



# Interlibrary Lending

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FROM THE POINT of view of the research worker, it would be ideal to have his materials located all in one library. This is obviously impossible. No one library in the world contains more than a small part of the total number of printed books that have been published to date. And printed books comprise only a fraction of the materials which a research library needs to procure and store. Thus the necessity of interlibrary lending for purposes of research can hardly be argued.

The idea of lending books between libraries in the United States was suggested in 1876 by Samuel S. Green. The idea grew slowly in its application, and it was not until 1917 that the American Library Association felt it necessary to issue a Code of Practice for Interlibrary Loans for the guidance of cooperating libraries. This Code was revised in 1940 and again in 1952,<sup>1</sup> by which time the system of lending between libraries had become almost universal. Today, the exchange of materials on loan goes on as a regular part of library business, and its operation is expanding yearly.

Printed books covering this phase of library operations are few. The standard guide for years has been Constance M. Winchell's *Locating Books for Interlibrary Loans*,<sup>2</sup> and J. A. McMillen<sup>3</sup> provides a bibliography up to the year 1927. The texts on college and university library administration, such as those by G. R. Lyle<sup>4</sup> and L. R. Wilson and M. F. Tauber,<sup>5</sup> cover the organization and administration of interlibrary loans in institutions of higher education.

The periodical articles of recent years would seem to indicate that librarians have been most concerned with matters related to cost and procedure. In 1932 C. H. Brown<sup>6</sup> made a good presentation of the problems involved in interlibrary lending, with some concrete recommendations for their solution. Elizabeth Ferguson<sup>7</sup> was concerned with public library problems in this field, but her ideas have general application. The relationship between the use of microfilm and interlibrary loans has been treated by H. H. Fussler.<sup>8</sup>

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Since 1946 there has been renewed concern over the increased volume of interlibrary lending and the solution of some of the problems involved. The difficulties of the large university library are told by R. H. Haynes<sup>9</sup> at Harvard and by Mary L. Lucy<sup>10</sup> at Columbia. Some fresh thoughts and experimentation have come out of the University of Pennsylvania and are described in articles by C. W. David<sup>11</sup> and W. W. Wright.<sup>12</sup>

By 1950 we seem to have an "interlibrary loan crisis" which is described by Margaret D. Uridge.<sup>13</sup> She outlines three suggested areas of investigation: (1) a study of costs, (2) a revision of the Interlibrary Loan Code of 1940, and (3) an investigation of work simplification techniques and routines.

The Association of College and Reference Libraries appointed a Committee on Interlibrary Loans, with William A. Kozumplik as chairman, to study these matters. Interlibrary loan costs had been the subject of many periodical articles in the past, such as those by Alan Holske<sup>14</sup> and K. H. Koopman.<sup>15</sup> It was J. G. Hodgson<sup>16-17</sup> who made the first comprehensive survey of all the costs involved in lending books from one library to another. He found that in 1950 it cost, on the average, a little over a dollar to borrow a title and about half of that to lend one. Lending libraries are not now making a charge for this service. Fussler<sup>18</sup> believes that the time may soon come when borrowing libraries should expect to pay a reasonable fee to the loaning library.

The exchange of material between libraries on a loan basis has been governed in a general way by an Interlibrary Loan Code. Harold G. Russell<sup>19</sup> was chairman of an A.C.R.L. Interlibrary Loan Code Committee which prepared the 1940 Code officially approved by the A.L.A. Council. In 1949 C. H. Melinat<sup>20</sup> made a study of the 1940 Code and recommended certain changes. Soon after, the A.C.R.L. Committee on Interlibrary Loans, working in cooperation with the Interlibrary Loan Sub-Committee of the California Library Association, formulated a revised and enlarged General Interlibrary Loan Code of 1952.<sup>1</sup> This is now the official code of practice for American libraries engaged in interlibrary lending. Individual libraries, however, accept and operate under the code only on a voluntary basis. The American Library Association has neither the desire nor the power to enforce the provisions of the Code, but its official adoption contributes much toward the uniformity of practices among libraries.

The work procedures and practices involved in interlibrary lending have been investigated by K. J. Boyer<sup>21</sup> and again by Ruth Harry and

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Harald Ostvold.<sup>22</sup> Melinat<sup>20</sup> made an extensive survey of practice in 1949. The selection of the libraries to be surveyed was based on the assumption that the libraries most concerned with interlibrary loans and those which controlled the practices involved were the large research libraries. To this group were added representative examples of other types of libraries to broaden the scope of the survey. The selection included 45 library members of the Association of Research Libraries (two Canadian libraries and one research library, which did not lend books, were omitted); 23 university and college libraries which were actively engaged in research (selection based on a total of more than 35 doctorates awarded by the institutions over a seven year period); 21 college libraries selected as representative by Felix E. Hirsch<sup>23</sup> for his study of interlibrary problems of college libraries; and 24 public libraries with holdings of over 500,000 volumes. Of the 113 questionnaires sent out, replies were received from 100 libraries and fell into the following groups: 50 university and special libraries, 30 college libraries, and 20 public libraries.

