Executive Summary
(web version)

The Minitex Briefing Book was developed as part of our strategic planning process. The Briefing Book is the culmination of activities associated with the situational assessment that took place from May - July 2013. As illustrated in the picture below, the situational assessment identifies the “where we are today” part of the process.

The planning process is being led by the Drivers Committee (Agnes Lee, Becky Ringwelski, Carla Urban, Jennifer Hootman, Paul Swanson, Tammi Halverson, and Valerie Horton (Chair), all from the Minitex staff; Philip Herold, University of Minnesota Libraries; and Jerilyn Veldof (Consultant). As part of the situational analysis, the Drivers Committee conducted staff and stakeholder surveys, did a SWOT analysis with stakeholders, compiled statistics, analyzed library trends, did a consortial assessment, and completed other activities that you will find described in this document. All of the information gathered in this book was designed to assist with the development of our vision, mission, goals, etc. On Aug. 6, the Minitex staff met in an all-day planning retreat to craft vision, mission, and principles statements as well as new goals. The information in this book was instrumental in helping draft elements on the plan.

Our SWOT analysis identified our strengths as saving libraries money, strong credibility, and providing staff from participating libraries with continuing education opportunities. Our weaknesses included a need to improve general awareness about Minitex’ services, concerns about long-term funding stability, and the potential for Minitex to overextend into too many new service areas. The SWOT analysis was used to create positioning statements, which are using to develop our goals. The five positioning statements covered very large content areas including digital content, collaboration, continuing education, funding sources, and lifelong learning and end-user information.

We did two stakeholder surveys including a paper survey for about 150 people and an online survey with 437 respondents. All of our services were rated as either very good or excellent. Resource sharing scored highest with 4.55 on a 5.0 scale. Looking at the two stakeholder surveys, our highest rated activities include:

- resource sharing and delivery;
- ELM and cooperative purchases;
our range of conferences, workshops and webinars;
Minnesota Digital Library;
subject expertise; and
bringing libraries together to collaborate around topics or to develop needed programs, as in the case of AskMN.

When also asked what Minitex could improve respondents listed:

• more communications about our services,
• provide some sort of ebook system,
• lower prices,
• more free webinars,
• more transparency.

We hope this planning process will help address the transparency issue as we go forward.

Staff opinions were considered a critical element of our analysis of Minitex. I met in small groups with every staff member to discuss Minitex’ performance and future options, and more than half of the staff filled out an online staff survey. Overall, the staff are proud of Minitex’ customer service, efficiency, outreach, and technology utilization. The staff wishes to see us improve our external and internal communication, look at space reorganization, and be more inclusive and build in more methods for promotion.

In my group meetings with staff, I asked them to identify Minitex’ core purpose. Staff identified the following items as integral to our central purpose:

• To aid in information discovery and resource sharing among libraries across the region,
• To help libraries save money
• To create more equitable access to library resources throughout Minnesota
• To bring library and educational communities together
• To provide excellent customer service
• To train and provide continuing education as well as leadership opportunities.

Analyses of statistics show that overall our services are doing well, with some areas of spectacular growth, such as dramatic increases in ELM and AskMN use, as well as significant increases in attendance at our instruction sessions on cataloging issue and using ELM. The Book also includes trend analysis of the current consortia landscape as well as trends impacting all types of libraries.

Since completing this Briefing Book, we have moved on to work on our Vision, Mission, Principles, and Goals. In a few months, we will start working on Objectives, Critical Success Factors, Barriers, Action Plans, and Monitoring (evaluation). Finally, we hope to finish the planning process by the end of 2013, and will continue to post documents on our website.

The Briefing Book has another purpose. As noted above, it is designed to provide a snapshot of where Minitex is at this time. The book is filled with analyses and statistics that we will reference during future assessment activities. We also believe it helps our stakeholders and staff better understand our organization. I hope you find this book helpful, and please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Valerie Horton
Director, Minitex
As part of the planning process, I asked staff and stakeholders to come up with five words that describe Minitex. I have gathered hundreds of responses in the past six months. Two separate word clouds have been created, staff and stakeholders (seen in the following pages). Only two concepts had a significant number of responses from both groups: interlibrary loan/sharing (most likely meaning resource sharing) and words associated with collaboration (networking, community, cooperation). These are two fundamental concepts for Minitex, and this recognition by our communities is reassuring.

Based on information in the chart below, stakeholders see us from the perspective of our services: resource sharing, cooperative purchases, databases/ELM, and training. They also see us as a collaborative and innovative organization that plays a role in leadership. There was great diversity in words selected by our stakeholders – from the concrete, such as barcodes, bins, OCLC, and articles, to the more conceptual, such as catalyst, convener, generous, leveraging, well-oiled, and envy-of-the-nation.

Staff, on the other hand, see Minitex through the prism of our values, such as service (most likely meaning customer service), efficiency, helpfulness, resourceful, quality, competent, and collaboration. These differences make perfect sense on reflection. Our stakeholders value us for the services we provide. Looking at the strong positive responses found in the stakeholder survey, it is likely that the staff’s commitment to quality service has created this positive impression of Minitex held by our stakeholders.

### Stakeholders’ Top Used Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Cloud - Top Used Words</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration/Community/Cooperative/Networking</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coop Purchases/Databases/ELM</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery/Courier</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlibrary Loan/[resource] sharing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/outreach</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership/Leaders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SWOT
Minitex SWOT Analysis

The initial SWOT was created by small groups from the Minitex Policy Advisory Committee mixed with Minitex staff from the Drivers Committee on June 7, 2013. It was later revised by the Drivers Committee for the Minitex Briefing Book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Saves libraries across the state time and money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong credibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps libraries learn and stay agile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strengthening collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providing strong, unified leadership for the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasizing preservation and access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Embedding libraries into learning modes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A lack of awareness in the state/region about what Minitex has to offer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Complex library environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multiple priorities and needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A perception of irrelevance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dependence on external funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Challenge of meeting multiple needs and providing multiple services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strengths**

**Saving libraries across the state time and money**

1. The infrastructure already exists for joint purchasing, delivery, database licensing and training. This infrastructure creates a cost effective model that avoids duplication and provides a good use of resources. We need to keep building on this.

