DALNET Subcommittee to Develop Cost/Benefits Analysis
Meeting March 22, 1984 — Harper Hospital
Notes by L. Bugg

Present: L. Bugg; J. Flaherty; B. Johnson; F. VanToll

A preliminary document needs to be prepared for distribution to/discussion with institutional administrative officers. The document is to achieve these objectives:

    (1) describe briefly the joint automation plans
    (2) identify the benefits to the institution of automating jointly
    (3) ask for a commitment toward joint automation planning in the form of:

        (a) permission to include institutional data in an rfp
        (b) release time for staff to participate in planning
        (c) money to share the costs of hiring a consultant to help with planning

    (4) outline future planning objectives, including cost/benefit analysis, within a time frame, to result in a Prospectus

In order to prepare this document, each institution needs to present some individual analysis and the potential network group needs to do some joint analysis.

Tasks identified include:

Individual Institution

1. Identify what operations are being done in each library including volume of each activity over time.

2. Identify what the automation needs are of each library.

- from staff viewpoint (what problems or headaches could it solve, what are the staff's priorities for solving them, would solving one alleviate another).
- from users viewpoint (via user analysis, suggestion boxes, staff opinion of user needs).
- from management viewpoint.

Network

1. Identify joint or shared activities, including affiliations, services, common clientele, collection overlap, volume of activity.

2. Identify joint automation needs and prioritize them:

- from staff viewpoint
- from users viewpoint
- from management viewpoint

3. Identify the benefits to the institution of jointly automating, relating them to:

    3. Identify the benefits to the group of jointly automating.

    - institutional mission, goals, objectives, priorities
    - library's mission, goals, objectives, and priorities
    - automation already in place.

A later task is to add cost analysis, done for each institution and for the network in order to compare the two. Institution cost analysis must be able to separate out the costs that would be incurred at the same rate whether or not automation was done jointly, e.g. bar coding materials. Network cost analysis must identify and cost out all elements of automating jointly, and include continuing as well as initial costs. A method for cost sharing must be agreed upon.

Some comments made during the discussion:

1. Automation can be viewed as a tool to accomplish other goals, rather than as a goal in itself. Those goals need to be identified.

2. Automating jointly brings some standardization in order to share data.

3. Some individual library needs may have to be surrendered to the larger needs of the group.

4. The role of the consultant should be clearly defined before contracting. [P. Spyers-Duran suggested a consultation is a minimum of 7 to 10 days @$1,000]

5. If we agree on the tasks to be done, what methodology should we use to accomplish those tasks that have not yet been done.

6. A network is evolutionary and planning is a continuous process.

7. We need the same sense of urgency for the network development as we have for the rfp development.

8. We are so dependent upon one another in order to best serve our own users that we must work to assure each other's participation.

9. Automation can help us identify our costs so the limited resources in our geographic area can be better used.

10. We don't know enough about each other.

11. The community's expectations of what each library has is often incorrect. Users need to know where to go for the resources they need so they don't waste their limited time, money, and energy.

12. We need a method to gather information on collection use by each other's users to facilitate collection development and more effective access policies.

13. A joint borrowers file seems essential to analyze use and user's needs.

14. Talking with project coordinators of other multi-institution, multi-type networks may help us design our methodology and define the role of a consultant, e.g. Cincinnati or Dayton.

15. A consultant could
    - help design a methodology for developing the network
    - help evaluate the rfp responses in the network framework
    - help develop the governance and cost sharing structures

16. The network meeting should be reviewed at the beginning of the larger group meeting each week.

17. One or more subcommittees of the Network group can take on some of these tasks and report back to the group.