

## **The Future of Interlending**

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**Mary E. Jackson  
Director of Collections & Access Programs  
Association of Research Libraries  
Washington, DC USA  
mary@arl.org**

### *Introduction*

I'm sure I share your excitement in being in Canberra, Australia for the 8<sup>th</sup> IFLA Interlending and Document Supply Conference. Although many of you may be first-time visitors to Australia, I can state unequivocally that the hospitality extended by the Ozzies is first rate and genuine. I've truly enjoyed my previous visits, and feel like I'm nearly a native as I have been to Australia three times in the past year alone.

As you are about to experience over the next several days, Tom Ruthven and his colleagues have done a splendid job organizing a conference that includes good professional content with an exciting array of social activities. It may be a bit unusual to give a round of thanks to the conference organizers at the beginning of the conference, but please join me in thanking Tom and his colleagues for organizing and hosting this conference.

It is my enjoyable task to give the welcoming keynote address. I've been asked to say a few words on the future of interlending, or interlibrary loan as I will probably call it. But, whether I use *interlending*, *interlibrary loan*, *document delivery*, or *document supply*, I will mean the time-honored process of exchanging library materials between two libraries.

Over the course of my talk I will speculate on ten key trends and will look no further than five years out – that is, between 2003 and 2008. I acknowledge that many predictions, including mine, are often way off target, so please do not take my comments to be anything more than personal musings based on a career of involvement in interlending. I hope my remarks will provide a context for the many speakers who will address these topics in much more detail than I. Please view my presentation as a high-level introduction to many of the topics being addressed over the course of the conference. The conference planning committee's selection of themes and speakers confirms many of the key trends that I have included. In preparing this talk, I realized how nicely the conference segments complemented the trends I will mention, even though we didn't plan that.

### *What are the Key Trends?*

I've identified ten key trends. They are not listed in any particular order, and the amount of time I spend on each should not be interpreted as the importance I place on each. Time restrictions made me narrow down from a much longer list of trends I monitor regularly.

### *Rising User Expectations*

The first trend, rising user expectations, drives or impacts on many of the other trends. As a result, I have consciously decided to start with it. This is not a new trend as the individuals who use our services – whether we call them users, patrons, customers, or something else – have always had expectations of what their library should provide in terms of interlending services. What we have witnessed over the past decade is that their expectations are increasing faster than our services are improving.

It's almost a cliché to say that users want ILL/DD services to be convenient, fast, free, without restrictions, personalized, and electronic. Most of these are expectations users have had for years, and they will continue to have them well into the future. But, their definition of *convenient* has changed dramatically in the Internet and Web era. Many users now measure *fast* in terms of hours, not days, and certainly not weeks, as was the norm in the late 1970s when I began my career in ILL.

Users have always wanted their ILL to be *free*, that is, they do not want to pay a service fee for a book or journal article the library didn't order. If ILL is a core service comparable to reference or circulation, ILL must be free, these users assert. Many of us have had experience with individuals who want to keep ILL books what feels like forever, or at least for a semester or two. Our users want to take their materials home rather than having to read them in the library, and they want to order as many items at a time as they need – no limitations on numbers of requests they can submit per day, week, or term.

Users want interlending to be *personalized*, that is, to have exceptions to general policy made when they ask. A very practical example of the personalization is where they want materials delivered. If the library's policy to have users come into the library and pick up loaned books, some users will want items to be delivered to their offices or homes. Finally, users now expect the entire process to be electronic – from the ordering of the item to the delivery of the article. Some don't understand why full-length books can't be delivered electronically.

May I see a show of hands of how many of you have had patrons ask the following question (or some variation): Why can't ILL be as fast as Amazon.com?

