

# Cooperation and Partnerships in Library Services: ANKOS

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## Abstract

In this paper, the activities of ANKOS (the Anatolian Consortium of University Libraries), as a model of cooperation and partnership in library services in Turkey, will be explained within the framework of the PULMAN criteria.

## Introduction

The rapidly increasing volume of information resources and the growing cost of access to information during the 20th century, which is called the "Information Age", and the insufficient library budgets constituted the major concerns of librarians, especially during the last quarter of the previous century. One of the significant developments which has deeply influenced librarianship and the accessibility of information in the 20th century was, certainly, the improvements (innovations) in the information and communication technologies as well as the transfer of scientific publications into electronic resources with the world-wide expansion of the Internet. The librarians, whose aim is to provide their users with the information they need in the shortest time possible, have been obliged to use the developing information technologies in order to cope with the ever increasing number of information resources and their growing costs. As a solution to the problem, a new cooperation model, called consortia, through which the scientific journals and databases are collectively purchased in electronic form by several libraries, have started spreading widely all over the world, especially in the United States and in Europe. OhioLink, which is one of the most advanced consortia in the world, includes 75 libraries as members and has access to 90 electronic databases. By joining their resources, libraries raise their bargaining power in negotiating with publishers. The Consortia do not actually realize a savings in the periodical subscription costs; but they make it possible to have access to more resources by an additional investment of approximately 10-15 %. Consortia prove to be significantly beneficial especially for those libraries with insufficient budgets and small print collections.

When we look at the criteria of PULMAN as regards cooperation and partnerships, the reasons which necessitate the establishment of partnerships include the following: development of an integrated approach in evaluating the people's need for libraries and getting organised within this framework; the rapid increase in the volume and in the cost of information resources; the fact that the libraries cannot be self-sufficient, at all, within such circumstances; and the appearance of network-based services and digital content. Consequently, the demand for services, which no single institution located at a specific geographical region could provide just by itself, are growing rapidly.

The PULMAN partnerships are classified as those partnerships made with the industry and organised by the voluntary participation of libraries at national, regional and local levels. The types of such partnerships would include national, regional or locally-based cooperation, subject-based cooperation (specialised in a specific field), and mission-oriented (such as expanding the computer literacy) cooperation. In England, the establishment of the public libraries network – covering the public libraries, museums and the archives – to serve as the people's network initiative, is a good example of such a partnership.

ANKOS, which was established in 1999 with the purpose of having access to electronic full text journal collections and databases among the university and research libraries and providing relevant services to the users, is a strategic partnership; and it complies with the underlying reasons and the types of partnerships described by the PULMAN criteria summarised above.

## The Purpose of ANKOS

The purpose of ANKOS is to provide users in the universities and research institutions access to the electronic journals and databases of various publishers, through the Internet, in accordance with the license agreements. Accordingly, users can have access to the full text articles as well as citations and bibliographical information, which appear in the journals not available in their libraries, via electronic access. ANKOS has achieved a lot in a short period of time through the participation of all the university and research libraries in Turkey. ANKOS began its activities in 2000, with subscription to 3 databases and by the membership of 12 institutions; in the year 2001, the number of databases rose to 11 with the membership of 39 institutions; in 2002, ANKOS had access to 16 databases and had 59 members; and in 2003, the number of databases was 20 with the membership of 78 institutions. While

the number of databases to which the individual institutions have subscribed was 139 in the year 2000, this number reached to 239 in 2002, and to 411 in 2003. ANKOS has grown at a rate of 72 % during the last two years, and the number of full text electronic journals accessible by the institutions has reached over 10,000 titles.

ANKOS is a model based on sharing and mutual assistance among its members, whereby each member contributes to the system according to its financial capacity and tries to subscribe to the databases needed by its users through the consortium. Considering the facts that the library budgets of the Universities in Turkey are limited and are actually under the level of world standards and that the print journal collections are rather scattered and are insufficient, the significance of ANKOS is well understood in raising the access to scientific information and in strengthening the communication among the university libraries. The journal subscriptions of all the ANKOS members to Elsevier, Springer, Wiley and Kluwer, which are deemed as the largest four publishers of the world, is about 3 % on average. This figure is quite low when compared with the USA and the European countries. For instance, this figure is about 25 % for the member libraries of the OhioLink Consortium. This ratio turns into a great gap at the universities with restricted subscriptions of print collections; and the number of print journals constitutes 1% of the electronic journals (accessible through ANKOS); moreover, it is a reality that most of the newly established universities do not have any print journal subscriptions. In the year 2001, the number of full text articles used by all ANKOS members was 1,373,000 (Bati & Karasözen, 2002). This number was 1,324,900 during the first eight months of 2002; and this is an indication of the increase in usage. It has been reported that 25,000 full text articles were used, on average, in the year 2001, by those universities which had limited resources and had less than 50 print journal subscriptions via Elsevier, Springer, Kluwer and Wiley. These figures clearly indicate the sort of opportunities that ANKOS provides, especially for small and newly established universities. One of the best indicators used in measuring the effectiveness of the consortia – called "cross access" – is the number of electronic resources accessed by the institutions, although the print subscriptions are not held by them. This ratio has been reported to be 80 % in some of the member institutions of ANKOS; and with such a percentage, ANKOS stands at the same level with the most successful consortia of the world.

