



January 16, 2025

Representative Nathe and Members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division,

My name is Jason Bedsaul, and I am the Director of ODIN (Online Dakota Information Network), a subdivision of the North Dakota University System - Core Technology Services, and I appreciate the opportunity to share ODIN's perspective with you on the State Library's Budget request. As the two primary state agencies whose mission is to support and serve North Dakota libraries and their patrons, ODIN and the State Library regularly partner on strategic initiatives. I am writing today to provide some additional context and background for the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Bridge initiative.

Current ILL Environment

The State Library has long supported libraries in the state with filling patron's requests for materials from other libraries in and beyond the state. ODIN's 53 Public, K-12, and Special Libraries share a common system along with the State Library. These libraries and their patrons can search and share materials directly with one another which saves on shipping time, allows more flexibility on collection decisions, and other benefits that come with pooling resources and unifying on a single solution.

Unfortunately, that leaves out most libraries in the state who are on various other systems and severely inhibits our members from requesting materials directly from non-ODIN libraries. In the cases where a library can afford an independent solution, it is often easier to request materials from thousands of miles away than from ten due to this technology gap that exists statewide in our communities. Additionally, in our internal annual survey of system satisfaction - ILL is a commonly cited pain-point.

The Interlibrary Loan Bridge Initiative

A dedicated ILL "bridge" would change the current environment in several ways.

1. **Simplify Process for Patrons and Libraries.** With a single, unifying search, patrons can identify and borrow materials from a broader collection and have them delivered directly to their local library rather than passing through the state library first. A single, unifying search and request layer would be placed over the existing hodgepodge collection of disparate systems, spreadsheets, and additional manual mediation and reduce the need for libraries to manually search multiple other libraries.
2. **Expanded access to collections and rural communities.** The current process to deliver a digital request (journal articles, book chapters, etc.) is complicated and often incurs additional fees from third-party processing software. This initiative would allow greater access for patrons in towns small and large to the state's robust collections of electronic resources purchased annually by academic institutions.
3. **Improve Cost-Effectiveness:** By leveraging shared resources, libraries can reduce redundancy and save taxpayer dollars. A statewide, shared ILL system would maximize the value of existing collections while minimizing the need for additional purchases. We also anticipate there to be savings at the local level where the library has been paying for a similar system independently to gain access to libraries outside the state.
2. **Network and Collaborate Beyond North Dakota.** This type of system is common in many other states and regions - including Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Colorado to name a few within our region. When no libraries in the state own a requested title, many of these systems can 'forward' the request to another group without having to recreate the request and manually manage two separate systems.

To prepare for this request by the State Library, ODIN conducted a preliminary RFI and formed a task force to prepare the request and review existing solutions. We are prepared to continue supporting the State Library with technical and logistical needs and ongoing training and support for the service statewide regardless of membership status with ODIN.

The proposed ILL bridge system would strengthen collaboration among libraries of all types - public, academic, school, and special libraries - creating a seamless network for sharing resources. This initiative would eliminate barriers to access, ensuring that whether you are a researcher at UND, a high school student in Minot, or a family in Dickinson, you can obtain the materials you need quickly and efficiently.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

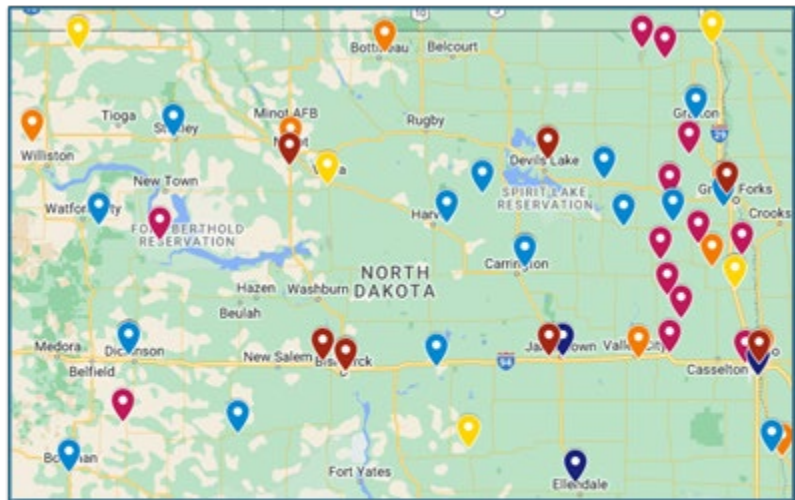
Best,

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About ODIN

ODIN, a subdivision of the North Dakota University System Core Technology Services Division (NDUS CTS) provides library management services and system support for 67 member libraries across North Dakota, including the 11 NDUS institutions and the ND State Library. The remaining libraries served by ODIN are comprised of two private higher education institutions, K-12 schools, public libraries, and special libraries. The ODIN Office also provides authentication services for E-resource access to other ND libraries. In total, over 300 ND libraries and school districts benefit from ODIN's services.



This map denotes the locations of ODIN's 67 member libraries across the state. The legend on the right indicates the type and quantity of libraries served.