2. Minitex’s relationships and collaborative partnerships (such as formal relationships with OHE, U of MN, South Dakota, MDE, and North Dakota) save regions and library communities time and money throughout the state through efficiencies gained through resource sharing.

3. Minitex’s political credibility demonstrates successful collaboration resulting in efficient use of tax money. Resource sharing program (as well as all Minitex programs and services) meets the needs of library users everywhere in the region and alleviates impact of local budget difficulties.

**Strong credibility (Note: this strength is also illustrated several times above)**

5. Minitex’s location at the U of MN and their ability to leverage resources and get exposure to the U’s projects brings a degree of uniqueness, strength and deepening of Minitex’s credibility.

6. Minitex understands the diverse needs of their multiple constituencies leading to a diverse support base and the perception of Minitex as a neutral voice.
Helping libraries learn and stay agile
7. Minitex’s credibility in the library community helps libraries accept change and new initiatives and benefits us region-wide. (3 likes)

8. Experienced, competent, agile staff forecast and predict library trends and share developing programs in response to those trends. (3 likes)

9. Ability to to scan the environment for new and emerging issues and pass these along through training and conferences creates continuing life-long learning for libraries. (3 likes)

10. Minitex offers participants a public forum to discuss and work through emerging issues, leading to an informed library community. (1 like)

Weaknesses

A lack of awareness in the state/region about what Minitex has to offer
1. There’s a lack of personal contact that leads to lack of awareness about what Minitex has to offer.

Funding
1. Our unpredictable funding situation can stifle initiatives.

2. With our complexity of funding sources and with those funds tied to specific programs, our popular programs may be reduced as the political landscape changes.

Complex library environment
3. The infrastructure of libraries adds complexity, leads to mission creep and creates a challenge to planning for libraries statewide. Minitex ends up filling gaps rather than driving intentional, strategic growth.

4. The age old criteria for Minitex participation is increasingly hard to apply. Some of the places most in need are excluded. The criteria need to be reviewed and updated.

Multiple priorities and needs
5. Not enough staff in Minitex leads to burnout. We just can’t do everything!

6. Mission creep and a recent lack of plan has confused people and spread them too thin.

7. Have to juggle multiple, complex constituents.

Opportunities

Strengthening collaboration
1. The shifting landscape which allows for formation of collaboration with other consortia.

Providing strong, unified leadership for the region
1. Brokering discovery for ELM which increases access.

2. A critical mass to respond to issues like access to digital resources (e.g. e-books, e-journals, etc.) which helps us negotiate more effectively with information providers (vendors, publishers, etc.) to preserve resource sharing and purchasing.

Emphasizing preservation and access
1. Minitex’s infrastructure which ensures that materials in the region are preserved digitally and made accessible digitally through discovery.
Embedding Libraries into Learning Modes
1. Embedding ourselves in the new learning modes which helps us remain relevant and being leaders in the life-long learning community.

Threats

A perception of irrelevance
1. Because Minitex serves libraries, Minitex is not visible to users which makes it harder to get support. Digital makes us even more invisible.

2. Changes in modes of discovery and education (e.g. MOOCs) are changing so rapidly, Minitex risks irrelevance.

Dependence on external funding
1. Dependence on federal and state funding which leads to unpredictability.

Challenge of meeting multiple needs and providing multiple services
1. A growing digital divide based on technology plus varying technology skills of customers mean that some customers may have limits for digital access capabilities. We need services that meet needs of varying types of customers.


Increasing Competition
1. Competition from vendors may cut out consortia.

2. Competition from other consortia for money and customers.

Impending Retirements
1. A wave of retirements (internal and external to Minitex) which means we need to repeatedly re-educate and re-sell the value of Minitex.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats
Positioning Statements
Positioning Statements

**Digital Content**
We believe accelerated growth of e-content and e-content technologies will pose challenges to libraries. Therefore, we must aggressively negotiate licensing to allow sharing of e-resources, expand our provision of e-content, and provide the library community with guidance as they navigate the e-content environment.

**Lifelong Learning / End-Users**
We believe that learning takes place on an ongoing basis throughout people’s lives. Therefore, we must collaborate with a broad network of partners and offer resources and tools needed for life-long personal development and skills-building with equal access for all.

**Collaboration**
We believe that the library environment is undergoing significant strain in a variety of areas, (eg.: funding, collaboration, competing priorities, succession issues) which may have a negative impact on Minitex, our services, and collaborative partnerships. Therefore, we must actively promote Minitex programs and services, and engage the library community throughout the Minitex region around the value and necessity of cooperative efforts.

**Continuing Education**
We believe that there will be a continual and growing need, given the increasing complexity of library and information resources, systems and trends, to provide educational opportunities for library staff while at the same time library budgets continue to decline. Therefore, Minitex must strategically seek out relevant and challenging content as well as innovative approaches to providing effective and affordable continuing education.

**Funding**
We believe funding will continue to be uncertain and unpredictable. Therefore, we must proactively pursue new and diversified funding sources while working to build sustainable service programs that make effective and creative use of resources.
Stakeholders
Stakeholders’ Survey Results and Analysis
Valerie Horton

In addition to the online survey discussed elsewhere, we solicited about a hundred print, qualitative stakeholder comments about Minitex. The results were similar to those you will see in the online survey. Respondents felt Minitex was doing the following activities well:

• Cooperative purchasing
• Resource sharing
• Conferences, workshops, training
• Minnesota Digital Library
• Expertise in many areas like cataloging, digitization, reference, interlibrary loan, etc.
• Bringing libraries together to collaborate
• Delivery

One respondent said, “My staff was amazed at all the services Minitex provides, and no one has complaints. Instead they gave me an A+ rating to everything they interact with. Keep up the great work!”

All organizations can improve, and Minitex is no exception. When asked what Minitex could do better, respondents said:

• More advertisement of services
• Some sort of ebook system
• Lower prices
• More free webinars
• More transparency, openness with colleagues at libraries
• More emphasis on academic libraries

One respondent said, my “staff is only aware of the services which they use in their jobs. Improvements could be made to advertise all services – to the larger audience.”

