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Rethinking Library Resource Sharing: New Models for Collaboration

Brenda Bailey-Hainer
American Theological Library Association, Chicago, IL, USA

Anne Beaubien
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI USA

Beth Posner
CUNY Graduate Center, New York, NY, USA

Evan Simpson
Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA

Abstract

This presentation provides an overview of how resource sharing services are evolving to meet changing user needs for digital and global information. It also reviews some of the tools and standards that resource sharing practitioners are using to improve services, and highlights some of the emerging library partnerships/collaborations that are reshaping the boundaries of library and information resource sharing.

Introduction

Libraries and librarians enjoy an established role in society—to connect people with information. Despite any and all other changes in the information world, or the world at large, that purpose remains a vital and consequential one. However, the challenges in meeting it are now taking on new dimensions. Enormous technological advances are pushing the boundaries of the information landscape and providing information seekers with new ways to find and access information. In addition, economic limitations are challenging librarians to meet the demand for quick access to global and digital information, in addition to maintaining access to print material, as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

Where libraries have traditionally developed services to address a scarcity of information, libraries and library services today are shaped by the deluge of information available to information seekers. Information seekers have the ability to discover more than ever before. At the same time libraries' collection development strategies have shifted from "just in case" to "just in time" making users' access to resources held outside of their home library even more critical. In this era, resource sharing has become a dynamic and increasingly strategic area of service that reflects a constantly changing information landscape and the commitment libraries are making to empower their communities to discover and access information efficiently and effectively.

The Rise of Resource Sharing

Resource sharing services such as interlibrary loan or document delivery have long provided access to information resources beyond what is available to a local community. What is different today is that in our rapidly changing landscape, resource sharing has evolved from a service to request and deliver physical information resources not available locally to one that delivers a variety of resources in multiple formats with workflows connected to acquisitions, collection development, reference and instruction and other library services. It has been transformed from an ancillary or supplementary service to a strategic force both supporting and shaping what resources libraries offer and how they are offered. Its definition has been widened and its goals enhanced, while its mission to connect people and information and its values of reciprocity, responsibility and sharing remain.

The evolution of resource sharing is evident when considering strategy and initiatives in three areas: 1) deployment of dynamic new discovery-to-delivery systems, 2) evolution and development of best practices and new roles for resource sharing practitioners, and 3) new innovative models for collaboration. While this is not meant to to be a comprehensive survey of examples, it does represent a glimpse of just what is possible today.

Work in each of these areas illuminates how libraries are delivering resources and services in bold new ways to meet changing user needs. How libraries offer their communities the ability to discover information, how resource sharing practitioners develop their roles, and how libraries work together to evolve services reveals a transformation in what resource sharing means and what it does in practice.

Discovery = Resource Sharing

Driven by changing user preferences and information seeking behavior in the age of Google, libraries today seek to provide rich and comprehensive search experiences. Major libraries and multi-type library consortia are deploying shared discovery and delivery platforms that bring together catalogs from partner institutions under one search. In Australia and New Zealand, libraries have worked for a decade to ensure ISO-

ILL interoperable systems. Today the Trans Tasman Interlending program enables efficient resource sharing across national borders. Within Australia, Libraries Australia Document Delivery (LADD) provides users nationwide with over 700 library collections to search and request from.[1]

The Boston Library Consortium in the Northeastern United States and the Committee on Institutional Cooperation representing public and private academic libraries in the Midwestern United States, have both forged ahead in providing their communities with shared catalogs to expand discovery and facilitate requesting and delivery. Others are deploying web-scale discovery portals built on massive central indexes. The Orbis Cascade Alliance, a consortium of 37 private and public academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States, has already implemented WorldCat Local and is developing an additional discovery layer built on Ex Libris' Primo that will provide users with a search experience built on a central index of metadata representing millions of articles, books, and other information resources that extend well beyond the print and electronic holdings of member libraries.[2]

As the result of these innovations, information seekers in institution-specific (i.e. academic or public libraries), state, region, and nation-wide communities are empowered to search across what had been silos of information, whether full text article/newspaper databases and online indexes, and/or individual catalogs from various libraries and library types. For many communities, more bibliographic information is available via one search than ever before.