As one of ARL's New Measures Initiatives, LibQUAL+™ has tracked user expectations with library service for the past three years.<sup>i</sup> The instrument provides a series of statements about library service and then asks users to indicate their minimum and desired expectations as well as their view of the service they receive. When the perceived service is lower than the minimum, there is a serious gap in service. In the 2003 survey, college and university faculty and students were asked their impressions on *timely DD/ILL services*.<sup>ii</sup> The minimum mean was 6.62 days, the desired mean was 8.02 days, and the perceived mean was 7.09 days. In other words, users wanted their ILL materials to come in between 6.6 and 8 days, and the service they received had materials arriving within 7 days, which was an acceptable delay. The user expectations I recited just a moment ago are not unrealistic, and they must be taken seriously. They simply present challenges to managers of ILL departments to provide a service that meets or exceeds their expectations. This is one trend that will never disappear from my list.

#### *Mediated ILL/DD Services*

My second trend, mediated interlending, is another that has been around for decades and will not disappear. You will not be out of a job a decade from now, but the tasks you will be managing will be quite different. Interlending is still growing. Among the ARL university libraries, borrowing for local patrons is increasing at a rate of just over 7% per year, and lending is growing at an annual rate of nearly 4%.<sup>iii</sup> In 2001-02, the 124 ARL member libraries reported 2.9 million filled borrowing transactions and filled 5.4 million ILL requests for other libraries. There are no reliable estimates of total ILL traffic in the U.S., much less internationally, but I've heard guesses ranging between 30 and 40 million transactions in the U.S. alone.

In spite of constantly increasing activity, many ILL units have made significant improvements in internal workflow. All 72 of the libraries participating in the latest ARL ILL study now provide a web form or other electronic means for their users to place ILL requests. All but one of the 72 use some form of management software. I suspect these two examples of workflow improvements are replicated in many of the libraries represented in this room.

One aspect of this trend that I am tracking closely is the movement away from using centralized ILL messaging systems to using ISO ILL Protocol-based systems, such as RLG's ILL Manager, or union list-based systems such as RAPID, developed at Colorado State University. I'm sure Dennis Massie will talk about RLG's decision to shut down the RLIN ILL system, and I'm also sure that OCLC management is watching closely the shift to these new methods of exchanging mediated ILL requests.

### *User-initiated Services*

Although the majority of ILL traffic in the U.S. and Canada is still placed via mediated ILL systems such as OCLC, there is a growing trend of using user-initiated systems. In North America, we don't yet have consensus on what we mean when we use the phrase, *user-initiated ILL*. The latest ARL study defines *user-initiated ILL* as the process by which users search a catalog, identify items, and initiate requests for those materials without the assistance or mediation of library staff. Depending on the software, the patron may also identify, and/or select, and/or send requests directly those potential suppliers. Many characterize *user-initiated ILL* as *remote circulation* or *direct consortial borrowing* as this service shares more in common with circulation than with traditional, mediated ILL.

Many of you are familiar with INNReach and URSA, two successful proprietary products developed by Innovative Interfaces, Inc. and Dynix respectively. The OhioLINK, ORBIS, and MOBIUS consortia, among others, use the INNReach software. URSA is the product used by Borrow Direct, the group of Ivy League libraries in the Northeast. Borrow Direct was previously known as the COPY Project.

In mid-2002 the voting members of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) approved a new standard, the NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol, or NCIP.<sup>iv</sup> The standard defines a set of messages that permit two circulation applications from different vendors to exchange information about items, users, and agencies. I'll say a bit more about NCIP when I talk about technical standards.

### *Increased Access to Electronic Resources*

My fourth trend is increased access to electronic resources. I suspect that there is not a library represented in the room today that does not provide some sort of access to electronic journals, databases, or web resources. Over the past several years, consortia have embraced "the big deal," that is, purchasing all of the content from a publisher because the publisher was making the terms of that package financially attractive.

This summer (well, at least in North American terms), ARL asked its members how they were dealing with the "big deal" now that some were up for renewal. Preliminary analysis suggests that some libraries are beginning to reexamine the effectiveness of the big deal. Nearly 40% of the respondents are planning to cancel or considering canceling a bundled package this year. Three-quarters cited budgetary considerations, and virtually all indicated that they plan to rely on ILL or attempt to license a core set of titles with document delivery for the remaining titles. The results of this survey are contrary to the now commonly held assumption that document delivery will disappear completely because all photocopy requests will be filled by electronic journals

available via the big deals. This is another shred of evidence that ILL or document delivery will continue to grow.

