

# ALLICE



# A WONDERLAND FOR LIBRARIANS

**B**ecause of the current recession, many libraries and their parent institutions are facing not only steadily shrinking budgets, but also in some cases, significant cuts. Still, students expect to have instantaneous access to full-text articles, eBooks, and other resources—not just in the library but from anywhere via their Smartphones, laptops, iPads, and tablet computers. In an information-rich world, even small libraries are expected to provide easy access to an increasing array of online resources. Library directors continually face the challenge of stretching their schools' shrinking budgets to license the increasing number of databases needed by students and faculty. Adventist college and university library directors are no exception.

## **The Answer—A Library Consortium**

To deal with the increasing strain on the library budget, most academic institutions have found it necessary to participate in several library consortia. For example, the Walla Walla University libraries belong to both the Adventist Library Information Cooperative (ALICE) and Orbis Cascade Alliance, a regional consortium of academic libraries. Other North American Adventist universities belong to ALICE and their own regional consortia, which enables them to participate in resources such as a shared union catalog, book lending, and lower prices for online databases. At the K-12 level, many state libraries provide the consortial base.

The Adventist Virtual Library (AVL) is an example of regional Seventh-day Adventist library consortia, created by the Inter-American Division to “facilitate the access to varied databases and links in several languages and diverse educational disciplines that complement the teaching-learning and investigative process in all the educational Adventist institutions that are part of the Inter-American Division.”<sup>1</sup> According to Evelyn Velazquez, director of the Adventist Virtual Library (AVL), the project, begun in 2007, grew out of recommendations from a

division-wide study indicating that “library services were very limited and in need of an effective tool that would update and complement the existing services.”<sup>2</sup> She added that “This virtual library has the added benefit of offering access to its users from within the educational centers as well as from the outside, allowing the technology to reach any location where our students find themselves.”<sup>3</sup>

Today, the AVL serves all 15 of the division's academic institutions and more than 1,000 of its K-12 schools in 33 countries. Databases and other resources provided by the AVL are also accessed by conference and union officials in the Inter-American Division. While the AVL subsidizes some of the licensing costs, each institution also pays a subscription fee. At present, access to databases and reference sources requires a username and password.<sup>4</sup>

The value of the consortium is succinctly summarized in the mission statement of the Orbis Cascade Alliance: to “strengthen member libraries through collaboration in order to support the work of our students, faculty, staff, and researchers. Alliance members join together to enhance our services, share our information resources and expertise, enrich and preserve our collections, and develop library staff to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing information environment.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, more than 160 consortia are now listed on the International Coalition of Library Consortia's (ICOLC) Website, underscoring the high degree of cooperation between libraries.<sup>6</sup>

## **ALICE Consortium**

If neither your division nor state/country sponsors a consortium, what can your library do? The Adventist Library Information Cooperative (ALICE) may be the vehicle through which it can obtain the benefits of collaboration. ALICE is a worldwide consortium of Adventist academic libraries that operates under the auspices of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL). Membership in ASDAL is open to

---

BY CAROLYN GASKELL

every Seventh-day Adventist academic library that can subscribe to at least one of its databases. Its purpose “is to provide Member Libraries with enhanced database access opportunities at reduced costs through collective efforts and resource sharing within the Cooperative.”<sup>7</sup>

### ALICE’s History

In the late 1990s, Adventist college and university library directors individually explored options for licensing databases at more advantageous prices through local and regional consortia. It soon became apparent that few were eligible to join such consortia or their database licensing projects. The only alternative was for Adventist academic librarians to form their own consortium. This wasn’t a daunting task since together, through the As-

databases, including two with substantial full-text.”<sup>8</sup> He further noted, “In many cases it provided an option which might not have been affordable any other way.”<sup>9</sup>

Today, 18 Adventist academic libraries in eight countries hold membership in ALICE. The newest member, Middle East University in Beirut, Lebanon, was officially voted in during ALICE’s annual meeting in June 2010. ALICE’s goal is to extend its services to Adventist academic libraries worldwide.

Looking toward the future at that 1997 conference, Clouten envisioned ALICE’s role as follows: “Within the sphere of Adventist higher education, a consortium such as ALICE may enable institutions to offer more resources for less cost. That in itself is an important benefit in view of rising costs within academia. More than that, though, ALICE becomes the broker of shared database licensing agreements that allow an institution to provide campus-wide access in a way that enhances student learning opportunities. And if the higher education scene includes a trend in the direction of distance education or ‘at-home’ learning, ALICE member libraries have built-in readiness to extend electronic information services to their students whether on or off campus.”<sup>10</sup>

ALICE is indeed fulfilling this role. Academic libraries of varying sizes from Canada, England, Germany, Lebanon, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and the United States are actively providing database services to their on- and off-campus students using ALICE-licensed databases.

Currently, ALICE licenses 10 Web-based databases, including *Academic Search* (four versions), *PsycInfo*, *PsycArticles*, *CINAHL* (two versions), *Social Work Abstracts*, and *ABI/Inform*. The complete list of databases appears on ALICE’s Webpage at <http://spinergy.southern.edu/asdalhere/alice-member-libraries>.

Licensing costs are often based upon an institution’s full-time enrollment (FTE). Consortia, by aggregating member FTEs, are able to work with vendors to reduce licensing costs. Vendors benefit by having to send only one invoice rather than many.