When asked what Minitex should consider doing in the future, respondents said:

• Shared ebook collections
• Provide leadership in cost-cutting for libraries
• Digitization for small libraries
• More leadership training

One respondent said, “Provide leadership in cost-cutting in libraries, e.g. giving guidance on staff cuts, out-sourcing, shared services, etc. Either through facilitate discussion or conferences. All libraries are facing budget and staff cuts, so this is the timely for all types of libraries.”

Finally, when asked how Minitex could help in regional collaboration, respondents said:

• Reinstate CALD (Council of Academic Library Directors, an informal Minnesota group)
• Bring digital libraries together, more digitization
• Bring leaders together
• Yearly regional meetings
• Support academic- public library meetings

One respondent said, “Facilitating conversations (in person and virtual); space to share ideas about which we are all doing locally.”
Stakeholder’s Survey Results and Analysis
Philip Herold and Becky Ringwelski

There were 437 responses to the stakeholders survey that was widely distributed within the Minitex region in June 2013. The majority of respondents were from academic (40.3%) or public (33.4%) libraries in Minnesota. Please note that 102 of 437 respondents (23%) did not complete any of the demographic question, likely due to the survey design placing demographics questions after a closing question.

The overall tone of the survey responses was extremely positive and included many remarks about the excellent organization we have at Minitex and the value of our services to the libraries that use them. The overall satisfaction with our services was around or over 4.0 out of a 5 point scale for all areas. Beyond the data points and trends we derived from the survey, the responses give Minitex staff important information on our program and service areas and will guide us in making improvements.

Demographic analysis/breakdown - What is your location?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your library type?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Type</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K12/Media</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special/Government Agency</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortia</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered questions</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your library position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web Services</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/IT</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Services</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public or Access Services (Reference, Circulation, ILL, etc.)</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Resources</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Management</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered questions 100.0% 334

skipped questions 102

Minitex service satisfaction: How satisfied are you with the following Minitex services?

There were 434 responses to this question. The survey included a don’t know/don’t use option for the satisfaction section. Individuals who chose that option may not be eligible for the particular service, haven’t identified a need for it, or aren’t familiar with the service offering. The lowest number of don’t know/don’t use responses went to resource sharing with the highest number going to contract cataloging. There was a good deal of variation in between.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>5 - Very Satisfied</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 - Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Don’t Use/ Don’t Know</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conferences &amp; Workshops</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Cataloging</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Purchasing - Elect. Resources; excluding ELM</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Purchasing - Lib. Prod. (barcodes, 3M products, etc.)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitization &amp; Metadata Instruction</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Library for Minnesota</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Digital Library</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Library Storage</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN virtual reference service</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MnLINK Gateway</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters &amp; Communication</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Delivery (courier, UPS)</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference &amp; ELM Database Instruction</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project Calculator</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Sharing</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you weren't satisfied with any of the above services, what changes would make you satisfied with those services?

There were 78 responses to this question. The responses were primarily focused on specific issues. Examples of this are:

- The courier could be more reliable in our neck of the woods.
- I’d love to see Learning Express Library added to ELM, or a similar test preparation site.
- I would like it if the format selected in the "create request" screen showed up on the VDX pick/ship slip.
- Have more conferences/workshops available online or at locations other than the Twin Cities.

There was also the occasional glowing comment mixed in:

"Really, everything you do, you do well. I'm a highly satisfied member, and the object of envy from librarians in other states because of the excellent service Minitex provides."

The information provided can be of use in identifying areas where we may be able to make improvements. The comments will be shared with the Minitex staff who will analyse the data for potential service changes.

What needs or concerns does your library have?

There were 368 responses to this survey question. There were several important themes that emerged from the responses, with static or shrinking budgets and the related theme of staffing issues as the leading concerns. Many seemed to read this question as a continuation of the satisfaction with Minitex services and programs, rather than the broader needs and issues they face disassociated from Minitex. As a result many comments reflect not only the desire for Minitex to continue or expand services in certain areas, but the provide evidence for the value of Minitex programs in alleviating some of the local budget pressures.

Among the most commonly expressed needs, concerns, or challenges faced by libraries in the Minitex network are:

- Declining budgets and understaffing, and the challenge for libraries to keep moving forward, implementing new services that meet patron expectations. In this context, Minitex services and resources like ELM become even more critical.

  “Our concerns are always about how to provide good service to the user. Our ability to do that is being affected by flat budgets and reduced staffing, which is why we really appreciate the resource sharing that Minitex facilitates.”

- Rising cost of resources (journals, databases, books).

- Demonstrating value to the parent institution, for academic libraries, this included demonstrating contributions to student learning.

- Adapting to changing technologies and information landscape as well as the changing needs and expectations of library patrons.

- Concerns around staff and professional development are critical given the rapid pace of change in our field. Training new staff, the aging of our profession, and closing skills gaps are all notable issues.

  “Training new staff in an era when experienced staff retire and new graduates just don’t have the skills; rapidly changing technology.”

- Many libraries noted space concerns, outdated spaces, too little space, and in several comments budget pressures compound this problem.
• Providing more to the library’s patrons: more e-books, more journals, more full-text content.

• There was considerable concern among libraries for the impact e-books are having and will have on sharing, since most licenses do not permit ILL.

  “The main concern I have is the impact of electronic resources, especially e-books, on interlibrary loan. As more libraries purchase e-books, we need to work out agreements so that we can continue to interlibrary loan these materials. In my opinion, a priority for Minitex needs to be working out agreements with vendors to allow interlibrary loan sharing of e-books.”

• Need for a new library management system (LMS) / integrated library system (ILS).

• Transition to RDA, which is accompanied by many specific concerns, including staffing, cost, and support and use.

• Consortial licensing for databases, journal subscriptions, and e-books. Cooperative purchasing saves money for participating libraries.

