

MIDWEST TRANSPORTATION KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

NETWORK GUIDING PRINCIPLES – Approved February 9, 2006

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The Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network is made up of cooperating publicly and privately supported libraries that specialize in transportation-related information and located geographically within region III of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. This Network is formed on a regional basis to enhance the communications needed between participating libraries to develop common principles, standards, and cooperative agreements. The regional Network will also develop leadership skills among staff of the individual libraries. This leadership will be essential in providing representation in efforts to develop a national network and, ultimately, the formation of alliances with networks in other countries, facilitating access to transportation information resources on a global basis. Since no one library can be self sufficient, these libraries have joined together to develop and share their resources to benefit all participants in the transportation community within the region.

As library and information technologies, the Internet, and new collaborations make more and more information available to users, the information demands of users will increase. Today's libraries and their staffs are expected to meet these demands. To an even greater degree, this will be the case in the future, and libraries and their staffs must change and develop the expertise to do so. Librarians must be able to interpret for users what is available, evaluate sources, answer questions, appraise technologies, and meet users' expectations about what their library can provide in all formats from what is available within their collections and from what can be accessed elsewhere.

The responsibility for providing excellent library services in this increasingly complex information environment rests with local library staff and funding authorities. The issue of quality services must be understood throughout the region. Ultimately, however, the provision of quality service rests upon the decision making, knowledge and experience of the local librarian and competent library staff and the collections they build and maintain. The benefit that individual libraries derive from participation in the Network depends upon the skill of local librarians to exploit their local resources and their commitment to making the most of opportunities resulting from their libraries' participation in the Network. Librarians must be able to assign staff to take advantage of necessary learning opportunities to keep up with developing electronic technologies and service demands. Decisions regarding which resources should be available in the local library versus which should be sought through the Network and other resource sharing partnerships need to be made locally.

In an age of accountability, budget reductions, and calls for quality services for users, we need to ensure equitable sharing of resources and responsibilities throughout the region. The purpose of these Guiding Principles, and the Criteria for Participation included within them, is to describe the roles of participating libraries, and protect the integrity of the Network as a whole. The members of the Network believe it is imperative that all participating libraries follow the Guiding Principles and strive to meet the criteria listed below.

MISSION

The mission of the Network is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of participating libraries by expanding their access to local, state, regional, national and international transportation information resources.

This is accomplished by promoting partnerships, effective delivery of needed information, and sharing library resources, including collections, electronic resources, bibliographic records, and reference services through conventional, electronic, and innovative means.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide the administration of and participation in the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network, and describe the roles of participating libraries.

Participating libraries are the most appropriate level for providing user services and are responsible for their own collections, bibliographic records, and personnel, for determining services, and serving their clientele. Libraries are strongly encouraged to strive to provide excellent services to their users.

Participation in the Network by a library should improve or expand upon existing services, and increase the availability of other libraries' resources to a library's users. In no case should participation of any library lead to deterioration of service to its users or to other participating libraries.

Participation should aid cost-effectiveness in individual libraries, allow for improved use of available funding, and reduce the rate of increase in library costs.

Programs should be developed with flexibility to interface with regional, state, multi-state, or national programs and/or support local cooperative activity. National and international standards and protocols (bibliographic, telecommunications, formats, etc.) should be adopted uniformly in the development of any programs or systems.

Participating libraries should meet the appropriate standards and guidelines for their type of library.

Participation does not preclude participating libraries from using services available from other agencies or organizations. Whenever possible, libraries are expected and encouraged to use

locally available resources. Libraries are encouraged to participate in other regional, state, multi-state, or national and international networks as appropriate.

Participating libraries should adhere to established criteria for participation in the Network.

CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

These criteria are the expectations for each library participating in the Network.

"Library" is defined as an agency having a bibliographically organized collection of materials and resources such as print, electronic, and audio-visual materials and computer software. Such collections should be available to users. A library shall be staffed with trained personnel to assist users in locating and securing resources and information.

Each participating local library is responsible for providing its own collections, bibliographic records, and personnel to support its institution's programs and/or to serve its community of users.

A participating library must not rely on borrowing materials to meet the majority of its information needs.

Participation does not diminish the responsibility of each library's appropriating authority to provide adequate financial support to meet current and ongoing collection and operational needs.

Each participating library is expected to have a designated staff member for day-to-day operations. The library's staff is expected to interact with other participating libraries and to perform the following responsibilities:

- Share resources consistent with library policies, including collections, bibliographic records, reference support, and staff expertise
- Update and maintain cooperatively developed information (for example, serials holdings in TAG and, for OCLC participants, current cataloging)
- Abide by current Network policies and protocols

INTERPRETATION OF CRITERIA

It is recommended that each library be staffed by at least one full-time professional librarian to administer the library service program. A professional librarian is a person who has a master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association or a master's degree in information technology from a program approved by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology/American Association of School Librarians. If a professional librarian is not available, trained personnel should be available to assist users in locating and securing materials and information.

Libraries whose bibliographic records are not currently in OCLC must agree to contribute their catalog records to OCLC.

All members, to the best of their abilities, are strongly encouraged to lend to Network members through interlibrary loan (ILL) and abide by the Network interlibrary loan guidelines.

Network members are strongly encouraged to be trained in the use of OCLC's interlibrary loan products, such as WorldCat Resource Sharing.

Network members must attend Network meetings for discussion of issues of regulation, funding, and fees.

Members must join the Network electronic discussion group to keep current on announcements, issues, meetings, and training.