Evidence suggests that as information seekers are empowered to discover more information the volume of both lending and borrowing requests has the potential to increase. Results of the University of Washington's implementation of WorldCat Local in 2007 was early indication of the impact of expanded discovery on interlibrary loan volume: due to a search experience that included local holdings, collections in partner libraries, and beyond, borrowing requests increased by 93 percent in 2007-2008.[3] The University of Delaware also experienced growth in interlibrary loan volume after implementing WorldCat Local with significant increases in borrowing and lending requests between 2007 and 2010.[4]

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[1] D. Hanington, "Libraries Australia Document Delivery: A System for a Variety of Users," Paper presented at *ALIA Access 2010*, Brisbane, Australia, September 1-3, 2010.

[2] Marshall Breeding, "Case Study: The Orbis Cascade Alliance: Strategic Collaboration among Diverse Academic Institutions," in: *Library Technology Reports* 49, no. 1 (2013): 30-31.

[3] Thomas Deardorff and Heidi Nance, "WorldCat Local Implementation: The Impact on Interlibrary Loan," *Interlending & Document Supply* 37, no. 4 (2009): 177-180.

[4] Megan Gaffney, "Interlibrary Loan Requests for Locally Available Materials: WorldCat Local's Impact," *College & Research Libraries* 73, no. 1 (2012): 68-77.

It is clear that the success of expanded discovery relies on resource sharing to ensure access to items found. The investment libraries make in discovery requires significant investment in resource sharing services, systems, and strategies. Libraries, vendors, and the open source community have invested heavily in tools that facilitate requests for items not available locally in print or online in full text that are integrated into search and discovery interfaces. Such tools are embedded in item records, available via openURL gateways, or available using plugins/widgets that connect users from resources discovered on the open web to discovery and resource sharing services at their affiliated library. The LibX toolbar is an example of an open source plugin that supports a direct connection between discovery and immediate delivery by retrieving appropriate accessible copy via a "Magic Button".[5]

There are new challenges in meeting the demands of increasing volume driven by new discovery platforms. In addition to ensuring adequate staffing levels, equipment, and systems there are challenges in fulfilling requests for new and rare formats. How to share ebooks has emerged as a focus for both the resource sharing and collection development communities as publishing models continue to restrict sharing.[6] Special formats such as media and microforms remain difficult to borrow, and as users discover more items from special collections, libraries are pushed to consider ways to provide access. However, solutions to these challenges may be as simple as drawing attention to policies which may have unnecessary restrictions on borrowing particular material types. As the result of a study conducted among CIC libraries about the challenges of high volume interlibrary loan, some libraries began lending AV materials or increased the amount of pages they were willing to photocopy to supply journal articles.[7]

Controlling costs associated with the delivery of physical items remains a priority given sustained if not increasing circulation rates and the investment in the discovery systems that bring print collections together via one search. Many library consortia or state library agencies have long managed and/or funded courier delivery services to help reduce the cost of delivery of materials. In Colorado the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC), which manages the statewide courier, expanded this idea even further. CLiC initiated an agreement that connected the couriers in Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri to form a service called COKAMO which was designed to reduce the cost of out-of-state borrowing. A library participating in the courier in their home state can send and return materials to libraries participating in any of the three state/regional couriers. During the

[5] Annette Bailey and Godmar Back, "Retrieving Known Items with LibX," *Serials Librarian* 53, no. 4 (2008): 125-140; Jason Puckett, "Superpower Your Browser with LibX and Zotero," *College & Research Libraries News* 71, no. 2 (2010): 70-97.
[6] Marshall Breeding, "Observations, Trends, and Ongoing Challenges," *Library Technology Reports* 49, no. 1 (2013): 32-33.
[7] Anne K. Beaubien et al, "Challenges Facing High Volume Interlibrary Loan Operations: Baseline Data and Trends in the CIC Consortium," *College & Research Libraries* 67, no. 1 (2006): 63-84.

first year of service, COKAMO saved libraries an estimated $215,000 in postage for out-of-state borrowing.[8]

Copyright law, intellectual property laws, and license terms can also limit the sharing of information. However, creative solutions can still be developed that are within the law, but allow libraries to provide excellent proactive service. The Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (Alliance) licensed Oxford Scholarship Online content for nine academic libraries and as part of that license was able to negotiate a contract that allows any public library or community college in Colorado or Wyoming to have free access as well.[9]

It is in addressing these types of challenges that resource sharing specialists are grappling with new roles and turning to best practices and new partnerships.