  “Ongoing cooperative purchasing is vital for us in this time of serious budget cuts. I hope it will continue and that more database services can be subsidized so we can keep providing these important resources for our students/patrons.”

• Assurances for long-term access to resources, including ELM, but also for other licensed content such as e-books. Continued funding for ELM is a grave concern for many libraries.

• More access to health-related resources

• Continued Minitex support of its many programs: ELM, MnLINK, cooperative purchasing, training, ILL delivery, contract cataloging,

• School libraries noted a decrease in professional media specialists sometimes being replaced by paraprofessionals.

Over the next five years in the Minitex service region, I would ideally like to see...
There were 337 responses to this question. Many of the comments pertained to sustaining existing services. Examples are:

- Minitex continue its good services to the state, valuable webinars and conferences, information sharing and awareness of needs of various types of libraries.
- I hope you will maintain a strong resource sharing focus and continue to provide and expand the cooperative purchasing, esp. database licensing options. The courier and licenses save our individual library significant dollars. Contract cataloging is also critical to our operation. I would also hope that a close relationship with OCLC can be maintained, as well as the strong SD/ND/MN partnerships.
- Continued access to ELM and continued instruction along with communication.
- Continue to represent the small, unaligned libraries.

There were those respondents who want more in specific areas. Examples are:

- More negotiated, affordable resources for our 3-state network.
- Increase in digitization training.
- More digital delivery.
- More regional cooperation-extending into additional states.
- Additional electronic resource sharing and the availability of more resources in ELM.
- More marketing of MnLINK service. Perhaps also to be able to embed MnLINK search/request into member libraries website/catalog.
- More information on the latest technologies and library applications.

One theme stood out in the responses:

**Ebooks**

- Cooperative ebook purchasing and lending
- A large regional purchase of ebooks
- Minitex help negotiate with vendors and publishers interlibrary loan of ebooks, both at the regional and national levels. Coordinate last print copy in regional cooperative planning as we all continue to switch from print to ebooks.
- Statewide ebooks collection that is something other than netlibrary.
- Would like to be part of an affordable ebook popular library (Overdrive or other?).
- A successful model for interlibrary lending of ebooks.

**Final comments?**

There were 148 responses to this question. The vast majority of comments were praise and thanks to Minitex. There is a deep appreciation for Minitex in the region. Most comments were general in nature, but some called out specific services, programs, and even individual staff members. A minor theme emerged around awareness, and the sense that Minitex should continue to work hard to make its service and programs better known in the region. There was also a strong thread expressing the desire for Minitex to continue its services and programs.

“I very much appreciate all the support we receive from MINITEX and the forward-thinking and progressiveness displayed by everyone in key positions. We are VERY fortunate to have MINITEX supporting us.”

“Minitex has been a leader in library co-operation and providing access for all. I expect that will continue in the coming years. I’m pleased to live and work in a state served by Minitex.”

“Minitex has been a visionary leader in library resource sharing and advocacy throughout it’s history, moving far beyond the original charge of simply sharing University of MN materials across the state. All residents and students in Minnesota benefit tremendously from the services provided or coordinated through Minitex. I look forward to many more years of vision and leadership from Minitex.”

“You have a very effective and proactive organization. Thank you for all you do!”
Library Staff and Patron Quotes

“As a solo cataloger at my library who does mainly original cataloging, this training was invaluable. It provided not only a thorough introduction, background and overview of RDA concepts - but also provided a huge amount of practical information, tips and cheat sheets that will be helpful as I learn and transition to RDA. The information will also be helpful in the future as a quick reference as I encounter materials outside the realm of my normal cataloging.”
(Minnesota Legislative Reference Library) - RDA for the Seasoned Cataloger: Print Monographs

• “I use the resources that ELM provides almost daily for my own research (on 18th- and 19th-century British novels) and for class preparation. Furthermore, I use these resources and teach students to search ELM databases, especially in my first-year seminar. The students continue to use these resources throughout their college courses. Our libraries offer access to a few databases (not provided through ELM) that I use occasionally and value, though I could manage if we could no longer afford them. ELM resources, on the other hand, are absolutely central to my teaching and research.”
- St. John's University

• “I use ELM resources through the hospital library to find information which helps me take better care of patients. The resources are linked right on the hospital’s Intranet site, so I can access them at the nurse’s station and in patient rooms.” - Essentia Health

• “This is a fantastic service! My home library system has a very good collection, but for those items they do not have, I have been able to find most everything I need through MnLINK. Please keep it going! What a great resource to be able to access collections state-wide. In this era of doing more with less and getting the most out of our resources, the MnLINK program makes sense and works really well.” Twin Cities

• “I was in Florida for a couple months, and the libraries which I visited had a very very limited selection. Some counties in Minnesota may have a limited selection, but with the interlibrary exchange program, they have the largest selection. It doesn’t matter where your home library is, your home is Minnesota, and you have all the resources you need.”

• I don’t know what I’d do without ILL--it provides access to crucial materials for teaching and research that are not available in my institution’s regular holdings. Since academia is at the same time so fragmented and so multi- and interdisciplinary these days, there is no way a single institution alone can maintain access to all the various journals and publications one needs to stay current in a given area with wide-ranging influences. The MEDD service in particular is wonderful and has gotten much faster, making it an ever more useful and efficient tool. Thank you!

• “I live nowhere near my campus and do my research remotely. The instant service is great to have available because it does not slow my schedule to either wait for email exchanges or call campus. This service enhances the overall services that all the librarians provide either in person on via computer, phone etc. Thank you.”

• “Wow, I never knew this existed but I feel like I need to tell everyone about it now. The librarian was extremely helpful and understood exactly what I needed. So cool!”

“I share this awesome service with my students. I also mentioned the Research Project Calculator in this list of 50 Ways to Increase Your Chances for an ‘A’ Research Paper.”
Unit Statistics
Delivery Unit

We move close to 1 million items & support another million in Last Mile Grants

FY13
TUBS: 50,274
UPS Packages: 11,648

396,723
# of direct borrowing (these items are moving through delivery between public & academic libraries but not being processed by our Resource Sharing staff)

During the academic year we work 6 days a week and until 11:00p.m.