I'll mention only briefly that we are still waiting for the promise of e-books to have a positive impact on ILL. I look forward to hearing what Kari Paulson and Jens Vigen will say about e-books and ILL. I remain cautiously hopeful that the expanded availability of e-books will reduce demand for ILL.

### *Copyright and Licensing*

Closely related to electronic content are the twin worries of copyright and licensing, my fifth trend. I'm sure everyone knows that historically copyright has governed print materials, and more recently licenses have become the preferred contract for electronic journals and other electronic content.

The second plenary session focuses on copyright, so let me express a few worries from an American perspective. We worry that the U.S. copyright law will be made more restrictive, thus more favorable to copyright holders, rather than retaining the current balance between owners and users of copyrighted materials. We watch the discussions at the international level, particularly WIPO and the European Union, and see a growing pressure on the U.S. Congress to adopt copyright legislation that harmonizes with international copyright treaties. And, we worry about the ever-expanding term of copyright protection. Until the recently enacted Sony Bono Term Extension Act, copyright protection on Mickey Mouse would have expired this year, and thus Mickey would have gone into the public domain. The Disney Company now has 20 years more of protection of its famous mouse.

I'll only mention briefly the worries, and growing evidence, that licenses prohibit libraries from using their electronic content to fill ILL requests, either by sending an electronic copy or by printing and sending the print copy via Ariel or even fax. And, then there is the challenge by several commercial copyright holders to the German SUBITO document delivery service that resulted in SUBITO shutting down service to libraries outside Germany, Austria, and Switzerland as of 20 September 2003.<sup>v</sup>

### *Implementation of Portals*

I'm now half way through my list of ten trends, and this, the 6<sup>th</sup>, and the next one are closely related. Many librarians have embraced portals as a more effective way of providing access to library users (and as a not-so subtle way of getting the undergraduate students to use library resources rather than Google). Portals have many different definitions and descriptions. To some a portal is simply an enhanced website or gateway to web resources. To others a portal is a super discovery tool that gathers a range of useful Web and non-Web resources into a one-stop Web page, and permits users to search, discover, and receive content regardless of format, metadata, publisher interface, or the campus authentication method.

The impact of portals on ILL is just beginning to be felt. One of the key features of a portal is the ability to discover print and electronic resources in one search. Some libraries have not cataloged their electronic journals and added them to the online catalogs, but have listed their electronic journals on web pages. As a result, a user searching that library's catalog may not discover that she has access an electronic copy, and thus will place an ILL request for a title listed on the library's Web site. A search in a portal environment will search the catalog and web site and alert the user that print and electronic versions are available, and may even link the user to the full-text article via the Open URL linking. It's much too early to predict the potential drop in ILL/DD requests, but portals offer the hope of reducing the number or at least moderating the increase.

#### *Enhancements to Online Catalogs*

Related to portals, and perhaps simply reflecting a different perspective is the enhanced online catalog. Some librarians feel that the online catalog will become the portal, whereas others feel that the online catalog will become just another resource searched by the portal.<sup>vi</sup> In either case, interesting developments are occurring in online catalogs.

RLG's September 26<sup>th</sup> announcement of RedLightGreen is an example of how a bibliographic utility views the future of a centralized union catalog.<sup>vii</sup> According to RLG, RedLightGreen is "RLG's union catalog reinvented for the Web and today's students." I searched for my name in the catalog, and was presented with a list of my publications, including rankings for relevance and how widely held the title was. Selecting my publication on the 1997 ILL/DD Performance Measurement study, I was presented with a series of related links, including ones to the ARL web site for my article in the *ARL Bimonthly Report*. Is this an online catalog becoming a portal, or a search target for a portal?