Best Practices

Traditional interlending – the sharing of loans and copies, of print, and now digital, information between libraries – remains essential for library patrons who need information that has not, or cannot be, digitized (generally because of copyright, and other intellectual property laws) and that is not owned by their local library. However, this traditional function is now performed more efficiently and effectively than ever due to new technologies such as electronic transmission and the development and sharing of best practices.

Best practices can take different forms in name and function. "Benchmarks," "guidelines," "standards" and "checklists" are all used to describe the practice of agreeing to common values and protocols for sharing All forms of best practices can help both new and seasoned staff to evaluate their own units and offer the most relevant and useful services to meet their users' needs. Since interlending is not a prominent subject in the curricula of library education programs and many people do not enjoy the benefit of learning from departed predecessors, new ILL staff can use these tools to learn just what their library can and should be doing, as well as how, and more seasoned professionals can stay current with the latest trends in sharing and the protocols that help guide sharing among partner libraries. Such guidelines are generally not radical or controversial, but since not all patron communities have the same needs, some may not be equally applicable to all libraries. They should, nonetheless, challenge all libraries to offer the highest quality of services.

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[8] Valerie Horton et al, "COKAMO: Model for Fast Inexpensive Interstate Delivery," *Collaborative Librarianship* 2, no. 4 (2010): 218-224.

[9] Joan Lamborn and George Machovec, "Ebooks: Finding a Way to Share." Presentation at *44th Annual Colorado Interlibrary Loan Conference*, Estes Park, CO, April 18, 2013.

For instance, interlending specialists today recognize that not all information is available from other library partners. In order to access requested information, they may have to purchase it directly from publishers or booksellers, make direct requests to authors, or search for open access material online. Best practices also include the responsibility that a borrowing library has to the lending library for print material from the time it leaves the lender to the time it returns. Libraries that want to borrow information should also be willing to lend at the lowest cost and with the quickest turnaround time as well as be willing to make their policies as open as possible to facilitate lending to libraries outside of their normal environment. Libraries should use technology whenever possible, and go beyond their local, regional, and even national partners when necessary.

The resource sharing community has actively engaged in developing best practices. Sources of best practices include the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' (IFLA) Guidelines,[10] the UK's Forum for Interlending and Information Delivery's Best Practices Guidelines,[11] the American Library Association's Interlibrary Loan Handbook[12] as well as their RUSA STARS online ILL course,[13] and the IDS Project Workbook.[14]

Another source of best practices is the Rethinking Resource Sharing STAR Checklist which focuses on the Rethinking Resource Sharing Manifesto for making interlending easier and more efficient for library users and partners.[15] In addition to providing a selection of policies/practices for libraries to strive for, data from libraries which have used the checklist reflect interesting trends in how the roles of resource sharing practitioners are changing and adapting to new challenges in the current landscape. The data show it is common to find resource sharing practitioners with knowledge of the sharing permissions for locally held electronic resources (88 percent indicated knowledge) and involvement with license negotiations for new resources (63 percent indicated having input). Nearly half work at libraries that provide and actively promote

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[10] International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, *Guidelines for Best Practice in Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery.* http://www.ifla.org/publications/guidelines-for-best-practice-in-interlibrary-loan-and-document-delivery.

[11] The Forum for Interlending and Information Delivery is an organization for interlending and document supply personnel in the UK. http://www.forumforinterlending.org.uk.

[12] *American Library Association/Reference and User Services Association Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States*. http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/interlibrary.

[13] Interlibrary Loan 101 provides an introduction to best practices and protocols http://www.ala.org/rusa/development/interlibraryloan.

[14] This workbook outlines policies and procedures for participants in the IDS Project. http://idsproject.org/tools/workbooklinks.aspx.

