committee proposed to the Academic Board that one library within the network be authorised to manage the provision of online library resources for the whole of the University. This proposal was subsequently approved by the Academic Board in May 2015 and a specific Library Resources goal (with associated funding) was incorporated into the University's strategic plan. A competitive application process ensued with all libraries being invited to apply for the role in June 2015. The management of the development and ongoing maintenance of the Library Hub was subsequently awarded to Mannix Library in August 2015 and an initial three-year contract was signed with the University in December 2015. The Library Hub had its official launch in February 2016 which coincided for us with the start of the new academic year.

Although there is no position of Chief University Librarian, as the manager of the Library Hub I was now authorised to perform a functionally analogous role of negotiating with vendors on behalf of the whole of the University. All subscriptions are now taken out in the name of the University of Divinity and are paid for by the University. The same range of online resources, which are now far more extensive than any individual library had previously been able to provide, are now available to all University of Divinity students and staff irrespective of where they are located across the University.

There was a huge amount of work involved in a short period of time to get the Library Hub established and ready for the start of semester. The infrastructure for the Hub incorporates a number of interconnecting products and technologies. Mannix Library was already using SirsiDynix's Horizon ILS and Enterprise and we used this same set up to create a separate new interface for the Library Hub. We used OCLC's EZproxy for authentication against the University's Theological Academic Management System (TAMS). Students were able to use the same unique username and password to access the Library Hub as they used to access both TAMS and the University's Learning Management System. The initial range of resources included products from vendors including ATLA, EBSCO, ProQuest, Oxford, and JSTOR. We used the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) API to wrap around all of this online content and produce a single integrated results list from a Google-like search. The implementation and customisation of the various components took some serious hard work but it was very gratifying to see the final product come together in a relatively short space of time. In the 2+ years since it was established the Library Hub has continued to grow with new resources being added each year.

I believe that one of the additional benefits of the success of the Library Hub is that it gave librarians the confidence that further collaborative projects could also be successful.

2. Single University ID/Library Card

This project was managed by the Library Committee. However, it also involved collaboration with groups and individuals across the University including staff at the Office of the Vice Chancellor (the UD's central administrative office), the Student Services Committee, Heads of Colleges, Registrars within each college, and those staff at each College that would actually be producing the new cards when students enrolled. Previously students could borrow from all libraries but they needed to obtain a separate borrowers card from each library. So, one of the primary advantages of the new system was that the single ID card enabled all staff and students to borrow from all libraries within the network. A standard template was established for cards which were co-branded with both University and College logos. The barcode on each card was based on the student's number in the University's TAMS system and could be read by all of the different ILSs.

The project was rolled out in 2017. Initially one printer was purchased and the implementation of the new card was trialled at one College, namely Catholic Theological College. We created a detailed procedures document which was tweaked with each successive implementation. This helped to ensure consistency of practice and accordingly of the final card product no matter where it was produced across the University. Some Colleges needed to implement new procedures, for example taking photographs of their students, which they hadn't been doing previously.

3. UDCat Replacement

UDCat (https://divinity.on.worldcat.org/discovery) is the name given to the combined library catalogue for the libraries associated with the University. A former version of UDCat had existed for over ten years. However, the technology on which it was based was now very old and needed to be updated, and not all libraries were included. Testing also revealed that search results were very unreliable and for optimal results you often still needed to search individual library catalogues. This meant it was not really adequate or fit for purpose.

The new UDCat uses OCLC Discovery and was launched in early 2018. Once again the project was managed by the Library Committee. It relied on the pre-existing relationship between OCLC and Libraries Australia, Australia's National Library database, which sees Libraries Australia records being incorporated into WorldCat. This project relied on all UD libraries becoming members of Libraries Australia and contributing their library holdings to the national database. Once again it was a project that was rolled out over time. We had an initial core group of five libraries that were part of the initial combined catalogue because they were already contributing their holdings to Libraries Australia. Smaller libraries have been assisted with the task of becoming members and contributing their holdings by larger libraries in the network that were familiar with requirements and processes. Libraries using the same ILS also worked together to understand what was required for their systems. One of the added benefits of this project is that the collections held by UD libraries have become more discoverable, which gives greater world-wide exposure to the collections of participating libraries. This is particularly useful in showcasing unique or rarely held items and special collections, which in turn helps to raise the profile of the library collections held across the University.

