

September 2019

The BIG Collection

Commitment to an Interdependent Future:

A Statement by the Big Ten Library Leadership

We, the leaders of the libraries within the Big Ten Academic Alliance, are committed to coordinated stewardship of the print scholarly record. Our history of collaboration positions our libraries to play a significant role in sustaining access to the unique and distinctive resources held in our collections, and our growing network capacity offers significant potential for working at scale to effect greater collective impact going forward.

Networks are inherently interdependent. The reality of today's world of networked access to information means that research libraries are increasingly interdependent. The current dominant approach, which has each library acting independently and cooperating with others when it is to its advantage, worked incredibly well in a pre-networked society. The Big Ten Academic Alliance libraries believe this model motivated by self-interest must transition to an approach leveraging the affordances of a networked reality.

The Big Ten libraries are committed to realizing our interdependent networked future. Without our intentional action, other forces will shape the environment for us or, in some cases, opportunities will be lost. Pursuing a purposeful strategy of interdependence will enable our libraries to realize the critical shift toward advancing services that support the shared interests of our institutions. Individual libraries will continue to offer distinctive collections and services focused on local needs, but enabling a networked approach will ensure the collective good, leveraging all of the remarkable libraries' collections of the Big Ten institutions.

With this context in mind, the library leaders of the Big Ten Academic Alliance have endorsed a vision for a "collective collection." Going forward, we will orient our collective actions around the challenges and opportunities that come with interdependence and will implement the necessary systems, policies, and services needed to create an integrated user experience of the networked collections, from discovery to delivery. We will individually and collectively invest in strategies that transition our focus from building local collections to creating a shared, fully networked collection that supports our local students and scholars. With ever increasing rigor, we will manage the separate collections of the Big Ten as if they were a single shared collection, maximizing access to and ensuring the preservation of the scholarly record in support of our common mission.

Through collective action, we will create the BIG Collection of the Big Ten Academic Alliance to support the premier institutions we serve.



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About the Big Ten Academic Alliance:

Headquartered in the Midwest, the Big Ten Academic Alliance is the nation's preeminent model for effective collaboration among research universities. For more than half a century, these world-class institutions have advanced their academic missions, generated unique opportunities for students and faculty, and served the common good by sharing expertise, leveraging campus resources, and collaborating on innovative programs. Governed and funded by the Provosts of the member universities, Big Ten Academic Alliance mandates are coordinated by a staff from its Champaign, Illinois, headquarters.

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