Reviewing and Reassessing ERALL – the Ebook Consortium in Hong Kong

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Introduction

- ERALL (Electronic Resources Academic Library Link) is a 2-year (Aug 2006 – Jul 2008) JULAC (**J**oint **U**niversity **L**ibrarians **A**dvisory **C**ommittee) project and funded by UGC (University Grant Committee)
- It is an attempt to form a Hong Kong based consortium to move from a group-purchasing model to collaborative collection development with emphasis on English-language ebooks.

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Objectives

1. To strengthen the English-language monograph collections of participating libraries
2. To acquire ebooks at the lowest unit cost
3. To keep duplication to a minimum (except for titles in high demand)
4. To offer another resource sharing alternative that requires no physical transportation of materials thus resulting in substantial savings
5. To free stack and storage space
6. To support e-learning

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Funding Arrangement

- UGC funded 50% of the actual expenditure of the project to cover acquisition of English language ebooks, employment of project co-ordinator and additional staff, and expenses for educational work and materials on use of ebooks, up to a certain amount.
- Institutions are advised to give matching funding support to this project. Member libraries agreed to share the cost based on 2006/07 block grants.

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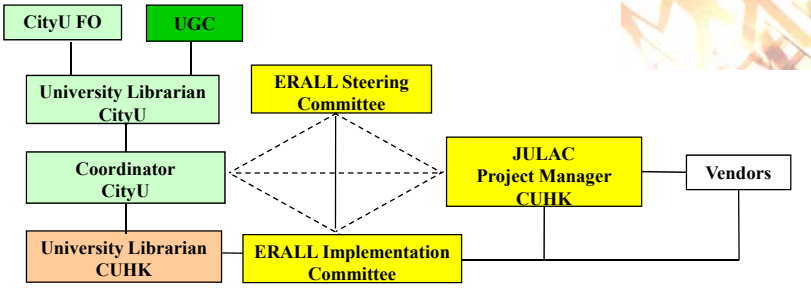
Organization Chart



- ERALL is overseen by the ***ERALL Steering Committee*** which comprises all eight JULAC librarians.
- *ERALL* ***Implementation Committee (EIC)***, directly reports to the Steering Committee, is charged to implement and execute responsibilities such as selection of ebook packages/vendors, collection development and usage evaluation.
- Employment of an Assistant Librarian to perform central coordination work and consortium negotiation business.
- Employment of an Executive Officer II to undertake administrative and liaison duties primarily focused on the coordination work with CityU Finance Office and UGC.

ERALL Purchases

Since October 2006, the ERALL Implementation Committee (EIC) has been actively involved in identifying ebook packages and establishing selection criteria. By mid-May, EIC has already acquired over 15,000 titles (~18,000 vol.) of ebooks.

Date	Activity
Oct 2006	15 ebook packages out of 63 were identified for ERALL project
Nov 2006	Selection criteria were confirmed and 5 vendors were selected for further negotiation
Jan 2007	Blackwell (BRO+BEOS), Springer ebooks and Wiley eMRWs were selected
Sep 2007	Ebrary ebooks were selected
Mar 2008	Oxford (OSO+DRS) was selected

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ERALL Selection Criteria

1. **Purpose** – support teaching & research
2. **Usage** – heavily in-demand items
3. **Subject relevance** – all subjects
4. **Format** – core reference materials and core textbooks
5. **Cost** – cheaper than print, build up a critical mass of low cost items
6. **Currency** – content outdated/updated fast
7. **Interface** – user-friendly with value-added service
8. **Copyright** – copyrighted materials
9. **Language** – English titles are preferred
10. **Reputation of the publisher / vendor**
11. **Access** – multiple access with perpetual ownership

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No. of Titles/Volumes Acquired by ERALL

Vendors	User Access	Publication Year	Titles	Volumes
Ebrary - Blackwell	3 users	2006-2007	236	708
Ebrary - Taylor&Francis	2 users	2006-2008	2,089	4,178
Ebrary - Others	1 user	2006-2007	2,070	2,070
Blackwell	Unlimited	1993-2007	278	288
Oxford	Unlimited	1963-2008	1,838	1,838
Springer	Unlimited	2005-2007	8,952	8,952
Wiley	Unlimited	1999-2006	9	219
Total			15,472	18,253

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Actual Cost per Title/Volume per Library (USD)(Cost based on amount shared)