4. eBook Purchasing Model

The Library Hub includes several eBook packages but many librarians also wanted a way to be able to purchase single title eBooks. Several libraries had previously purchased a small number of individual eBook titles but most libraries had been holding off on doing this waiting for a University-wide model. Because Mannix Library was already managing the Library Hub and was responsible for ensuring that all eBooks were available via the Library Hub we also took the lead with this project. This involved establishing a UD GOBI account with YBP/Ebsco solely for the purpose of purchasing eBooks. Individual selectors from libraries interested in purchasing eBook titles were set up with GOBI accounts and given the ability to search and select. Mannix Library staff are then responsible for processing the orders, ensuring MARC records are added to the catalogue and available in the Library Hub, and managing the invoicing. Mannix Library pays the original invoice and then is reimbursed by the library making the selections. Once again all eBooks purchased by this model become available to all staff and students across the University. This project has been particularly beneficial as it supports the increasing number of online units being taught across the University. This eBook purchasing model remains opt-in with not all libraries choosing to participate at this time.

5. Print Journal Optimisation

This project I initially thought would be an easy one to progress. It involved collaboration with regards to our print journal collections. In Australia and New Zealand there is a long-established product known as AULOTS, which is managed by the Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association (ANZTLA). Theological libraries contribute their print journal holdings data to this online database. It is often an easy way of tracking down journal titles held by smaller libraries that may not be listed on Libraries Australia. Initially the idea for this project was about the collation of AULOTS data for our libraries so that we could make informed decisions in the future about journal holdings and current subscriptions. There was no pressure for libraries to cancel subscriptions or consolidate holdings. However, what was initially considered to be a simple data collection exercise ended up taking many months to complete. Not everyone's AULOTS data was up-to-date and not everyone was able to provide an accurate report of their journal holdings at the same time. We now do have a consolidated list of all journal holdings which resulted from merging individual library reports into a single Excel file. This has enabled us to get an idea of duplication and titles where multiple libraries have small print runs of the same title. This information will inform decisions about reducing duplication and the potential relocation of volumes to single locations in order to consolidate holdings and free up resources for more subscriptions. It may be that some libraries could also consider the cancellation of some of their print subscriptions or aggregation to make complete runs of paper journals. This project is still definitely a work in process.

6. Collated Library Statistics

This next project was very similar to the journals. Each year ANZTLA libraries are asked to complete an annual statistics form. The suggestion was that when libraries emailed their completed forms to the ANZTLA statistician they would also email them to the Chair of the UD Library Committee. The data from all UD libraries could then be compiled. Once again this process ended up being a fairly torturous one with statistics forms being received over a spread-out period, and with forms being filled out inconsistently. However, the data once compiled has proved to be useful for a number of purposes. It has been useful to be able to source this collated data quickly when information has been requested, rather than having to contact libraries each time statistical data is required. It has been useful for benchmarking purposes, to compare UD library statistics with those from other theological libraries in Australia and New Zealand. The data has been used in the completion of University reports and provided on request to vendors. The collated UD library statistics have also been enhanced with additional technical data, for example, IP ranges and details of Integrated Library Systems.

7. UD-Libraries Agreement

The creation of the University-Libraries Agreement has been a significant project that has been a long time in process but is now nearing completion. I already mentioned that there is a collegiate agreement

between the University and each College. This additional Agreement is a way of formalising the relationship between the University and individual libraries, and in particular with the legal owners of libraries, who may not necessarily be the same as the College that the library serves. The Agreement has taken many months of development and legal review to get to the point where all parties agree on the final text and feel positive about endorsing its content. Essentially the Agreement affirms the critical role of libraries in the life and mission of the University. It spells out the rights and responsibilities of all parties. For example, all libraries are obliged to provide access and borrowing rights to all members of the University. Funding arrangements are detailed including library fee payments from the University to libraries, and the eligibility of librarians to apply for UD research grants. The University is responsible for maintaining funding for the Library Hub. Libraries are required to contribute to the work of the University's Library Committee and to provide representation on this committee. Librarians agree to contribute to the development of policies related to provision of library services and resources, and to abide by the policies that are developed by the Library Committee and approved by the Academic Board. All bar one library have now indicated that they are happy with the latest draft and are willing to proceed with signing the final Agreement. This project was another that was included in the Library Resources goal of the University's Strategic Plan 2016-2025. The completion of this project will be a significant achievement. The establishment of the University-Libraries Agreement will both clarify and strengthen the relationships that already exist between the University and all of its associated libraries. These libraries are critical to the University's mission and support the University's teaching, scholarship and research.

