Cooperative ventures to secure acquisition of and access to e-resources at discounted group prices. Several forces foster a successful consortium, including a belief in and commitment to cooperation by local administrators and library staffs, equitable fees, clear understanding of local holdings and local needs, and effective consortial governance. Flexibility and responsiveness to local collection development needs are central to success.

Cooperative ventures have grown as the ability to build on-site collections has declined. Libraries struggle with making cost-effective decisions about their position on the continuum between access and ownership. Analyzing the costs and benefits for various approaches for providing materials remains a challenge. Various formal and less rigorous approaches to cost-benefit analysis are being explored, including social return on investment and balanced scorecard.

Most libraries have little choice but to cooperate. As libraries reduce acquisitions, they must rely on other libraries for critical materials that they do not have. They work with cooperative partners to secure the most cost-effective access to e-resources. Librarians coordinate local collection development and management with state, regional, and national cooperative programs to ensure that access to comprehensive national collections is maintained and users have timely access to the materials they seek.

CASE STUDY

Mathew is the collections and technical services coordinator for the Cochrane School District, which consists of twenty-five elementary schools, six middle and junior high schools, and five high schools. The elementary schools include a Spanish immersion school, French immersion school, Montessori school, and three magnet schools that emphasize humanities, music, and science and mathematics. The middle and junior high schools do not have specific focuses. One of the high schools is an open (alternative) school, one is devoted to the performing arts, and two offer international baccalaureate programs. The city of Cochrane has a reasonably well-funded public library with a large central facility and four geographically distributed branch libraries. Through state funding, all citizens have access to a comprehensive suite of e-resources. Of particular interest to the school system and its students are the Gale products InfoBits and InfoTrac Junior and Student Editions, MasterFILE Premier, and Academic Search Premier. Additional online reference sources are also provided. Librarians and school media specialists in each of the Cochrane schools manage their own acquisitions budgets, selecting materials for students and teachers in each location. Materials are receipted and cataloged centrally and sent to the schools on a twice-weekly basis. Journals and magazines are receipted centrally and also sent to the schools twice a week. The school system uses OCLC for cataloging and shares a single
automated catalog; searching can be limited by location. Mathew manages the agreement with the system’s monograph vendor and its serials agent and supervises the technical services department. The school library media centers only occasionally borrow materials from each other, and the librarians and school media specialists tell students to visit the public library for materials the school media center does not own.

**Activity**

Mathew believes that some type of coordinated selection would be valuable, enriching the print resources available to students and teachers in all the schools. He has a sense that within the school system are unrecognized and untapped resources. Are aspects of effective cooperative collection development and management already in place? If so, what are they? What steps should Mathew take to advance coordinated collection development, and why? Develop a sequenced list of activities for Mathew to follow as he moves the Cochrane School District libraries and school media centers toward cooperative collection development and management. What resources are needed?

**Note:** The first edition of this book also provided a case study and activity related to the information in this chapter. It can be viewed at www.ala.org/editions/extras/Johnson09720 as a supplementary resource.

**Notes**