OCLC is expanding WorldCat to expand content and link to other online catalogs. OCLC has added links (in the 856 field for the catalogers in the audience) to additional content such as cover art, table of contents, summaries and author notes. OCLC expects that WorldCat will include new forms of information and contributors as well as links to digital objects in other knowledge repositories, such as museums and archives.<sup>viii</sup> OCLC has also raised the possibility of enhancing their ILL service to search the local online catalog for ownership and availability before sending the ILL request to the potential lender.

Not all of the innovations are occurring at the bibliographic utility level. Many libraries are adding book jacket covers, reviews, links to other content and links to Amazon.com as a way of making their online catalogs stay relevant and vibrant for users.

### *Blurring of Collections and Access Activities*

Should the library buy the book or order it on ILL? For most research libraries, this question was simple to answer 15 or 20 years ago: buy it. The title was available, it was affordable, and it probably fit within the library's collection development policies. The answer today is not nearly as easy. Many titles go out of print very quickly, the price of the average monograph has escalated, and collection development policies are increasingly focused on core materials or materials that are directly related to the teaching curriculum. I am pleased that several speakers will be addressing this complex topic as the issue of maintaining comprehensive collections is under increasing pressure as ILL is seen as a quick fix to shrinking collection development policies.

ARL's new Collections and Access Issues Standing Committee is a reflection of the debate within our profession. It is the result of a key recommendation of the Collections and Access Issues Task Force that access is not possible without collections and collections should be accessible.<sup>ix</sup> It is a single example of how the line between distinct activities formerly under the control of bibliographers and of ILL managers are blurring.

### *Technical Standards*

Technical standards should be invisible to most librarians and certainly to library users. Standards provide the infrastructure that permits catalog records to be created, remote catalogs to be searched, and ILL requests to be exchanged. This is a topic that many librarians find boring, but fortunately not to all. I will mention only four standards that have direct relevance to the ILL community.

The first is the ISO ILL Protocol, an international standard that permits two different ILL applications to exchange messages about an ILL transaction. The standard supported the mediated interlending process, and thus excludes the step of how patrons submit requests to their ILL units. The third edition of ILL Protocol is about to be finalized, but the standard is now just gaining widespread implementation and acceptance after more than a decade of limited use. In virtually all of the implementations, the ILL Protocol has been implemented in a more comprehensive ILL application. Peer-to-peer ILL is another characterization of Protocol-based messaging. Dennis Massie's provocative title, *Peer-to-Peer or Bust*, should be an enlightening session on RLG's commitment to this standard and model of ILL service.

Also in the concluding plenary session, Gail Wanner from Dynix will address the issue of the blurring line between circulation and interlibrary loan. The NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol, Z39.83, governs communication between two circulation applications or between a library's circulation and ILL applications. This standard has the ability to turn a mediated ILL transaction into a circulation transaction. In the session on "Improving," I

plan to describe how user-initiated ILL has faster turnaround times, higher fill rates, and lower unit costs. Let me simply mention the key impact that availability of circulation status and truck/delivery systems play on those measures.

The third technical standard is the Open Archives Initiative's Metadata Harvesting Protocol. It is a mechanism for data providers to expose metadata from their repositories or archives. It permits portals to discover content that may have been hidden, and has been mentioned as an alternative to building a physical union catalog.

The Open URL is the fourth standard that I will mention. The OpenURL standardizes the syntax for transmitting a package of metadata to a link resolver. The Open URL addresses the "appropriate copy" problem, that is, it helps a user determine whether the library has a print copy, a full-text copy, whether an ILL or document delivery request can be generated, whether the item is available from a commercial document supplier, or whether another library might own the title.

#### *Increased Globalization*

My 10<sup>th</sup> and final trend, increased globalization, is made possible by the key role of these and other technical standards. We live in a small world - witness the number of different countries represented in this room. The international acceptance and use of Ariel coupled with Internet-accessible online catalogs enable a library in the U.S. to order a copy of an article from Japan or Australia or South Africa as easily (or perhaps more easily) than from another library in the States.

