OPAL is a tight-knit community powered by OhioNET. We use our collective voice for the strength of small libraries, the progress of our institutions, and the enrichment of students, staff, and faculty.

Founded in 1998, the consortium offers more than 2 million titles and 4 million individual items to the patrons of dozens of Ohio academic libraries. All OPAL members are also members of OhioLINK, a statewide initiative offering a shared union database and the reciprocal lending of more than 46 million items among 120 libraries in the state.

OPAL is proud to represent 23 libraries across the state and 34,000+ students impacted.

The combined OPAL catalog is the third largest of all OhioLINK institutions, following only The Ohio State University and University of Cincinnati in number of holdings.

OPAL is proud to share its first impact report with our community. In 2018, OPAL celebrated its 20th anniversary, a milestone that could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of its members and our parent organization, OhioNET. Our accomplishments have always depended on the shared vision, tireless effort, and collective might of the group.

This guide is intended to share those success stories of our consortium and help our stakeholders learn more about the value of an OPAL membership. This impact report serves as a snapshot of the valuable resources and services we bring to our users and captures OPAL’s impact between fiscal years 2017 and 2020.

Get to know OPAL. We have been serving Ohio’s not-for-profit, private academic libraries for two decades.

OPAL Executive Committee Chairs, 2017–2020

LESLEI JANKOWSKI
Director of Library Services
Columbus College of Art & Design
Chair, 2017–2018

ANDREW WHITIS
University Librarian and College Librarian for Business
University of Findlay
Chair, 2018–2019

TIFFANY LIPSTREU
Library Director
Otterbein University
Chair, 2019–2020

The Directors’ Council and Executive Committee guide OPAL. Learn more at opal-libraries.org

*IPEDS 2017–2018 data reports
Sharing resources and best practices

From knowledge sharing to digitization, your membership opens up the opportunity to give your students, staff, and faculty the support they need to be successful.

**SHARED LIBRARY SYSTEMS**

All OPAL libraries use a shared Sierra Integrated Library System to provide management insight and to supervise day-to-day collection management and financial activities.

The shared library catalog also facilitates inter-library borrowing and materials lending within OPAL and enables OPAL participation in OhioLINK. This provides access to a vast shared collection of millions of materials.

OPAL libraries can also opt into the OPAL Digital Collections project, built on the CONTENTdm digital object management platform. Participating libraries use CONTENTdm to build, manage, and showcase their archival or special collections.

**SHARED ELECTRONIC CONTENT**

As part of the effort to provide users with quality materials, OPAL subscribes to EBSCO’s Academic eBook Collection. With over 150,000 titles, all eBooks are available with unlimited user access, and titles are regularly added to the collection.

**OFF-CAMPUS ACCESS**

OPAL operates and maintains a proxy server for each library, allowing users to access library-licensed online articles, eBooks, and videos from anywhere in the world.

**LIBGUIDES**

LibGuides are librarian-created, online portals to content-rich multimedia guides for patrons. Using LibGuides can increase the use of your library’s resources and services.

**TECHNOLOGIES**

As part of OPAL, a library receives access to several technology benefits, ultimately resulting in saving several thousand dollars a year, not to mention challenges in coordinating those services.*

- Proxy service
- Sierra system assistance
- Collection maintenance
- Statistics gathering
- Records management

**SAVINGS FOR INDIVIDUAL LIBRARIES**

Each OPAL library saves an estimated $6,000 per year on maintenance and hosting fees for an individual catalog—which does not even take into account the additional costs for staff to coordinate catalog administration or to maintain the catalog.*

**STAFFING COST SAVINGS**

The full price of OPAL group participation—which includes OhioNET staff support and Innovative Interfaces software fees—is less than a full-time employee’s salary, before benefits.

* Source: cost avoidance report for an OPAL Library, prepared February 2016

In OPAL, we know you are consistently being challenged to do more with less. OPAL helps you do just that.