8. Library Collections Policy – Last Copy Preservation

Once again this project was an initiative of the Library Committee and a collaborative project related to collection development. It arose after a distressful situation for one particular librarian when a large scale weeding project was undertaken at one of the smaller libraries owned by a religious order. A large portion of the collection was to be shipped off to an overseas location, without reference to the librarian, and without going through any systematic process of de-accessioning records from the library catalogue.

The Library Committee has subsequently worked on the development of a Library Collections Policy with its initial focus being on last copy retention. The policy recognises the distributed nature of our collections, with a range of research strengths and available special collections. The basic premise of the retention policy is that before any item is removed from any library collection, UDCat, the combined libraries catalogue is checked to ensure that any unique item is not discarded. The development of this policy affirms the librarians' commitment to the stewardship of our combined resources and to ensuring that resources are available for future research. Although developed by the Library Committee the Libraries Collections Policy will also be approved by the University's Academic Board. This process has the added benefit of raising the profile of libraries, librarians and library collections to all members of the Academic Board.

9. Shared Integrated Library System

This project certainly remains a work in progress. According to the University's Strategic Plan we are only committed to investigating the feasibility of such a project in 2018. In our ideal library scenario, it would be desirable to be able to search all catalogues simultaneously and to have live availability data. This combined catalogue would also be fully integrated with all of the University's online resources. Achieving this goal has some significant hurdles to overcome. There are currently at least five different ILSs as well as various versions of these systems in use (SirsiDynix – Horizon & Symphony, SoftLink (Liberty), Follett Destiny, and KOHA). Additional issues to be resolved include those associated with data quality and reaching consensus on future cataloguing standards.

The implementation of a shared Integrated Library System would be a significant undertaking if indeed the project was thought to be both feasible and desirable. Such a project would require buy-in from multiple stakeholders and require a considerable investment of time, personnel and financial resources. However, I believe that librarians associated with the UD couldn't have even contemplated such a project a few years ago, without having already worked together and achieved successful outcomes on several other collaborative endeavours.

Collaboration

There are a number of factors that foster the success of collaborative projects. At the heart of any collaboration is the strength of the relationships that exist between all involved parties. Relationships founded on trust and goodwill will greatly facilitate the success of any collaborative project. A belief in the benefits of collaboration can also lead to a willingness of participants to share information and contribute. Support from the University has also been vital. This support involved including library goals in the University's Strategic Plan, which talks about "fostering greater collaboration", taking requests or proposals from the Library Committee seriously, and providing appropriate funding as required. Another aid to collaboration success is having an appropriate leadership model. This model might include being able to start with the outcome in mind, avoiding dictatorial styles of leadership but instead having leaders who will listen, who will champion good initiatives and who have energy and drive. Flexibility is also key to success, knowing when it is important to provide opportunities for all to contribute, versus when it is in the group's best interest to have one person appointed who can liaise with vendors on behalf of everyone. Benefits of collaboration have definitely included an increase in the profile of libraries across the University, but also an increase in the profile of librarians. Collaboration has also provided beneficial professional development opportunities for members. This has included the development of project and people management skills, negotiation, public speaking, report writing, and policy development.

Conversely, some of the potential barriers to collaborative project success include distrust among parties, or where there is an imbalance of power between project members. Another factor is where members feel a pressure to contribute to a project rather than using opt-in models which rely on voluntary contributions.

Good leadership has a corresponding requirement of good 'followership' or in this case, the ability of each library to apply conscientiously decisions or determined coordinating details made centrally or by a project's directors, and also the good faith that the leadership team, or subcommittees engaged in coordinating information and forming policy and implementation practice are doing so with good will, institutional neutrality and professional competence. Poor communication about any project will also result in less engagement and buy-in from all stakeholders. Within the University library community there can also be a tension between the autonomy of individual libraries and their commitment to the collaborative work of the "University Libraries" network. Often this tension can occur because of the time commitment associated with any collaborative project and because of the relatively low staffing levels at some of the individual libraries.

Conclusion

Despite some difficulties along the way, the librarians' experience of collaboration and working together on a variety of projects had been largely positive. Success has resulted in increased energy and a group of librarians who are willing to engage with new possibilities, and with the confidence that further collaborative projects will also be successful. The totality of the success of many of these projects has led to the increased recognition of the role of libraries and librarians at the University of Divinity. The work of the Library Committee is seen as a model for the wider University community of what is possible through collaboration, having a shared vision, and the belief that we can achieve so much more when we work together.

Endnotes

[i] See www.divinity.edu.au - The University website includes links to all of its associated Colleges and to the online Library Hub.