[15] The Rethinking Resource Sharing Initiative is an ad hoc group that advocates for a complete rethink of the way libraries conduct resource sharing in the context of the global internet revolution and all of the developments that have arisen from that. Several documents are available on their website, including the STAR Checklist. http://rethinkingresourcesharing.org/?page_id=23 and their Manifesto http://rethinkingresourcesharing.org/?page_id=27.

tools to connect users from the open web to library services, namely discovery options and interlibrary loan. These data reflect the interconnectivity of discovery via library services and the open web and the importance of and increase in resource sharing services. They point to the challenges posed by license restrictions and emerging formats and the role resource sharing and resource sharing practitioners play in addressing them. Overall it is clear that the roles of resource sharing practitioners have broadened as resource sharing increasingly integrates with other library units and workflows.

Collaborative Models

Interlending and resource sharing are by their nature collaborative enterprises. The closer that libraries and librarians work together, the more they can accomplish on behalf of their communities. There are many examples of collaborative models that improve interlending and many that expand the concept of resource sharing.

Examples of models that improve interlending can be found across the globe. Among Scandinavian libraries, there is no charge for the sharing of returnable material.[16] Scandinavian libraries have also connected their library courier systems for more efficient physical delivery. This means that, for example, a Danish library can send a book to any library in Norway or Sweden for less than one dollar US (which is the same price as within Denmark) even though the distance between a library in southern Denmark and a library in northern Norway is more than 1200 miles.

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) is comprised of large research universities in the Midwestern United States including the "Big Ten" universities plus the University of Chicago. In 2012 the CIC implemented a service called UBorrow, which offers discovery of collections from CIC libraries and the Center for Research Libraries totaling nearly 100 million books. Items are delivered with speed due to the relative proximity of CIC partners, as well as the significant commitments made by each institution to provide comprehensive and timely service. CIC has also created a task force of CIC ILL librarians, collection development officers and an electronic resources officer in order to identify a publisher willing to work with the CIC to develop a new model for ILL for eBooks that will be beneficial to both libraries and publishers.[17]

CIC libraries built UBorrow using Relais D2D (Discovery-to-Delivery), a next-generation software platform for consortial borrowing from Relais International. In the CIC implementation, Relais D2D passes the availability information for requests to each library's local ILL system, ILLiad. The library staff manage all requests via their

[16] Poul Erlandsen, "Global Resource Sharing: Recent Findings from an International ILL Study," Presentation at: *10th Nordic Resource Sharing, Reference and Collection Management Conference,* October 3-5, 2012, Reykjavik, Iceland.

[17] Information on the joint CIC and CRL reciprocal borrowing project is available on the CIC website: http://www.cic.net/projects/library/reciprocal-borrowing/uborrow

respective ILLiad system. Other consortia have adopted Relais D2D, including the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA)[18], a consortium of 33 research libraries in the central and Western United States and the Marina[19] system in the state of Maryland in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, which provides users with the ability to search and request from a network of public libraries. GWLA is experimenting with deeper collaboration as selected members are working together to create a tool that can be used to support interlending ebooks which is called Occam's Reader.[20]

Some of the most innovative and successful collaborations take advantage of technology, human connections, and expertise. The IDS Project consists of a group of 75 libraries in New York state that are committed to ongoing development of innovative tools that benefit the broader resource sharing community. IDS Project libraries have created innovative applications that are improving interlibrary loan workflows and supporting additional library services. Applications include the Gift and Deselection Manager (GDM) to assist with managing gifts and weeding resources. The Getting-It System Toolkit (GIST) connects interlibrary loan with acquisitions workflows. IDS Project libraries created the Article License Information Availability Service database (ALIAS) containing license terms for electronic resources held in the consortium to help practitioners identify titles able to be requested and supplied. In the discovery arena, IDS Search brings together collections from IDS Project libraries under one search, developed utilizing OCLC's WorldCat API. IDS Project libraries have also invested in professional development and training through Regional User Groups, the annual IDS Conference, and a mentor program.[21]

