

LIBRARIES CONNECT OHIO - Summary

“Information is the oxygen of the modern age.” - *Ronald Reagan*

It is a myth that quality information making a difference in people’s lives will be “free.” Whether supplied in print or electronic media, organized and authoritative information never has been and never will be without a cost. Yet we know that such high-quality, multi-disciplinary information is a necessary resource for Ohio’s 21st century success.

Libraries Connect Ohio (<http://librariesconnectohio.org>) is a partnership of Ohio libraries and library organizations that work together to build and provide the *Ohio Web Library* core collection of information resources, and to make these resources accessible to all Ohioans. This efficient pooling of assets for the benefit of many also provides tremendous cost savings, making it possible for any Ohioan to take advantage of a collection of information that no single library can afford on its own. The principal partners are:

- INFOhio, the statewide cooperative school library and information network, supporting and enriching teaching and learning by providing equitable access to quality resources for Ohio’s PreK–12 community of students, educators and parents.
- The Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK), a consortium of 90 Ohio libraries serving two-year community colleges, four-year independent colleges, and four-year state universities that work together to provide Ohio students, faculty and researchers with the information they need for teaching, learning and research.
- The Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN), providing Internet connections to Ohio public libraries and the Explore Ohio web site in addition to contributing to the Ohio Web Library.
- The State Library of Ohio, a state agency serving state government and all types of libraries. The *Ohio Web Library* is funded in part by an Institute of Museum and Library Services LSTA grant awarded by the State Library.

Ohioans currently retrieve over 15.5 million information articles from the collection each year. Students in Ohio schools and colleges typically access the collection by using their normal login to either <http://infohio.org> or <http://www.ohiolink.edu/resources.cgi>. Everyone else can access the collection through the simple search interface at <http://ohioweblibrary.org>.

The combined bargaining power of **Libraries Connect Ohio** has made it possible to obtain contracts with information vendors that start at low initial costs, and then keep costs in succeeding years well below normal inflation. Articles cost as little as \$0.05 each at current usage rates, with an average cost of \$0.35. This cost is about 89% less than what an individual library would pay.

A recent survey by INFOhio indicates that, if **Libraries Connect Ohio** did not provide these information resources, only 20% of PreK–12 libraries would be able to afford them. This means that 80% of Ohio students would not be as well-prepared for our information-based economy.