Take the Virtual Delivery Tour!
Organizational Support Unit

Front Desk Totals

Patrons served: 436
Items checked out: 464
Reading room patrons: 231

Supported 7 Minitex Conferences

Registrations, catering, material preparation, assist presenters and facilitators

Dedicated Student Staff

Office Projects

- Flexible administrative staff support
- Handle almost 10,000 pieces of mail!
- Supported 177 training/webinar sessions
- InDesign layout specialists
- Travel organizers
- Much, much, more!

- Library material check in/out
- Sorting, filing, and searching
- Telecom support
- Customer service for MLAC patrons
Minnesota Library Access Center (MLAC)

1.5 million items are stored in MLAC.

from 21 depositing libraries

- U of M Twin Cities
- Hennepin County Library
- St Paul Public Library
- Mayo Clinic
- U of M Duluth
- Minnesota State University Mankato
- Minnesota State University Moorhead
- Carleton College
- St John's University
- St. Olaf College
- William Mitchell College of Law
- Bethel Seminary
- James J Hill Reference Library
- State Agencies
- Other

18,500 requests were filled in FY13.

- 36.6% for Resource Sharing & DTU
- 30.1% for U of M campus libraries
- 26.9% sent through Minitex Delivery to depositing libraries
- 6.4% for checkout by O.S. at the Minitex desk

Bringing you Groundhog's Day CAKE since 2000
Resource Sharing Unit

FY 2013 Statistics Summary: Analysis & Charts

Electronic Delivery
University of Minnesota Libraries staff negotiated new terms or revised the e-journal licenses of most publishers to allow Minitex to use additional types of electronic delivery. The license terms of 124 of these publishers now allow us to import the original e-file into electronic delivery software for delivery to end users or to Interlibrary Loan offices. This change has helped streamline processing by eliminating the need to print and scan most articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minitex - Resource Sharing</th>
<th>Electronic Delivery Summary FY 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Filled Minitex copy requests delivered electronically</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of articles delivered to desktops of end users</td>
<td>24,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests filled at U of M using E-Resources</td>
<td>27,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Fill rates</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PERCENTAGE OF FILLED MINITEX COPY REQUESTS DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

NUMBER OF ARTICLES DELIVERED TO DESKTOPS OF END USERS

REQUESTS FILLED AT U OF M USING E-RESOURCES

CAMPUS FILL RATES
**Resource Sharing Volume Traffic**

Our overall decrease in requests reflects the increased availability of e-content, especially e-books. This is further highlighted by the decrease in the number of loans requested.

Due to the “availability checking” capabilities built into our systems over the past few years, fill rates of total incoming requests have continued to climb and was over 70% last year.

---

**Minitex Resource Sharing**

**MnLINK Borrower/Requester Traffic Summary FY 2013**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: Gateway Borrower Traffic</td>
<td>543,259</td>
<td>501,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: Requests Filled</td>
<td>387,622</td>
<td>376,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: Percentage (%) Filled</td>
<td>71.40%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
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**Borrower Traffic**

Total Borrower Traffic

![Borrower Traffic Chart](image)

**Filled Requests**

Filled requests

![Filled Requests Chart](image)

**Percentage of Total Requests Filled**

Percentage of Total Gateway Borrower Requests Filled / Fill-rate

![Percentage Filled Chart](image)
Minitex Resource Sharing

Incoming Volume Traffic Summary FY 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: Number of requests Received</td>
<td>398,314</td>
<td>364,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: Number of requests Filled</td>
<td>270,636</td>
<td>256,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: Percentage (%) filled</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOANS: Total Received</td>
<td>269,822</td>
<td>239,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOANS: Total Filled</td>
<td>163,955</td>
<td>155,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPIES: Total Received</td>
<td>110,549</td>
<td>104,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPIES: Total Filled</td>
<td>97,008</td>
<td>90,712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Incoming Requests Received**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>398,314</td>
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**Incoming Requests Filled**

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<tr>
<td>270,636</td>
<td>256,357</td>
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**Percentage of Total Requests Filled**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70.50%</td>
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**Loan Requests Received**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>269,822</td>
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**Copy Requests Received**

<table>
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<th>FY 2012</th>
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<tr>
<td>110,549</td>
<td>104,141</td>
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Digitization, Cataloging, and Metadata Education (DCME)

DCME training attendance has grown dramatically in the last few years, due primarily to the national and international audience for the OCLC and CONTENTdm Guaranteed Training Partner courses we teach and to broad interest in Mark Ehlert's RDA sessions.
We see growing interest in our training in all three topic areas. The gap between the introduction and actual implementation of RDA explains the FY12 dip for that area.

This graph demonstrates that the training interests of our regional participants (in MN, ND and SD) are not necessarily directly aligned with our out-of-region demand.
Administrative Financial Services (AFS)
Minitex FY13 Revenue
(Agency - $12,473,045)

Minitex FY13 Expenses
(Agency - $12,507,179)
Reference Outreach and Instruction (ROI)

FY13 (7/1/12 – 6/30/13)
Selected Charts and Graphs

ELM Instruction

- In FY10, ROI experienced a spike in K12 participation when we began partnering with the University of Minnesota’s Wilson Library to prepare students for their History Day research trip to the library.
- The 33.4% increase in attendance between FY12 and FY13 is largely attributable to these students and teachers.
- Of the 202 sessions in FY13, two-thirds were conducted on-site, many in area schools to History Day classes.

- K12 attendees include school librarians, teachers, and students.
- Other includes home educators and MN residents.
Reference-Related (non-ELM) Instruction

- Due to loss of funding, ROI sharply decreased non-ELM instruction in FY11.
- Reference-related instructional sessions (non-ELM) include AskMN, NISO, and other topics.

Total ELM & Reference-Related Instruction by FY

STEM Day 2013 Conference
ROI planned, coordinated, and hosted STEM Day 2013 Conference which took place on the University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus. There were nearly two hundred participants.