With the power of OhioNET, OPAL participation offers access to staff and technology benefits that go above and beyond the standard OhioNET membership. Access to OhioNET staff protects against the consequences of potential staffing turnover, software system changes, and technology barriers.

OPAL libraries pay less than half of list price on their subscription to the EBSCO eBook package.
Professional development and community

OPAL staff share best practices and work together to solve unique challenges. Because we’re not-for-profit, private academic libraries too, we know what you face and we’re eager to grow and thrive together.

ONBOARDING, TRAINING, AND MENTORING (OTM)
The onboarding, training, and mentoring program provides a holistic approach to staff development, both to integrate new OPAL employees into the OPAL community and provide ongoing learning opportunities for all OPAL staff. The program was revamped in 2018 to emphasize ongoing development.

OTM provides:
- Flexible OPAL integration, learning, and collaboration options—in-person, virtual, and self-directed
- New employees with diverse yet consistent ways to learn the basics of OPAL, OhioNET, and OhioLINK
- Individuals with special training from staff who serve as mentors

No matter the stage in their OPAL participation, our members have access to onboarding, training, and mentoring resources focused around their specific needs.

OPAL CONFERENCE
The OPAL Conference is free for all OPAL members, providing professional development and rich content at no charge in this time of flat or declining library budgets. In addition, staff and faculty at OPAL libraries have the opportunity to present at a regional conference within a supportive peer environment.

COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST (COI)
COI are staff-generated and self-governed communities from within OPAL colleges and universities. Staff from the various member schools develop and maintain these communities for growth, conversation, and development.

COI benefits include:
- A forum for open discussion
- Professional partnerships and conversation for individual libraries’ growth and advancement
- Opportunities for collaboration on scholarship
- Professional development
- Best practices and policy creation and feedback

All OHIONET WEBINARS ARE FREE TO OPAL MEMBERS.

GROUPS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
A number of groups support collaboration, community and innovation.
- Working groups are organized to accomplish both the functional and visionary work of OPAL. Current working group topics include marketing and communication, outreach and relationships, assessment, and shared expertise
- Task forces may exist for a designated period to work on initiatives and to test pilot programs
- Members have the opportunity to join COI and committee meetings, visit other libraries, and attend OPAL conferences

OPAL is proud to recognize its members through awards and scholarships to put toward professional development opportunities.

2018 OPAL SERVICE AWARD
Matt Polcyn
OhioNET

2018 OPAL ESSENTIAL PIECE SPECIAL RECOGNITION
Michael P. Butler
OhioNET

2018 LIBRARY LEADERSHIP OHIO SCHOLARSHIPS
- Claire Ballinger
  Athenaeum of Ohio
- Nimisha Bhat
  Columbus College of Art & Design
- Michael Dziabiaik
  University of Findlay
- Jessica McIntosh
  Otterbein University

2018 OPAL CONFERENCE POSTER WINNER
Gina Maida and Laura Kumler
University of Mount Union

2017 OPAL SERVICE AWARD
Beverly Lane
Pontifical College Josephinum

Thanks to OPAL I was able to join fellow librarians from all over the state to attend Library Leadership Ohio 2018 free of cost. Over the course of just a few days, I participated in the most engaging conversations with colleagues from a variety of backgrounds and was made to think critically about librarianship.

Nimisha Bhat
Technical Services Librarian
Columbus College of Art & Design

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Nimisha Bhat
Technical Services Librarian
Columbus College of Art & Design
To join a strong, tight-knit community of your peers, call any OPAL library director or contact OhioNET for more information.

Antioch College
Antioch University
The Athenaeum of Ohio
Baldwin Wallace University
Bluffton University
Columbus College of Art & Design
Defiance College
Franciscan University of Steubenville
Heidelberg University
Lourdes University
Malone University
Mercy College of Ohio
Methodist Theological School in Ohio
Mount Carmel
Muskingum University
Otterbein University
Pontifical College Josephinum
Tiffin University
University of Findlay
University of Mount Union
Ursuline College
Walsh University
Wilmington College

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