

# **Interlibrary Loan Position Paper: The U.S. Perspective**

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## **1. Review of Achievements since the Hoover Conference**

Interlibrary loan (ILL) and document delivery were addressed by one of the Hoover Conference task forces, "User Access to Materials." Most of the focus of those discussions was on improving domestic ILL, while a limited amount of attention was given to gaining access to Japanese bibliographic information and improving ILL with the National Diet Library. The years since Hoover have seen many changes with significant implications for ILL. The spread of personal computers, online access to library catalogs, retrospective conversion, online access to Japanese periodical indexes and library catalogs, and general improvements in domestic ILL delivery mean that many of the recommendations from Hoover have been achieved independently. Instead, widespread access to Japanese bibliographic data through online catalogs (including the NACSIS webcat) and periodical databases has meant that the focus has turned towards interlibrary loan with Japan and gaining access to information not held in the United States.

The AAU/ARL Japan Journal Access Project, one of the six projects of the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program, has begun focusing its efforts on improving interlibrary loan within North America as well as with libraries in Japan, after an initial effort to increase holdings of sci-tech journals in the United States.

The first document delivery project links Waseda University Library with nearly 20 members of the AAU/ARL Japan Journal Access Project. Using the OCLC ILL system to send requests, participants may request book loans and photocopies. Materials are sent via airmail or Ariel respectively. Payment of any lending fees is accomplished via the OCLC ILL Fee Management (IFM) service. The project was begun in November 1998 and continues.

In February 1999 five U.S. librarians attended a Round Table on the Improvement of Document Delivery Services between Japanese and U.S. Academic Libraries. The Round Table, held in Tokyo on February 8-10, was sponsored by the Association of National University Libraries and the Japanese Coordinating Committee for University Libraries. Participants agreed to establish a document delivery project focusing on copies of journal articles and book chapters. Requests are sent via email and the documents are sent via Ariel or as email attachments. Copyright and payment methods are two key issues to be explored during the nine-month project.

## **2. General Setting**

The following bullets provide summary details on the current ILL/DD environment:

- ILL borrowing in research libraries has increased 8% per year since 1986
- ILL lending in research libraries has increased 4.5% per year since 1986

- Total ILL borrowing has increased 151% from 1986-1998
- Total ILL lending has increased 69% from 1986-1998
- Serial purchases from 1986-1998 decreased 7%
- Monographic purchases from 1986-1998 decreased 25%
- ILL is 2% of circulation activity in research libraries
- International ILL (borrowing or lending) is less than 1% of total ILL
- For research libraries, borrowing is 50% book loans (returnables) and 50% photocopies (non-returnables)
- For research libraries, lending is 33% book loans (returnables) and 67% photocopies (non-returnables)
- Although there is great interest in using commercial document delivery suppliers, research libraries received only 12% of their photocopy requests from document suppliers
- Virtually all U.S. research libraries use the OCLC ILL system to send and receive ILL requests; a much smaller number also use the RLIN ILL system
- Many libraries are interested in implementing user-initiated systems such as OhioLINK or ORBIS, but these generally are being implemented by a library consortium or state
- The international standard for ILL, the ISO ILL Protocol, is just beginning to be implemented in OCLC, RLIN, Docline; a number of the local system vendors are also beginning to implement the standard.
- The cost of an ILL transaction in research libraries (\$18.35 to borrow, \$9.48 to lend) is placing new pressures on libraries to reduce the cost of the service. Staff is two-thirds the cost of borrowing and three-quarters the cost of lending.

### 3. Issues

- Varying copyright laws in Japan and the U.S. may hinder effective electronic document delivery. The U.S. copyright law is silent on the use of Ariel and fax to send or receive articles, and as a result, many U.S. libraries use Ariel and fax to send articles. The U.S. copyright law is less clear on whether it is legal to send an article as an attachment or post on a secure web site, but librarians are taking the position that such transmission is legal as long as the article is not for commercial use. Publishers, however, are asserting that "digital ILL" is illegal and not permitted.
- Challenges of currency conversion exist whenever the borrower and lender are in two different countries and have not established an agreement to waive their lending charges. Most libraries charge a fee to lend a book or supply a copy, some are willing to enter into no-fee reciprocal agreements. OCLC's ILL Fee Management (IFM) has eliminated the cost and difficulty of paying lending fees in another currency. The AAU/ARL German Resources Project has addressed this challenge by setting up a deposit account system at the Association of Research Libraries and having ARL pay Goettingen University for ILL transactions sent by German libraries. However, this is a short-term solution.
- Sending and receiving requests increase the complexity and cost when the borrower and lender are not using the same ILL messaging system. Virtually all research libraries in the U.S. use the OCLC ILL system to send and receive ILL requests, and they use management software such as Clio to track requests internally. Accepting requests via other methods (mail, fax, email) may result in additional staff costs of handling multiple

methods as well as potential delays as some libraries give priority to OCLC requests. This challenge will be solved when all the ILL messaging systems completely implement the ISO ILL Protocol, an international standard for ILL communication. At that point, a U.S. library could use OCLC to send a request to a library in Japan which would receive it via NACSIS or another Protocol-compliant system. Likewise, a U.S. library will be able to receive requests from Japanese libraries via OCLC, even though the requests originated on NACSIS. OCLC and all the other major vendors are in the process of implementing the Protocol.

#### **4. Proposals**

- Expand the number of pilot document delivery projects to include more libraries and more types of materials
- Establish a bi-national task force to come to an understanding of the copyright implications for bi-national ILL/DD
- Develop a method to facilitate the charging and payment of lending fees
- Work with NACSIS on the implementation of the ISO ILL Protocol