Communication
ROI wrote and published 12 issues of Reference Notes; each issue gets 733 viewers on average.
Cooperative Purchasing & Electronic Resources Services (CPERS)

FY13 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013)

- CPERS maintains a current customer base of over 2,030 libraries.
- We have accounts from libraries in 49 states – all except New Hampshire.

- In FY13, CPERS handled orders for 615 customers in 37 states. 56% of orders came from libraries within the Minitex region.
The balance between business from libraries within and beyond the region has been fairly constant in recent years. Competition from other consortia and vendors may begin to impact business from outside the region.

Volume of orders remained steady in FY13 despite a dip in the number of libraries which placed orders.

CPERS discounts and subsidies resulted in MN libraries saving over $36.4 million, excluding ELM.
AskMN: The Librarian Is In!

FY13 (7/1/12 – 6/30/13)
Selected Charts and Graphs

AskMN Volume by Queue and FY

- AskMN surpassed 100,000 questions in FY13! This significant mark was hit in February and celebrated with the distribution of 100 Grand bars and mugs to participating library staff.
- Activity in both the academic and public library queues increased, and overall volume grew 3% in FY13 over FY12.
- Minitex ROI administers, supports, and staffs the AskMN service. 39 participating libraries and library systems in Minnesota staff the service.

Who Asked Questions Received by AskMN

- Partial year data, April – June 2009

**Partial year data, April – June 2009**
**AskMN did not begin responding to requests outside MN through the 24/7 Reference Cooperative until December 2008 (FY09).**
Who Answered Questions Received by AskMN

- AskMN continues to narrow the margin between questions answered by MN library staff and the OCLC QuestionPoint 24/7 Reference Cooperative, thus fulfilling our contractual obligations.
- AskMN participation in the 24/7 Reference Cooperative is a key component of our service; questions submitted by Minnesota residents at times when our service is not staffed by Minnesota library staff are picked up and answered by the 24/7 service.

Patron Satisfaction Survey

Patron satisfaction with AskMN continues to grow

- In FY13, 81% of survey respondents said the librarian was helpful, an increase of 5% over FY12.
- 80% were satisfied with the answers to their questions, an increase of 7% over FY12.

  - “This was an amazing service. I am off-campus and was panicking because I couldn’t get on a database I was able to access on the campus network, but within seconds the librarian responded and gave me exactly what I needed, and what I couldn’t find through Google. Thank you!!”
  - “I live nowhere near my campus and do my research remotely. The instant service is great to have available because it does not slow my schedule to either wait for email exchanges or call campus. This service enhances the overall services that all the librarians provide either in person on via computer, phone etc. Thank you.”
  - “This is a great way to get help. I can use it while I’m doing a bunch of other things and someone is always there to help. Great resource, thanks!”
  - “Wow, I never knew this existed but I feel like I need to tell everyone about it now. The librarian was extremely helpful and understood exactly what I needed. So cool!”
  - “Online chat is so easy! I got the answers to my questions before I had to enter the library. Now when I go, I know exactly what I’m looking for.”
  - “The answer was speedy and in-depth, and they went out of their way to give me several more sources I could check out. Great job! J”
  - “This AskMN service is an incredibly valuable tool for teachers and students in our high school. Awesome staff responding to our queries. Thank you!!!”
This graph shows the estimated amount of time that IT works with each unit. The numbers are based on current and future projects, helpdesk tickets, and the amount of time it takes to support each unit. Server management typically falls under the Administration category with unit groupings based on budget categories.
Trends
The purpose of this essay is to look at the current state of consortia in America and to look at how Minitex compares to the norm. I have summarized the norms for consortia in terms of services, funding, communications, and challenges. As we decide the future of Minitex, this data can help us determine how we compare with our peers.

There have been a lot of surveys done recently on library consortia. The following information comes from a variety of sources including: 2007 large-scale survey by ALA ASCLA, “Library Networks, Cooperatives and Consortia: A National Survey” (LNCC); a 2009 study “Where are library consortia going” by Katherine Perry; a 2012 OCLC study “U.S. Library Consortia”; an as-yet-unpublished 2012 study by Greg Provenvitz and me; and a handful of other articles on consortia quoted below.

**Historical National Trends for Consortia**
Norman Oder, in a 2000 article “Consortia Hit Critical Mass” explores the history of many consortia that started out as resource sharing networks and expanded to database purchasing cooperatives in the 1990s. He calls the growth of consortia at this stage a “boom.” Oder misses a significant growth in consortia in the 1970s and 1980s with the development of state-funded, regional library systems.

In 2007, the large ALA ASCLA “LNCC” survey found a strong and growing library consortia environment in the survey of 204 organizations. The survey found that consortia were regional (61%), local (26%), or statewide (12%). Most consortia in the survey were multi-type and had clearly defined geographic limits. The five big services found in that survey were:

1. Resource sharing/interlibrary loan
2. Communication
3. Professional development/continuing education
4. Consulting and technical assistance
5. Cooperative purchases (primarily databases)

Other services identified included: Automation (networking, tech support, and online catalogs), advocacy, information and referral services (many of these were before virtual reference became popular, though, not all), courier and document delivery services, support for standards, support for special populations, professional collections, rotating or shared collections, digitization and digital preservation.

Most consortia in the LNCC study received their funding from fees collected from libraries participating in a specific service, such as an online catalog or a database subscription. Other sources of revenue included state funding, member fees, and local or federal government (e-rate) fees.

The chart to the right shows the overall expense breakdown among all respondents:

By 2009, Perry was arguing that, due to the economic crisis, “consortia cannot survive if ‘business as usual’ is the mandate during this economic downturn.” Interestingly, Perry found significant evidence of recent growth in international library consortia. Perry also identified five critical functions of consortia: shared catalogs, interlibrary loan, cooperative acquisitions, budget management, and license negotiations.
Current National Trends for Consortia

OCLC Survey

When OCLC surveyed consortia in 2012, they found among their 101 respondents that “more than half have more than 40 members, serve multiple types of libraries, and have operated for more than 30 years. The large majority employ full-time staff.” A few other findings from consortia leadership in the survey are:

• Consortia leaders think professional networking is one of the most valuable aspects of membership in their consortia
• Three points of focus are: 1) facilitating resource sharing, 2) increasing efficiencies through collaboration, and 3) improving leadership through collaboration
• Other values of the consortia reported by respondents include costs savings, e-content purchases, shared integrated library systems, training, technology solutions, and professional development.