[ii] For a more substantial account of the origins of the University of Divinity see: Peter Sherlock, "The foundation of the Melbourne College of Divinity," *Journal of Religious History* 40, no. 2 (June 2016). DOI: 10.1111/1467-9809.12279

[iii] See http://library.divinity.edu.au/

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"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much": Collaborative Library Projects at the University of Divinity

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Overview

- University of Divinity
- University of Divinity Libraries
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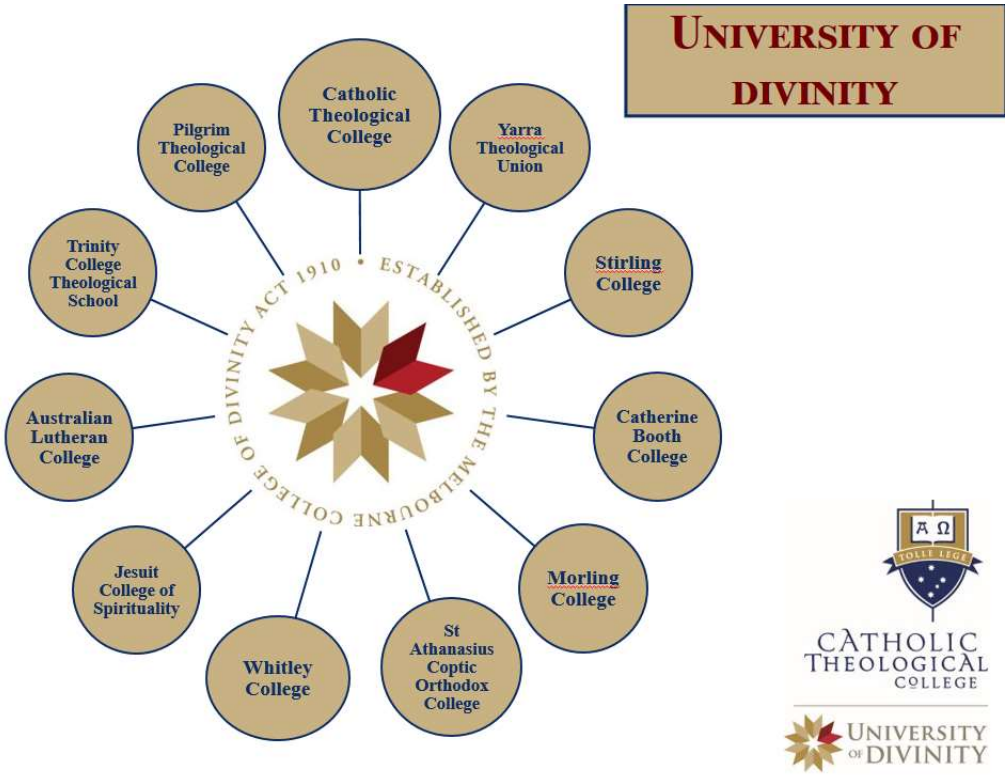
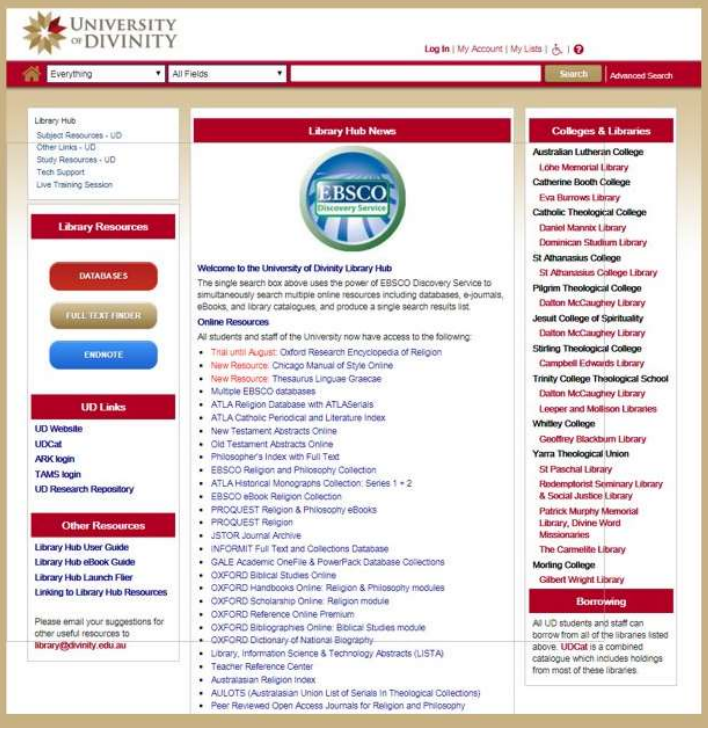
- Library Projects
    1. Library Hub
    2. Single University ID/Library Card
    3. UD Cat replacement
    4. eBook purchasing model
    5. Print Journal optimisation project
    6. Collated UD library statistics
    7. UD-Libraries Agreement
    8. Library Retention Policy
    9. Shared LMS
- Collaboration – Aids/Benefits and Barriers
- Conclusion/Questions