2CUL is a collaboration between two large US academic libraries, Columbia University and Cornell University. They are creating a partnership that aims to broadly integrate resources, collections, services and expertise between the two organizations. This model goes beyond traditional sharing of expertise and materials. It aspires to merge operations of two distinct institutions to reduce costs significantly so that resources can be redirected to meet emerging needs. James Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University, has referred to ambitious projects like these as "radical collaboration."[22]

Successful collaborations have developed that involve not just libraries, but also nonprofit organizations and commercial entities. Ingram has developed partnerships with organizations like OCLC and CISTI to re-envision what "interlibrary loan" means in an ebook environment. A selection of ebooks offered through their MyiLibrary platform

[18] http://www.gwla.org
[19] http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/services/marina/default.aspx?id=56300
[20] http://occamsreader.org/
[21] Information on each IDS Project initiative is available on their website http://idsproject.org.
[22] Information on the 2CUL project is available on their website http://2cul.org/.

has been made available for short-term e-book loan access through OCLC, a variation on a project they undertook earlier with CISTI.[23]

Early shared print repositories focused on reducing the space demanded by rapidly growing print journal collections, particularly as those same publications became available in electronic form. The trend has shifted to examining true needs for printed monographs. Library consortia use data harvested from circulation and holdings records to determine overlap in collections, usage patterns and estimate the true number of copies needed to support library users across the organizations. One such project, the Maine Shared Collection Strategy, has been undertaken by eight of Maine's largest public and academic libraries, which features shared management and archiving of print collections. This collaboration ensures that users have access to materials via resource sharing, but at the same time insures that libraries' financial and physical plant resources are used wisely.[24]

Of the many examples of collaborations that exist, those that can be replicated and expanded offer the most possibility, but any group of libraries and any library of any size can benefit from joining consortia and connecting with other library resource sharing specialists. As seen in Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, and the United States, cooperation on a massive scale to expand discovery and facilitate interlending is opening new library collections to users. Leveraging collective knowledge is critical for various library consortia to continue serving their communities, and the IDS Project and 2CUL represent a significant new direction for what resource sharing can be. Collaborative development projects around key systems and technologies are helping practitioners in IDS Project libraries gain efficiencies and improve the user experience. Shared strategies, expertise, and staff in collection building, metadata creation, and other services allow 2CUL libraries to innovate in organizational design, discover efficiencies, and find new opportunities to serve their research communities.

CONCLUSION

Discovery systems, best practices and new collaborative partnerships are all logical ways to improve services, but they are not inevitable. Indeed, they require concerted time and effort to build and maintain.

It is true that ever easier online discovery and free open access publishing should make the sharing of information increasingly seamless in the near future. However, interlibrary loan services will still be necessary for the delivery of print items still under

[23] Michael Levine-Clark, "Whither ILL? Wither ILL: The Changing Nature of Resource Sharing for E-Books," *Collaborative Librarianship* 3, no. 2 (2011): 71-72; Bronwen Woods and Michael Ireland, "EBook Loans: an E-twist on a Classic Interlending Service," *Interlending & Document Supply* 36, no. 2 (2008): 105-115.
[24] Michael Kelley, "Major Maine Libraries, Public and Academic, Collaborate on Print Archiving Project." *Library Journal* (March 15, 2013). http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/03/managing-libraries/major-maine-libraries-public-and-academic-collaborate-on-print-archiving-project/.

copyright protection that have not yet been, or cannot yet be, digitized. More libraries, meanwhile, may decrease their local print holdings and instead join regional print depositories, where more material can be efficiently managed, stored, preserved, jointly collected, and shared.

With the existence of both print and digital information, librarians must advocate for liberal guidelines and non-restrictive license language so that they can share what they have purchased. Particularly for education and research, this is essential in order to advance the collective good. Librarians also need to plan for preservation of information. New models, such as direct purchasing of individual articles from publisher websites or licensing access to articles does help with access, but this does not ensure either the preservation of information for future use, or for the sharing of information through interlending.

In conclusion, there is much to do, but this is both interesting and important work. Librarians must advocate for creative resource sharing through domestic and international library associations, as well as educate ourselves as to best practices and partner with other libraries. Only by doing all of this can we advance and preserve information access for current as well as future generations of students and scholars, world citizens and lifelong learners.

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