According to the OCLC survey, most consortia receive their funding from a variety of sources including state funding (public tax dollars), consortia membership fees, participation in a service fees, and federal funding.

The top services offered are:

- Resource sharing/ILL/document delivery: 45%
- Shared online catalog/union catalogs: 41%
- Cooperative purchasing: 38%
- E-content licensing (33%)
- Professional or leadership development (24%)
- Technology management (28%)
- Training 31%

When OCLC asked consortia leaders about challenges, not surprisingly, the biggest challenge by far was funding. Other challenges mentioned significantly less often include: staff cuts, lack of collaboration among members, remaining relevant, selecting a new shared catalog system, increasing costs, and a limited staff.

Regarding communications, in person meetings are still the most common, followed by live online, audio and video conferencing. Consortia use the following tools to communicate with participants, in order of the frequency of use:

- Conference/workshops – 99%
- Email lists (LISTSERVS) – 98%
- Websites/Wikis – 94%
- Webinars – 70%
- E-newsletters – 66%
- LinkedIn – 16%
- Facebook – 65%
- Video conferencing – 56%
- Blogs – 61%
- Twitter – 45%
- Print Newsletters – 14%

Provenvitz/Horton Survey

In 2012, the survey Provenvitz and I did of 87 consortia found that one-third of the consortia that had participated in the 2007 LNCC survey had either ceased to exist or merged with another entity. Plus, several other respondents were uncertain how much longer they would continue to exist without a return of some form of state funding.

The top services provided by respondents included, in order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Training/continuing education/professional development</th>
<th>6. Resource sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Shared electronic content (e.g., group database licenses)</td>
<td>7. Cooperative collection development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Group purchases (e.g., supplies, computers)</td>
<td>8. Shared digital repositories and digital services (Digitization of objects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Integrated Library systems</td>
<td>9. Shared off-site print repositories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this survey, looking at the responses in services offered, there was very little statistical difference among the top six responses, but a big drop in numbers reporting began with cooperative collection development.

The reasons why we see so many differences in services reported among all these surveys are unclear, but they could be as simple as the way the questions were asked. Overall, it’s clear that most consortia engage in resources sharing, cooperative purchasing, delivery, and hosted integrated library systems. Almost all consortia have some kind of training, though in some cases this training is related only to the service offered, such as support for the online catalog system. Communications is an issue across the board, with much frustration expressed in comments by respondents about how hard it is to reach staff at participating libraries.

To summarize past trends: There was several decades of strong expansion for existing consortia and growth of new consortia that ended roughly during the Great Recession of 2008. Since that time, many consortia have struggled, declined, or ceased to exist. As we do our planning, there are some sign that the national situation for consortia is stabilizing, but I would not be surprised if we continue to lose more consortia over the next few years. State funding is still precarious throughout much of the country. On the plus side, the Pronovitz/Horton survey did find a few new consortia starting in the past two years, mainly in support of shared catalog systems.

Where does Minitex fit in?

A 2003 article by Shahaf (“Nationwide Library Consortia Life Cycle”) looked at international consortia and argues that there is a five-stage lifecycle for consortia.

1. **Embryonic stage** – Libraries recognized the need for collaboration, informal, and voluntary efforts. Typically, stage lasts one or two years.

2. **Early development** – External funding sought, processes and membership in development, leadership established, bylaws formed. Typically, stage lasts a few years.

3. **Development** – Successes from early stages bring confidence but funding uncertain ties still dominate, expansion takes place into other products, new services, and geographic areas. Typically, stage lasts three to five years.

4. **Maturation** – At this stage, consortia almost always provide resource sharing and cooperative purchases, funding tends to come from multiple sources and to be mostly stable and predictable, membership fees are a significant part of the budget, size of consortia is likely stable with a clear identity and clear boundaries, competition from other consortia can be an issue, most consortia at this stage do a lot of evaluation and assessment while making sure customer service remains primary given the competitive marketplace. Typically, consortia can stay for decades at this stage.

5. **Disbanding or Meta-Consortia Creation**– At any time during maturation, outside pressures (most often funding-based) or changes in the need for the core mission and services can cause consortia to disband. Alternatively, a consortium could join together with other consortia and start passing through the lifecycle again.

In the past five years, we have seen numerous examples of disbanding and meta-consortia building. Looking at former OCLC affiliates, BCR and NEBASE disbanded. AMIGOS combined with Missouri Library Network, and Lyrasis is comprised of several former OCLC affiliates (PALINET, SOLINET, etc). The same can be said of regional library systems. In Colorado, Massachusetts, and Illinois, the regional systems merged. In California and Texas, they closed down. Finally, another model not mentioned by the author is WiLS (Wisconsin), which is in process of completely reinventing itself, downsizing, changes funding and services models, and attempting a rebirth to a different type of consortia.

Considering this lifecycle, Minitex clearly falls in the ‘maturation’ stage. While we lost some funding via state sources and OCLC affiliation changes, we have regained most of our state funding. Minitex is also looking, through the planning process, for logical places to add new services and revenues. In the last legislative session, possible new services discussed (legislative bills introduced, but not passed) included statewide homework help and e-textbooks sources.

Minitex has a healthy collection of revenue sources including state, federal, participant fees, contracts, and grants. The staff is skilled and experienced, and demonstrates significant dedicated to critical tasks. Minitex has a strong reputation,
a focus on customer service, and a commitment to increasing efficiencies. Our connection to the UMN and Office of Higher Education brings us enormous benefit. In addition to office space and use of UMN systems (HR, Internet, power, lights, IT systems, etc.), we shared 140,000 items from the UMN collection with our resources sharing partners and are able to piggyback on the UMN’s big deal contracts with Elsevier and other database vendors to bring high-cost, scholarly databases to other academic libraries.