Purchase Mode		CUHK	CityU	HKBU	HKIEd	PolyU	HKUST	LU	HKU
1 copy	Per Title	6.12	3.20	1.52	1.32	4.46	3.48	0.52	6.05
	Per Vol.	6.12	3.20	1.52	1.32	4.46	3.48	0.52	6.05
2 copies	Per Title	21.59	11.28	5.36	4.65	15.71	12.28	1.85	21.33
	Per Vol.	10.80	5.64	2.68	2.33	7.85	6.14	0.92	10.66
3 copies	Per Title	29.94	15.64	7.43	6.45	21.78	17.03	2.57	29.57
	Per Vol.	9.98	5.21	2.48	2.15	7.26	5.68	0.86	9.86
Unlimited access	Per Title	13.72	7.17	3.41	2.96	9.98	7.81	1.18	13.55
	Per Vol.	13.45	7.03	3.34	2.90	9.79	7.65	1.15	15.29

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Cost Saving per Title per Library

(saving = (list price - actual cost) / list price * actual cost & list price varies among libraries)

Vendors	CUHK	CityU	HKBU	HKIEd	PolyU	HKUST	LU	HKU
Ebrary – Blackwell	22%	59%	81%	83%	43%	56%	93%	23%
Ebrary - Taylor & Francis	22%	59%	81%	83%	43%	56%	93%	23%
Ebrary - Others	22%	59%	81%	83%	43%	56%	93%	23%
Blackwell	23%	60%	81%	84%	60%	56%	93%	24%
Oxford	73%	86%	92%	93%	80%	83%	97%	73%
Springer	66%	47%	75%	78%	27%	71%	91%	67%
Wiley	77%	88%	92%	93%	83%	82%	97%	77%
Average	61%	72%	85%	87%	61%	72%	95%	62%

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Electronic Copy Duplicated Within the ERALL Collection

- To reduce duplication, single copy purchase is preferred
- In case of Ebrary, some publishers (e.g. Blackwell, Taylor & Francis) required the libraries to purchase multi-copies for shared access
- In response to publishers' requirement, members voted
- 5 members agreed to include Blackwell and Taylor & Francis while 2 agreed to include Blackwell only and one did not agree to include any of these multi-copy publishers

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Print Copy in JULAC Libraries Duplicated With the ERALL Collection

Vendors		ERALL eBooks	Print Title Duplicated with ebook		Duplication rate (P/E)
			Total	# of copies per print	
Ebrary - Blackwell	No. of copies	708	537	3.18	72%
3 users access	No. of titles	236	169		
Ebrary - T&F	No. of copies	4,178	4,521	3.00	72%
2 users access	No. of titles	2,089	1,506		
Ebrary (other publishers)	No. of copies	2,070	4,935	2.96	81%
1 user access	No. of titles	2,070	1,670		
BRO + BEOS	No. of copies		975	4.39	80%
Unlimited access	No. of titles	278	222		
DRS	No. of copies		87	3.95	92%
Unlimited access	No. of titles	24	22		
OSO	No. of copies		5,017	3.46	80%
Unlimited access	No. of titles	1,814	1,452		
Springer	No. of copies		21,779	2.89	84%
Unlimited access	No. of titles	8,952	7,536		
Wiley eMRW	No. of copies		27	3.86	78%
Unlimited access	No. of titles	9	7		
Total	No. of copies		37,878	3.01	81%
	No. of titles	15,472	12,584		

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No. of Copies Per Print Title Purchased within JULAC Libraries

No. of Copies	Ebrary		Blackwell (BRO+BEOS)		Oxford (OSO+DRS)		Springer		Wiley eMRW	
	# of titles	Percent	# of titles	Percent	# of titles	Percent	# of titles	Percent	# of titles	Percent
1	779	23.29%	29	13.06%	266	18.05%	1,566	20.78%	0	0.00%
2	762	22.78%	30	13.51%	262	17.77%	1,865	24.75%	1	14.29%
3	685	20.48%	40	18.02%	278	18.86%	1,516	20.12%	2	28.57%
4	497	14.86%	25	11.26%	232	15.74%	1,371	18.19%	2	28.57%
5	312	9.33%	26	11.71%	193	13.09%	913	12.12%	1	14.29%
6	168	5.02%	25	11.26%	148	10.04%	260	3.45%	1	14.29%
7	91	2.72%	22	9.91%	69	4.68%	39	0.52%	0	0.00%
8	31	0.93%	11	4.95%	20	1.36%	3	0.04%	0	0.00%
9	10	0.30%	4	1.80%	5	0.34%	1	0.01%	0	0.00%
10	7	0.21%	6	2.70%	0	0.00%	2	0.03%	0	0.00%
11	2	0.06%	2	0.90%	1	0.07%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
12	1	0.03%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
13	0	0.00%	2	0.90%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total no. of print titles	3,345	100.00%	222	100.00%	1,474	100.00%	7,536	100.00%	7	100.00%
Total no. of copies	9,993		975		5,104		21,779		27	
No. of copies per print title	2.99		4.39		3.46		2.89		3.86	
Total no. of ebook titles	4395		278		1,838		8,952		9	
% Duplicate (P/E)		76%		80%		80%		84%		78%