ALICE typically allocates costs to its member libraries based on a tiered FTE model or per library if so indicated by the vendor. To ensure that larger institutions do not over-subsidize the projects, licensing fees are allocated in a way that makes each institution’s cost less than it would be if it licensed the database on its own. This policy allows the larger institutional libraries to support the smaller ones while still being fiscally responsible to their parent institutions. Member libraries can opt into and out of database projects annually as their circumstances change.

While consortial licensing reduces costs, the databases are still expensive, with most costing thousands of dollars per year. In addition to the database licensing fees, there is an annual ALICE membership fee, and each library director must maintain membership in the parent organization, ASDAL.

## ALICE MEMBERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL ADVENTIST ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

1. **Stable power source**
2. **Stable IP address**
3. **Stable e-mail address**
4. **Ability to pay in U.S. dollars, in a timely manner**
5. **Membership in ASDAL**
6. **Appropriate computer/technology infrastructure and personnel support**
7. **Commitment to participating in ALICE governance, e-mail voting, and other business**

sociation of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL), they had already tackled such projects as the *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index*, the *Seventh-day Adventist Obituary Index*, and a *Unified Collection Development Policy* for Adventist resources.

In 1996, Adventist technical services and systems librarians met to explore possible avenues of cooperation. Adventist collegiate library directors built on these initial meetings, and on September 1, 1996, ALICE came into being with 10 inaugural members: Andrews, La Sierra, Loma Linda, and Southern Adventist universities; Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University), Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences, Pacific Union and Union colleges, as well as Oakwood and Walla Walla colleges, now both universities. Keith Clouten, then Andrews University library director, was elected ALICE’s first chair.

Less than a year later, in a presentation at the 1997 ASDAL conference, Clouten observed that, “In a flurry of activity during its first five months in existence, the new consortium signed agreements with four vendors totalling more than \$153,000, providing nine member libraries with electronic access to up to ten

## How ALICE Works

ALICE is a volunteer organization managed by a council of library directors from member institutions. Volunteer staff members include the council chair, projects manager, treasurer, and secretary. Andrews University acts as the consortium's fiscal agent. At present, only academic libraries are members. The ALICE council meets face to face annually during the conference of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians. The rest of the year, business is conducted via e-mail. Databases licensed by ALICE are currently English-language based.

## How to Join

Interested library directors from Adventist institutions of higher education should contact the ALICE chair and/or projects manager in writing asking to join ALICE and indicating which database(s) they wish to access. A list of databases licensed by ALICE can be found on its Website. Library directors must be members of ASDAL in order to be considered for membership. The best time to join is during the annual license renewals in the fall.

Even though the landscape of library consortia has changed and many Adventist academic libraries now also belong to other consortia, ALICE remains a vital service to Adventist academic libraries and the students and faculty they serve. ✍



Carolyn Gaskell, M.A., is the Director of Libraries at Walla Walla University in College Place, Washington. She became the ALICE Projects Manager in 2004 after having served six years as ALICE Chair. She has also served on the Orbis Cascade Alliance Electronic Resources Committee and represented Washington state private academic libraries on the state library's Subcommittee on Cost Allocation for the State-wide Database Licensing Project during 2004-2005. In addition, she has authored a number of articles and made presentations at library conferences. This article is updated from one printed by the Journal in volume 67, No. 2.

# FREE ACCESS TO 300 HEALTH AND MEDICAL JOURNALS FOR ADVENTIST ACADEMIC LIBRARIES!

**Who qualifies?** Seventh-day Adventist colleges/universities in the developing world that offer nursing, public health, or other health-related programs.

**What do your faculty and students receive?** Access to the full-text articles from 300 health and medical journals through the database vendor EBSCO.

**How can you gain access?** Contact Elizabeth Pettit, Health Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 U.S.A. Phone (301) 680-6702; fax (301) 680-6707; Website: <http://www.health20-20.org/>.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "About Us," Adventist Virtual Library, Inter-American Division, Office of Education: <http://bva.interamerica.org/en/aboutus.html>. Accessed January 19, 2011.
2. Evelyn Velazquez, "Adventist Virtual Library Report," e-mail attachment to author, January 10, 2011.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "Mission Statement," Orbis Cascade Alliance: <http://www.orbiscascade.org/index/missionstatement>. Accessed January 19, 2011.
6. "Participating Consortia of the ICOLC," International Coalition of Library Consortia: <http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/icolcmembers.html>. Accessed January 24, 2011.
7. "ALICE Agreement," Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians: <http://spinergy.southern.edu/asdalhere/alice-agreement>. Accessed January 24, 2011.
8. Keith Clouten, "Alice in an Electronic Wonderland: Rabbit Hole or Passageway to the Future?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians at La Sierra University, Riverside, California, June 22-25, 1997.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

*Guest Editorial* continued from page 3

tury, library facilities and professional librarians become important indices of the quality of Adventist education. Our schools and colleges must forge a consensus that adequate library budgets, along with trained librarians capable of engaging students in critical thinking, are central to the accomplishment of our mission.—Malcolm Russell.

**Malcolm Russell, Ph.D.** (School of International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University), is currently Vice President and Academic Dean at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. He has taught

at two other Adventist higher education institutions and served as a department chair, assistant dean of a university school of business, chair of a General Education Committee, and Honors program director. Dr. Russell has gained a reputation as a strong supporter of academic libraries.

## REFERENCES

1. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1952), p. 18.
2. Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities, "Accreditation Handbook," Part III: Criteria 7: <http://education.gc.adventist.org/approval.html> (2004):III-18. Accessed April 5, 2011.