Overall, we are in a strong position, but not an unassailable one. We must be constantly vigilant-looking for new areas of growth and revenue-widening ventures. We must also make sure that the services we continue to offer are relevant to our participating libraries. We must watch our competition and make sure that the services we offer and our customer service are second to none. We must continue our strong focus on efficiencies, while building a culture of continuing innovative, inclusion, and collaboration.

**Patron Quotes**

“I am the only full-time cataloger left in my institution and this course was a life-saver!” (Princeton Theological Seminary) - RDA for the Seasoned Cataloger: Print Monographs

“This was an amazing service. I am off-campus and was panicking because I couldn’t get on a database I was able to access on the campus network, but within seconds the librarian responded and gave me exactly what I needed, and what I couldn’t find through Google. Thank you!!!!”

“I love the research project calculator it has helped me get work done on time so much better!” – Bemidji High School

“Since we are a rural school in a small K12 district, having access to ELM databases is vitally important for our students and staff. We don’t have the financial resources to purchase subscriptions to these databases on our own.”
LIBRARY TRENDS

BIG DATA for Good Not Evil
Jennifer Hootman

I recently read the post, "Keeping Up With...Big Data," by Mark Bieraugel, Business Librarian at California Polytechnic State University: http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping_up_with/big_data

Hopefully this post inspires some creative thinking around the information we have access to, how we collect that information, and what we can do with it rather than necessarily taking "Big Data" so literally (then again, maybe we should take it literally, hmmm).

Big Data is: "Big data is characterized by three Vs: Volume, Velocity, and Variety. The first V, volume, is the easiest to understand. Big data differs from regular data in that the size of the data sets are huge’’ To keep reading, check out the article link above.

Questions: How might “Big Data” be relevant to the work you do in your unit? How might it be relevant to Minitex across units? Depending on what we could do with it, what might it mean for our participating libraries?

Brainstorm: With the information we collect could we,…innovate new services based on data like “recommender” services for products or training? Or more robust “account services?”

More Questions: What else can we do with the information we already have that might improve or enrich our services to participating libraries and staff? How can we make the most out of all the information we have? How can we pull data from all units (e.g., Resource Sharing, ROI, CPERS, DCME, Delivery, IT) and groups (e.g., trainers, web, social media) in Minitex together? What could that look like and what could we do with that kind of data?

Edutaining video from TED Ed on Big Data (6 minutes): http://youtu.be/j-0cUmUyb-Y

Horizon Report: 2013 Higher Education Edition
Tammi Halverson

I recently reviewed the NMC Horizon Report. This edition is a decade-long research project designed to identity and describe emerging technologies likely to have an impact on creative inquiry, learning, and teaching in higher education. There are six emerging technologies identified across three adoption horizons over the next 1 - 5 years, as well as key trends (and challenges) expected to continue. These technologies and trends are giving college leaders and education practitioners a value guide for strategic technology planning.

Six Technologies Featured:

• Massively open online courses
• Tablet computing
• Games and gamification
• Wearable technology
• 3D printing
• Learning analytics

Key Trends Featured:

• Openness (open content, open data, and open resources, along with notions of transparency and easy access to data and information)
• Massively open online courses
• Workforce demands skills from college grads that are more often acquired from informal learning experiences than in universities.
• Increasing interest in using new sources of data for personalizing the learning experience and for performance measurement.
• Changing roles of educators due to the vast resources accessible to students via the internet.
• Education paradigms are shifting to include online learning, hybrid learning, and collaborative models.

For more information, visit: http://www.nmc.org/publications/2013-horizon-report-higher-ed

Key Statistics FY13.

Marshall Breeding
Becky Ringwelski

The state of library automation, specifically related to Integrated Library Systems (ILS) is the topic of an article written by Marshall Breeding for Library Journal. Marshall is a leader in tracking library automation and his thoughts on the status of implementations and product developments are included in this article that can be found at: http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2013/04/ils/automation-marketplace-2013-the-rush-to-innovate/

The University of Minnesota is undergoing a move from Aleph to Alma that is scheduled for December 2013. This will have a significant impact on several areas of the Minitex organization. The MLAC, Resource Sharing and Contract Cataloging areas all use the U of M’s ILS system in their daily work. Alma is a cloud-based system that will be hosted by Ex Libris. North Dakota State University went into production on Alma in June 2013.

There is movement underway among other libraries in our network. Locations in the region have implemented the Sierra system from Innovative Interfaces as well as OCLC’s WorldShare Management Services. There are also RFI and RFP processes underway. The CLIC libraries brought in vendors to demonstrate their automation systems this summer. The South Dakota Library Network (SDLN) has been in discussions to replace the current Aleph system.

Minitex staff interact with the automation systems used by our libraries in various ways. For example, contract cataloging accesses the systems for their work as does Resource Sharing and the MnLINK Gateway. The article by Marshall Breeding offers an overview that will be of use if you’d like to learn more about the industry.

“The Blip”
Carla Urban

I am currently part of strategic planning discussions for the Minnesota Library Association, as well as for Minitex. One issue that has been identified in both settings is that funding will be unpredictable, with an inclination toward tight. The New York Times recently ran an article titled “The Blip” (July 21, 2103, http://nymag.com/news/features/economic-growth-2013-7/) summarizing the thinking of Robert Gordon, an economist who does not subscribe to a fairly common assumption, particularly here in the U.S., that things will always get better, that “progress, ever-escalating, is both inevitable and sustainable.” Rather, he predicts that, in the next 15 years, “Our economy will grow at less than half the rate it has averaged since the late-nineteenth century because of a set of structural headwinds that Gordon believes will be even more severe than most other economists do: the aging of the American population; the stagnation in educational achievement; the fiscal tightening to fix our public and private debt; the costs of health care and energy; the pressures of globalization and growing inequality.”

The article is kind of long, and some may find it bleak, but for me it was thought-provoking. Even if things don’t turn out as badly as Gordon predicts, it still behooves us to take the trends he identifies into account as we plan for the future of libraries and services for users. The attention we pay to supporting life-long learning will be more crucial than ever, and we will have to accomplish it with limited resources.