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Loan Status of Print Titles with High Multiple Copies in JULAC Libraries

* Highest loan title = Handbook of Child Language (Blackwell)

Vendors	No. of Titles	Total No. of Loans
Ebrary (11 – 12 copies)	3	46 – 50
Blackwell (11 – 13 copies)	4	27 – 333 1 title not for loan
Oxford (9 – 11 copies)	6	50 – 113
Springer (9 – 10 copies)	3	7 – 23
Wiley (5 – 6 copies)	2	Not for loan

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Perspective Study on ERALL

A self-administered questionnaire was sent to all UGC-funded libraries and followed up by an interview in mid-May.

The study aims at collecting opinions from member libraries on the following aspects:

- cost benefit analysis of this project
- current and projected trends of collection development policy on ebook collection
- future direction of ebook consortium

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Key Survey Findings

Majority of member libraries agreed on the following:

- ERALL is an effective endeavor for raising funding for collaborative collection development.
- ERALL helps bridge the electronic divide between those JULAC libraries that can afford buying ebooks and those that cannot.
- The Steering Committee and the Implementation Committee are effective mechanisms to ensure efficient coordination and deep collaboration among the JULAC libraries.
- The appointment of the Professional Librarian and Executive Officer has helped alleviate the workload of ERALL Implementation Committee members.

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Key Survey Findings (Cont'd)

- 50% of respondents agreed* that the unit cost of the ebooks was reasonable and acceptable.
- 75% of respondents agreed* that the selection and evaluation of vendors had been effectively and properly carried out.
- 63% of respondents agreed* that the subject coverage of these ebooks met the needs of users of your institutions.
- Respondents unanimously disagreed that the multiple-copy requirement set out by some publishers was reasonable and acceptable.
- All respondents agreed* that in general, the purchase of these ebooks achieved the goals set forth in the ERALL Proposal.
- 75% of respondents agreed* that in general, the purchase of these ebooks met the criteria outlined in the "ERALL eBook Selection and Collection Development Policy"

** strongly agreed/agreed*

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Key Survey Findings (Cont'd)

- 88% of respondents agreed* that the cost-sharing model was reasonable and fair.
- 88% of respondents agreed* that the financial arrangement and payment method was reasonable and effective.
- 88% of respondents agreed* that the eBook Conference would provide an excellent opportunity for exchanging experiences and best practices in strategic collection development, acquisitions, promotion and use of E-Books.
- 88% of respondents preferred the cost-sharing model be based on block-grant ratio if matching fund could be sought from the government in the future while 12% preferred other strategic contribution formulae.
- 50% of respondents preferred the cost-sharing model be based on block-grant ratio on a mutual agreement basis if matching fund from the government is not available while 38% preferred other strategic contribution formulae.

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** strongly agreed/agreed*

Key Survey Findings (Cont'd)

- 12% of respondents responded that in the coming 5 years, their libraries would be provided with sufficient funding for buying ebooks while 50% remarked that they would not, and the remaining 38% were not sure about their funding situation.
- All respondents were interested in participating in inter-regional consortium.
- 50% of respondents expressed that their affordable budget for buying English-language ebooks per year was USD50,000 and above while the other 50% less than USD30,000.
- 12% of respondents indicated that their affordable budget for buying Chinese-language ebooks (in traditional Chinese) per year was USD30,000 and above, 38% between USD10,000 and USD30,000 and 50% less than USD10,000.
- 75% of respondents indicated that they were interested in buying the frontlist ebooks (2008).
- 25% of respondents remarked that, besides the recurrent library materials budget, they had sufficient funding for ebooks in 2008/09 while 75% did not.
- 63% of respondents planned to shift buying printed books to electronic books; the % involved will range from 3% to 10% in 2008/09.

Key Survey Findings (Cont'd)

- 75% of respondents planned to integrate ebooks into their approval plan. The remaining 25% did not plan to do so either because they would like to keep their library collection focused or because they were not sure if they we could purchase the front lists from the core publishers.

- 88% of respondents were interested in developing an ebook consortium in response to the requests from libraries (demand side), e.g., apart from shared ebook option, libraries could apply their long-established interlibrary lending framework into a new mode of mechanism.

