Chapter XIV

A Case Study of One IT Regional Library Consortium:
VALE — Virtual Academic Library Environment

Virginia A. Taylor, William Paterson University, USA

Caroline M. Coughlin, Consultant, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historic models of library management are being tested and modified in the digital age because of several interrelated factors. First, the importance of place or a home library space changes as electronic opportunities for dispersal of library collections increase with IT innovations and availability. Second, the high cost of IT has made library managers more sensitive to issues of cost in general while the ability of IT systems to provide easy access to managerial data, data previously difficult to capture, has allowed library managers to begin to differentiate costs for services based on use. As a result of these two factors, new, partially cost-focused models for

delivering IT systems and information sources to library users are being developed. The new IT library regional models raise many questions about appropriate organizational and funding strategies. In this case, one strategy is examined in depth. Suggestions for alternative managerial strategies and economic models for IT regional library managers to pursue are given, based on the lessons to be gleaned from this experience and an examination of the literature describing other regional IT digital library ventures.

BACKGROUND

Today libraries are being challenged to develop digital library services, utilizing all the best information technology (IT) has to offer. These same institutions are also facing escalating costs for subscriptions to journals and indexes. Over the years, many librarians have chosen to form voluntary associations or consortiums. The majority of these ventures state as their goal the improvement of library services to users of each member library. In the past, the ability of individual libraries to pay the full costs of their use of the service being offered was not the primary issue library managers faced when building the association. It was common practice for wealthier libraries to cover the majority of the costs. Costs were not systematically reviewed, and decisions to subsidize some members were based on sentiments that favored inclusive, egalitarian models of service. This case centers on the work done by IT library professionals in New Jersey to develop a cooperative program for the digital distribution of information resources. VALE is an acronym for the phrase selected to describe the goal of the new New Jersey consortium — Virtual Academic Library Environment (VALE, 2001). As a not-for-profit library regional cooperative venture, VALE exists to provide electronic databases and journals to its members, a large group of academic libraries in New Jersey. It has been in existence for almost five years, and it is an example of a collaborative organizational approach to the provision of information technology-based services in more than one library.

Data Sources for Case Materials

In building this case we reviewed all VALE public records, including minutes of meetings of the 28 member VALE Task Force held since June 1997. An Executive Committee with nine members is responsible for ongoing operation and growth of VALE, including budgetary accountability and planning for future funding. Accordingly, we also examined the minutes of their meetings held between December 1998 and November 2000. Two key members of the VALE leadership team were interviewed at length. The head of the VALE Executive

Related Content

Requirement Specification and Conceptual Modeling for Data Warehouses
Elzbieta Malinowski (2009). *Handbook of Research on Innovations in Database Technologies and Applications: Current and Future Trends (pp. 65-73).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/requirement-specification-conceptual-modeling-data/20689

Application of Mobile Agents in Mobile Data Access Systems: A Prototype
Yu Jiaoand Ali R. Hurson (2004). *Journal of Database Management (pp. 1-24).*
www.irma-international.org/article/application-mobile-agents-mobile-data/3318

Fabric Database and Fuzzy Logic Models for Evaluating Fabric Performance
Yan Chen, Graham H. Rongand Jianhua Chen (2009). *Database Technologies: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 2166-2191).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/fabric-database-fuzzy-logic-models/8029

A Review on the Integration of Deep Learning and Service-Oriented Architecture
Marcelo Fantinato, Sarajane Marques Peres, Eleanna Kafeza, Dickson K. W. Chiuand Patrick C. K. Hung (2021). *Journal of Database Management (pp. 95-119).*
www.irma-international.org/article/a-review-on-the-integration-of-deep-learning-and-service-oriented-architecture/282446

Strategic Review of the Organisation for Public Service Delivery in the Digital Era
 (2019). *Information Systems Strategic Planning for Public Service Delivery in the Digital Era (pp. 117-134).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/strategic-review-of-the-organisation-for-public-service-delivery-in-the-digital-era/233406