The challenges of international interlending are significant and not easily solvable. They include: how libraries discover holdings and the format of those holdings; how ILL staff determine whether a library will lend internationally; the method of sending and receiving ILL requests in a format that is readable and understandable to both parties; the high cost of physical delivery and lack of universal electronic delivery; and finally, the difficulties with payment and the high costs of exchange currencies.

The IFLA Document Delivery and Interlending Section is addressing each of these issues, and is an excellent forum for raising other issues. Poul Erlandsen is the new chair of the Standing Committee and would welcome questions on its activities.

Several times I've used ARL activities as examples of innovations. Of course, there are many other examples of these innovations, but I will cite the AAU/ARL Global Resources Network and its German and Japan projects as examples of initiatives to improve international document delivery. I will also cite the Library of Congress' assertion that it wants to become the lender

of first resort for materials in its Japan collection. Some of you may not appreciate the significance of that policy change. OCLC's Global Sharing Program is yet another example of an effort to encourage and support global interlending. Finally, Ariel is now so ubiquitous and so international in adoption that the document delivery traffic could be characterized as truly global (well, at least for libraries that don't charge!)

#### *Where Will We Be in 5 Years?*

I hope my walk through the ten trends that I find worth tracking has sparked questions and raised new possibilities. I want to close by speculating on the future of interlending, five years hence.

- We will be using a blend of mediated and user-initiated services, though the proportions for individual ILL units may vary significantly.
- I expect that the percentage of returnables will increase (for borrowing and lending) as electronic journals expand in number and print versions are terminated.
- We will still be working in a mixed copyright and license environment, but I expect (hope?) that the percentage of licenses that permit libraries to fill photocopy requests from non-commercial libraries will increase.
- Global interlending and document delivery may reach five percent of a library's ILL transactions, up from the estimated 1-2 percent of current traffic.
- Turnaround time will be faster, but user expectations will have also increased, so that for many requests, turnaround time will still not be fast enough.
- Bibliographic items will be easier to identify, though users will continue to use a variety of online catalogs, portals, gateways, and perhaps tools that haven't yet been invented.
- Finally, many of us will be submitting proposals to give papers, and making plane reservations for the 11<sup>th</sup> IFLA Interlending and Document Supply Conference to be held in 2009 in ??

Thanks for your attention and I hope that you will enjoy the rest of the conference as much as I expect to.

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<sup>i</sup> For additional information on the project see: <<http://www.libqual.org/>>. The October – December, 2003 issue of *ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research*

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*Library Issues and Actions from ARL, CNI, and SPARC* is a special issue devoted to the New Measures Initiatives. It will be found at:

<<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/2003.html>>.

ii "LibQUAL+™ Spring 2003 Survey Results." Available at:

<<http://www.libqual.org/documents/admin/sp2003results1.html>>.

iii Supply and Demand in ARL Libraries, 1986 - 2002. Available at:

<<http://www.arl.org/stats/arlstat/graphs/2002/2002t3.html>>.

iv A list of approved NISO standards is available at:

<<http://www.NISO.org/standards/index.html>>.

v "Important Information about SDUBITO Delivery to Foreign Countries."

Available at: <<http://www.subito-doc.com/>>.

vi Sarah E. Thomas, "Abundance, Attention, and Access: Of Portals and Catalogs," *ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research Library Issues and Actions from ARL, CNI, and SPARC* (212, October 2000). Available at:

<<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/212/portal.html>>.

vii "RLG Announcements to Members," posted to RLG-Announce by Linda West on September 26, 2003. RedLightGreen available at:

<http://www.redlightgreen.com/>.

viii "Minutes of the May 19-21, 2002 Members Council Meeting."

Available at:

<<http://www.oclc.org/memberscouncil/meetings/2002/may/minutes.htm>>.

ix "Collections and Access for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Scholar: Changing Roles of Research Libraries." Available at:

<<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/225/index.html>>.