



PERSPECTIVES ON...

New Electronic Resources Management System for the ANKOS Consortium

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ABSTRACT

The Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS), which was originally established to coordinate university libraries' electronic serials purchases, today plays an active role in selecting, providing access to, managing and evaluating electronic information resources in Turkey. A substantial volume of subscriptions and purchases of e-journal, e-book and e-reference resources is conducted through ANKOS. In order to measure the usage rate of these resources, to conduct cost analyses and to use the findings in strategic planning cycles of both the institutions and the consortium, a New Electronic Resources Management System (ERM) has been developed by ANKOS. In this study, the authors explain how the new system was developed, its technical features, data entry and collection, the system's contribution to the collection of institution and usage statistics, and its impact on strategic planning. Available statistical facts are also provided to illustrate the development and the impact of the new ERM system.

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INTRODUCTION

The resources available in libraries are rapidly increasing in number and changing format from print to electronic. In this regard, e-resources' shares in both library collections and budgets are dramatically increasing (Hogarth & Bloom, 2008, p. 322). Library operations such as acquisition, cataloging, circulation and periodicals are all handled using library automation systems. The rapid increase in the number of electronic resources since the 1990s has created a demand for the management of these resources. In 1995, field 856 has been included in MARC to address issues regarding access to e-resources; however, despite the increase in the ease of access to information sources, challenges concerning destination (Hogarth & Bloom, 2008, p. 323) have continued to prevail. Administrative data for e-resources are kept in spreadsheets and other receptacles, and not in the library catalog. In order to address this need by establishing ERM standards for the first time, a series of meetings have been organized in the United States in 2002 to bring together experts from university libraries, associations, NISO and company representatives.

In these meetings, must standards of Electronic Resources Management (ERM) systems and cooperation issues were discussed (Hogarth & Bloom, 2008, p. 328). During the course of this process,

some institutions (e.g. UCLA's ERDb, North Carolina State University's e-Matrix and MIT's Vera) chose to improve their ERM systems (Fons, 2008, p. 365). The launch of "Electronic Resource Management" by Innovative Interfaces in 2004 was followed by other commercial vendors with a series of releases, e.g. Meridian by the ILS vendor Endeavor and Verde by Ex Libris. In the meantime, Serial Solutions, a publication access management service, introduced their Electronic Resource Management System. Noncommercial organizations such as the Colorado Alliance ("Gold Rush") also appeared in the market during this period (Fons, 2008, p. 365). As a result both the number of commercial firms focusing on e-resource management and the number of locally developed ERM systems increased substantially. While some institutions preferred to purchase their ERM systems from their automation systems vendors, others have opted to develop their own ERM systems. In a similar fashion, some consortiums have also chosen either to develop their own ERM systems independent of their ILS systems or to purchase a standalone ERM system.

Parallel to these global developments, the number of universities, the number of database subscriptions (as consortiums) and amounts paid for library databases had begun to rise in Turkey. The number of universities, which was 82 in 2005, had already reached 167 by 2010. The number of database subscriptions, which was 34 in 2005, had already reached 81 by 2010. This dramatic increase resulted in requiring both the collection and the analysis of such administrative data as licensing costs, usage rates and subscription fees. Upon evaluating the locally-developed commercial ERM systems, ANKOS decided to develop its own ERM system, taking into consideration the standards set by the Digital Library Foundation (DLF), Sushi and COUNTER. Lack of ERM modules in the locally-developed automation systems, the high prices

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of alternatives, data security and privacy issues, non-Turkish interfaces, and lack of IT staff in university libraries have all strengthened the case for ANKOS' commissioning the development of an ERM system that will allow the management of administrative data both by ANKOS itself and by its members.

INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS INTER-LIBRARY COLLABORATION: FOUNDATION OF ANKOS

The creation of digital collections by means of the internet and internet-based technologies has made access to and management of the electronic databases, electronic books and other electronic contents evermore complicated. This new ecosystem of information exchange provides new universal opportunities for cooperation and trade and requires collaboration between all interested parties. Since early 2000s, the major libraries in the world have worked together to form consortia in order to acquire electronic resources under better economic conditions and to increase the accessibility of information to users.

The Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS) was established in Turkey in 1999 for enabling the university and research libraries to access the maximum number of electronic information resources at the best price and to share the investments in these products within the framework of economies of scale. Other priorities were to provide the highest level of access to the global information network for academics and students, to increase the supporting role of libraries to education and research, and to conduct joint activities (ANKOS, 2010a). On the eve of the third Millennium, with the collaboration of EBSCO, one state and three foundation university libraries in Turkey signed a contract for the joint purchase of two databases for 1999. The consortium's development began in earnest a year later, when seven other state university libraries and the Turkish Academic Network and Information Center (ULAKBIM) joined the EBSCO contract for 2000; nine institutions joined to the agreement with Academic Press for IDEAL; and twelve jointly subscribed to MathSciNet (Karasozen & Lindley, 2004: 402). The number of members of ANKOS reached 39 in 2001 and license agreements were signed for 9 databases. By 2010, the number of members had reached 120 and the number of databases for which license agreements had been signed had risen to 81.

ANKOS is a member of the Southern European Library Link (SELL), the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC), the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), and Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources (COUNTER). With approximately 50 volunteers and membership in international associations,

ANKOS is one of the most important consortia and professional associations in the world. "It is one of the five largest consortia in Europe amongst the consortia related to electronic publishing" (Yanaz & Kafalı, 2010: minute 13:20). ANKOS organizes annual conferences targeting participation from members, publishers and intermediary firms. Donations received from the sponsoring firms are used towards financing adoption of new technology, and organization of meetings and workshops. It should also be noted that all ANKOS staff is composed of volunteers from ANKOS member libraries' staff.

Since its establishment in 2000, ANKOS' organizational structure has gone through three major amendments to achieve the current structure shown below in Fig. 1. The creation of three new units, namely the Negotiating Group on Databases, the Research Groups and the Working Groups, has significantly improved operational effectiveness.

In this study, we will be providing a brief description of the aforementioned units along with the activities of the Statistics Group, which is responsible of executing the development of the ERM system.

The Negotiating Group on Databases (NGD) was established in order to identify the electronic resources which might be subscribed to within the scope of the consortium; its remit also includes determining or developing pricing model(s) that fit best into the economic, legal and academic structure and to follow consortium activities throughout the world and cooperate with other important consortia. The NGD also follows developments within the publishing world and uses the information obtained for the benefit of the members of ANKOS in accordance with their requirements (ANKOS, 2010b).

ANKOS Database Liaisons are expert librarians working in member libraries who have a deep knowledge of the databases they are in charge of. They work together with the Steering Committee, Working Groups, members and publishers/vendors.

Research Groups are temporary groups formed in order to conduct activities related to new practices and developments in the fields of databases and librarianship. These groups present reports of their activities to the ANKOS Steering Committee which shares such reports with all its members. Electronic books (2005), off-campus access (2006–2007), remote access (2006–2007), and common interface (2006–2008) groups have been the subject of such temporary groups within ANKOS (Yanaz & Kafalı, 2010: minute 03:04). Currently there is a Research Group for collaboration, including interlibrary loan. Working groups sustain the continuous activities performed within the scope of ANKOS. Statistics, License Agreements, Public Relations, Open Access and Institutional Archives, Cooperation and Institutionalization are the working groups of ANKOS.

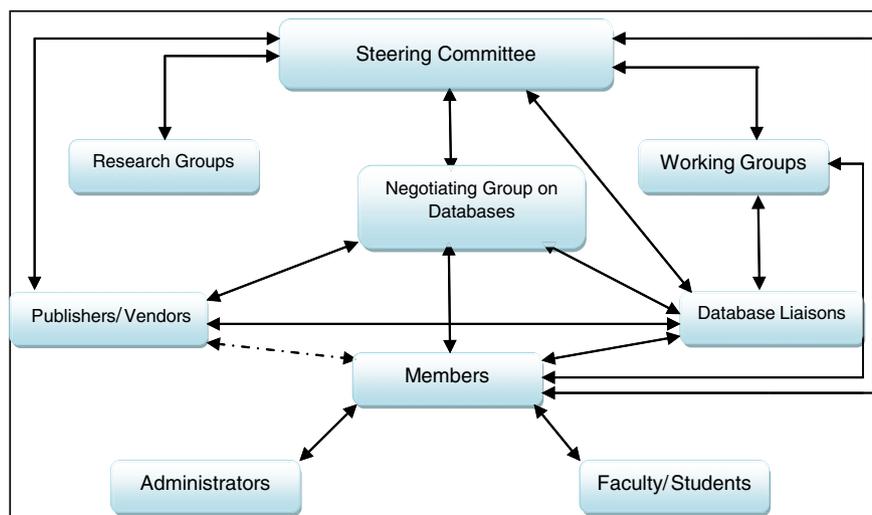


Fig. 1. Organizational structure of ANKOS.

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