Library consortia

Library consortia can offer extremely useful financial support, but their processes can be lengthy and complex.

You should seek out consortia whose members may already publish (extensively) with you to demonstrate the value of investment.

Approaching library consortia can be a powerful way to generate multi-library signups and quickly gain many members. CEU Press and Liverpool UP have received important financial support from consortia during our project.

That said, there are a number of aspects to bear in mind with consortial groups:

- Consortial groupings can be slow in their decision making. There are often multiple layers of committees, and budgets can be set up to 12 months in advance. Hence, while the rewards can be great, the lead time for consortial participation can be lengthy.
- Consortial groups are more likely to respond to larger presses with more substantial asks. There is almost a sense that below a certain threshold, it is not worth the time/participation of the big groups. Nevertheless, we have been supported on an individual press level, so while the path to consortial funding may be more difficult and time-consuming, it is feasible.
- Consortia can sometimes be distant from the purchasing process. Speaking directly on the ground with individual acquisitions and scholarly communications librarians can often yield more immediate direct results, although the rewards of landing a large-scale consortial group is key.
- Some library systems act as mini-consortia. The California Digital Library (CDL), for instance, acts on behalf of the California system and is an extremely important player in the US market. Nine libraries of the CDL group are subscribing members of Opening the Future at both Liverpool University Press and CEU Press.
- Some consortia have a large reach as advocates, if not as purchasing schemes. The Center for Research Libraries (CRL) in the USA is a powerful ally who has endorsed the Opening the Future model at the Central European University Press.
- Some libraries are members of multiple consortial groups. Avoiding overlap in pricing calculations and factoring this in during growth predictions is important.
- Being able to demonstrate to consortia that their institutional authors publish with you can be persuasive for gaining support.

Consortia have their own timeframes for applications, as well as different application processes. Some may be appropriate for your press. We have only had discussions with consortia in North America and Canada, which may influence our perspective. As a starting point, several US consortia are listed on the ICOLC website.

Revision #7
Created 2025-01-15 15:47:40 UTC by Kira Hopkins
Updated 2025-11-17 14:31:59 UTC by Jo Fitzpatrick