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Other Comments

- … we have already bought duplicated copies of print titles among us (for the recently purchased ERALL titles, 80% of these titles are available in print). When we purchase ebooks imprint, single-copy for shared access is reasonably fair for both libraries and publishers …
- … we cannot afford to duplicate our collection contents. Therefore, we would like the consortium to exert pressure to the major publishers and scholarly societies to provide us perpetual access to their front list titles at reasonable cost.
- … also worry that e-text only titles that are not purchased jointly are not available for use via HKALL and for inter-library loan. It would mean that those titles would only become available at the subscribing library…
- … translate long-established interlibrary lending framework into a new mode of mechanism … libraries can decide on the types, collection size, number of copies of ebooks they want and which ebooks are available for interlibrary loans.
- … better ESCROW arrangements and for a mirror site so we can have the software platform in HK to fall back on if one/all of these companies go bust …

Future Perspectives - Further Collaboration

- A t present, effective collaboration among JULAC libraries have been in place, such as interlibrary loans, wider access to JULAC libraries, collaborative bibliographic services and collection development.
- Are there any opportunities for further collaboration?
- JULAC libraries are planning for the JURA (Joint University Research Archive) – a research archive for the 5.6 million volumes for which they do not and will not have space.
- With the media shift taking place among libraries, a paradigm shift towards further collaboration will be necessary.
- Suggested Strategic Solution : Introduction of a centralized, cost-effective **ALL-IN-ONE** service system for joint eBook collection.

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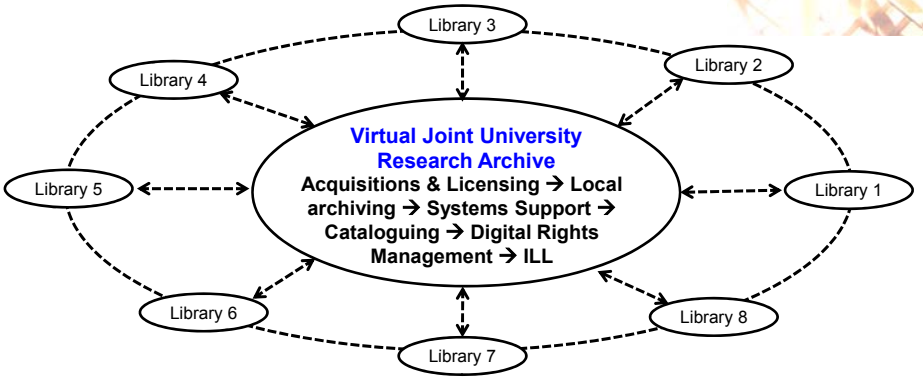
ALL-IN-ONE Service System for Joint eBook Collection

(a developing thought)

Proposed Project Title: Virtual Joint University Research Archive



Desired Outcomes

- Meet the diverse needs of different libraries.
- Address the issues related to duplication, frontlist ebooks, print-and-electronic divide, ILL and mirror sites for ebooks.

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Comparison : Physical vs Digital Archive

	Physical Archive (JURA)	Virtual Joint University Research Archive
One-off initial setup cost	**Very substantial setup cost** - Construction cost - Building services system (electrical and mechanical or E&M system) cost - Storage facilities, furniture and equipment cost - Professional fees and contingencies - Cost for the initial relocation and processing of the library materials	**Relatively low setup cost** - Digital Content Management System (hardware, software) - Integration with the existing library systems (library catalogue, ILL, linking system, etc) - Staff cost for developing the system.
Recurrent operation /development cost	- Building maintenance - E&M systems maintenance - Storage facilities maintenance - Staff Costs	- Collection Development - Digital Content/Rights Management System (hardware and software upgrade) - Staff cost for maintaining the system
Government Land	Required	Not required
Land-Grant Limit	Normally 50 years	Not applicable
Capacity	Subject to the physical limitation of space	More room to expand

Media Shift – CityU HK

Year	Printed Monographs (in vol.)	% increase	eBooks (in titles)	% increase
2004/05	844,210	-	50,518	-
2005/06	849,493	+0.6%	189,025	+274.2%
2006/07	869,782	+2.4%	216,996	+14.8%

- For the past few years, CityU has undergone a profound media shift which is attributed to the various consortia initiated by JULAC Collaborative Development Committee (CDC).
- CityU has also initiated inter-regional consortium (Cicada) in 2005 and regional consortium (ERALL) in 2006 with an aim to speed up the media shift.
- In the future, the anticipated number of ebooks will grow substantially, perhaps surpassing that of print as the growth of ebook collection is not limited by space.

Epilgoue

- ERALL has laid a very good foundation for ongoing collaboration among libraries that are working in an environment shifting from print sources to electronic format.
- The Virtual Archive could be a viable solution for addressing the needs of different libraries though there are still challenges ahead.
- When the Virtual Archive moves from concept to implementation plans, it would not be possible without the ardent support from UGC and JULAC libraries.
- The Virtual Archive could also be applied to a regional or cross-regional proposal.
- We believe that the Virtual Archive will be a worthwhile project and the outcomes will benefit the society of Hong Kong.

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