#### ANKOS as a Model

ANKOS is a model based on learning by trial, aiming to increase the knowledge accumulation and experience of the member institutions, to promote the idea of consortium, and to contribute to raising more specialists in this field. The ANKOS Steering Committee, consisting of 8 university library directors and the director of ULAKBİM (Turkish Academic Network and Information Centre), was formed in 2000. The Steering Committee meets four times a year and coordinates the activities of ANKOS. Some ANKOS tasks, such as the introduction of databases, trials of new databases and subscription operations, had been carried by the ANKOS Centre situated at the Middle East Technical University until the end of 2001. From then on, these tasks have been shared by the member institutions of the Steering Committee and by some other libraries. The activities are now being operated by a group of librarians, called "Database Contact Persons".

ANKOS has adopted an integrated approach, indicated by the PULMAN criteria, in the field of accessing information to electronic products. In 2002, ANKOS Licensing Principles and the Turkish National Site License (TRNSL) were prepared; and after their adoption by the ANKOS Members, the license agreements, which are very important for the protection of access rights of the libraries and the users in our country, have been arranged in accordance with these criteria. The process of information being archived and being accessible when needed in electronic form is of vital importance. ANKOS has added a clause relating to this issue in all the license agreements signed so far with the publishers. Besides, joint work with ULAKBİM is being carried out, in order to secure archiving and accessing of some databases at ULAKBİM. In 2001 and 2002, two international ANKOS meetings were organised in İzmir and İstanbul, respectively. Representatives of several publishers, some invited lecturers from the library consortia in Europe and USA, and a large number of librarians from the academic and research libraries in our country participated in these meetings. The meetings have been very useful for the recognition of ANKOS at the international level, for establishing contacts with other consortia, for the identification of the needs of the libraries of our country in electronic resources, and for informing the librarians about various databases. From the time of its establishment, ANKOS has given much importance to training librarians and users in electronic resources. Towards this end, three training seminars have been organized in İstanbul, Gaziantep and Bolu.

As indicated in the PULMAN criteria, such joint efforts, whatever the type of partnerships they have, would be insufficient by themselves. Therefore, the consortia have to understand that they are part of the worldwide global network, and they have to know what steps to take and determine their strategies accordingly. ANKOS pays great importance to international relations and mutual assistance. ANKOS is a member of ICOLC (International Coalition of Library Consortia), which is the umbrella organisation covering more than 150 library consortia in the world, and its European branch, E-ICOLC. ANKOS regularly participates in the annual meetings of these organisations and conducts its activities in accordance with the criteria set by them. ANKOS is also a member of the European branch of SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), established in 1999 by ARL (Association of

Research Libraries, USA), with the purpose of developing new publishing models as an alternative to commercial publishing and securing a more economical and efficient communication of scientific information via electronic products. ANKOS aims to spread the activities carried by SPARC in the field of institutional archives and open archives in Turkey and to inform the academic world about the existing situation of the libraries as well as the electronic publishing and electronic access to information (Karasözen, 2002).

ANKOS is also a member of SELL (Southern European Library Link), a regional coalition of the consortia of Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Among the aims of SELL are the following: to emphasize the differences in the library and educational systems in the Mediterranean countries; to underline the fact that the pricing systems based on the number of students and the faculty (FTE) applied in Europe and North America are not appropriate for all countries; and to stress the imbalances among the national income per capita in various countries.

ANKOS has given great importance to the relations with the library community in our country; ANKOS members have presented several papers about the activities of ANKOS and the electronic databases at the various meetings organised by the Turkish Librarians' Association as well as at the annual "i-net" and Academic Computing Conferences. One of the most important contributions of ANKOS to the library community in Turkey, besides providing access to information using the most economical and contemporary technologies, is that ANKOS has created an environment of interaction, whereby the librarians would know each other more closely and would feel free to interchange ideas and information among themselves. ANKOS gives great attention to the following issues: that the participating institutions carry the obligations and responsibilities necessitated by the partnership and that one high level officer be responsible and act as the representative for ANKOS in each member library. On the other hand, ANKOS is highly determined to follow the world developments in the field of information technologies very closely and to revise its objectives accordingly, provided that the necessary measures are taken; to join the multinational partnerships as necessary; to participate actively in scientific meetings and exchange information; and to continuously evaluate its activities and performance.

The number of scientific publications and the researchers is increasing year after year in our country; on the other hand, emphasis is being placed and resources are being allotted to graduate education in order to raise faculty members. It is obvious that these developments will accelerate the need for scientific information. The provision of electronic access to information, within the framework of ANKOS, to the users of many university and research libraries with limited budgets and small collections will have a great impact on the new scientific objectives and progress of our country.

ANKOS, although it addresses the academic community, will always be open to partnerships and consortia with public and other libraries and to the exchange of information, experience and solidarity, and it will support such partnerships as far as possible.

#### Bibliography

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