www.divinity.edu.au

1. Library Hub - www.divinity.edu.au/library



2. Single UD ID Card

- Replaces multiple cards used for each library
- Co-branded with University and College logos
- Barcode based on Student number
- Can be read by different LMSs
- Being rolled out in 2017

3. UDCat Replacement

- https://divinity.on.worldcat.org/discovery
- Combined Library Catalogue
- OCLC – Libraries Australia

4. eBook Purchasing Model

- Single Title eBooks
- University of Divinity YBP GOBI account
- eBooks made available via the Library Hub
- Ordered centrally but paid for by library selecting title
- Opt in program

EBSCO eBooks

ProQuest Ebook Central™

ATLA Historical Monographs Collection: Series 1 & 2

Oxford Scholarship Online

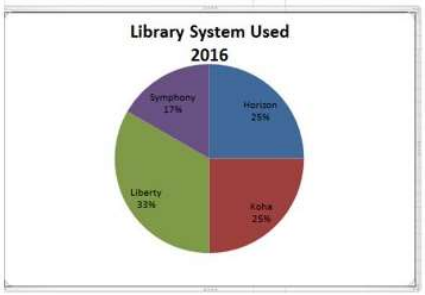
5. Print Journal Optimisation

- ANZTLA AULOTS Holdings Data
- Individual Library Reports merged into one Excel file
- Potential for review of duplicate holdings at multiple sites
- Relocation of volumes to consolidate holdings in single location
- Cancel print subscriptions?

6. Collated Library Statistics

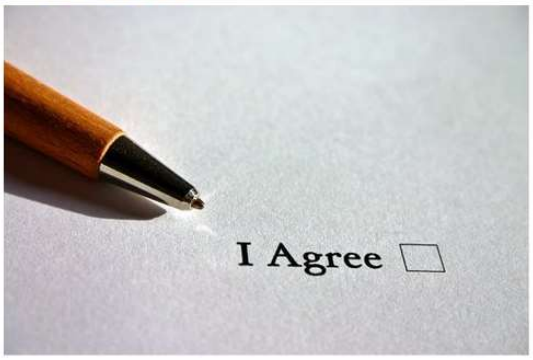
- ANZTLA Statistics
- Kerrie S + Kerrie B
- Benchmarking
- University Reports
- Data for vendors
- Additional data

INSTITUTION	STATE/INZ	LIBRARY SYSTEM USED [73]
Australian Lutheran College - Löhe Memorial Library	SA	SirsiDynix Symphony
Catherine Booth College - Eva Burrows Library	VIC	Liberty
Catholic Theological College - Mannix Library	VIC	SirsiDynix Horizon (Hosted)
Dalton McCaughey Library	VIC	SirsiDynix Horizon
Divine Word Missionaries - Patrick Murphy Memorial Library	VIC	Koha
Dominican Studium Library	VIC	Destiny
Morling College - Gilbert Wright Library	NSW	Softlink Liberty
Queen's College - Featonby Library	VIC	SirsiDynix Horizon
Redemptorist Community - Redemptorist Libraries	VIC	Koha
St Athanasius Coptic Orthodox Theological College - Library	VIC	Koha
Franciscan Order of Friars Minor - St Paschal Library	VIC	Liberty v. 5, build 8
Stirling Theological College - Campbell Edwards Library	VIC	Destiny
The Carmelite Library	VIC	Softlink Liberty
Trinity College - Leeper & Mollison Libraries	VIC	Symphony Workflows
Whitley College - Geoffrey Blackburn Library	VIC	Softlink Liberty



7. UD-Libraries Agreement

- Formalises relationship between University and libraries
- Affirms critical role of libraries
- Entitlements
- Obligations
- Strengthens partnerships



8. Library Retention Policy

- Policy initiative of the Library Committee
- Arose in response to library "culling"
- Last copy retention policy
- Affirms librarians commitment to stewardship of resources & future research
- To be approved by Academic Board

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY

Thank you!

Questions?

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