In borrowing books from others, the majority (62 per cent) of the libraries (unless otherwise noted, the percentages given are for the total sample of 100 libraries) surveyed follow the Interlibrary Loan Code plus their own regulations. Only 20 per cent follow the Interlibrary Loan Code without variation, and 16 per cent use only their own set of regulations. The university and college groups follow the same pattern as the total sample, but the public libraries tend to use their own set of regulations more frequently (45 per cent) and the Code less frequently (10 per cent). The same general pattern is followed by all libraries in lending books to others. The only difference is a slightly greater reliance upon their own regulations (19 per cent) with a corresponding reduction in the adherence to the Code without variation (15 per cent).

Most libraries have definite rules as to who should be allowed to take advantage of the interlibrary loan service. Almost three-quarters of the surveyed libraries indicate that they both borrow and lend books for the use of faculty members (78 per cent borrow; 74 per cent lend), Ph.D. candidates (65 per cent borrow; 72 per cent lend), and master's candidates (70 per cent borrow; 72 per cent lend). However, less than half report that they borrow (40 per cent) and lend (38 per cent) for undergraduates. Almost half (46 per cent) of the libraries borrow for any patron with a serious research purpose and almost three-quarters (72 per cent) lend to this group. Only one-quarter (26 per cent) borrow for any serious reader or student, while

half (50 per cent) will lend to this group. Less than one-quarter (21 per cent) borrow for the use of commercial firms, but over two-thirds (69 per cent) lend to them. Only rarely will libraries borrow (2 per cent) or lend (9 per cent) for the use of a group of students. It is noted that libraries generally place greater restrictions upon their borrowing than on their lending. It should also be pointed out that both the borrowing and lending policies become more liberal as one progresses from the university to the college to the public library group.

Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of the libraries provide photostats, practically half (49 per cent) are able to supply microfilm reproduction, and only slightly over one-quarter (28 per cent) have no photographic facilities. University libraries are most likely to offer these services, next in order come the public libraries, and the college group has the least number of facilities. Libraries report that their provision of photographic services has not reduced the number of books sent out on loan. Only a few (15 per cent) replied that the services have resulted in a material reduction in the number of periodicals sent out. The reason why the general provision of photographic service has not resulted in a considerable reduction in material sent out on loan is clear upon examination of the conditions under which photographic reproductions are requested by borrowing libraries in lieu of the actual publications. Over three-quarters (77 per cent) of the libraries order reproductions when the actual material cannot be borrowed, slightly fewer (72 per cent) order when the patron wants a reproduction, and over half (54 per cent) are interested in reproduction when they wish to keep the material for their permanent use. Only one library indicates that it requests reproductions in all cases where the lending library offers the service; 10 per cent of the libraries order reproductions in very few or no cases; and 7 per cent have no microfilm reader and thus never order microfilm.

Every library restricts its borrowing and lending to certain types of materials. Libraries usually have fewer restrictions on the types of materials they will lend than on the types they will attempt to borrow. Libraries lend oftener than they borrow: books in print, individual volumes from sets, government documents, material of unusual size, and unbound newspapers. They tend to attempt to borrow oftener than lend: manuscript theses, unbound periodicals, valuable books, rare periodicals, rare books, reference books, and rare newspapers. As to the characteristic borrowing and lending policies of the three groups studied, the university libraries generally have the fewest re-

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strictions, next come the college libraries, and the public libraries have the most restrictions. In order to protect the authors of uncopyrighted manuscript theses, many libraries place controls on the lending of this type of material. Devices used include: providing a statement of the limitations of using uncopyrighted material (14 per cent), requiring user of thesis to sign a statement of use (13 per cent), and getting the written consent of the author before lending thesis (5 per cent). Almost half (44 per cent) of the libraries lend only duplicate copies of theses, and about one-third (34 per cent) have no special restrictions. The control devices are more generally used by university libraries than by college or public libraries.

Most libraries (87 per cent) indicate that they attempt to verify and complete all citations before sending out requests. As to the per cent they are able to verify, the majority report that it is between 90 and 95 per cent of the total. When unable to verify citations, only slightly over half (57 per cent) note that fact by, "Not verified." About two-fifths (41 per cent) of the libraries are satisfied that the citations as they come to them from others are verified and complete. Only 10 per cent report that citations generally indicate "Not verified" when that is the case. Almost half (47 per cent) of the libraries are not satisfied with the references sent to them. Slightly less than half (45 per cent) report that requests do not usually indicate "Not verified" even when that is the case. Almost one-third (31 per cent) indicate that there is general uncertainty as to whether citations have been verified or not. In general, university libraries seem to make a greater effort to verify their citations than do college and public libraries. University libraries also report the greatest dissatisfaction with the references as they come to them from others.

Although the borrowing library assumes all transportation costs connected with interlibrary loans, it often seeks reimbursement from its patrons for these charges. In some cases, fees are charged to cover the cost of the service rendered. Almost half of the libraries pay all costs of borrowing for faculty members (45 per cent) and others (40 per cent). Transportation costs both ways are charged by one-quarter (24 per cent) of the libraries to faculty members and by one-half (49 per cent) to others. A few libraries charge the cost of transportation one way to faculty members (5 per cent) and to others (4 per cent). The cost of photographic reproduction is charged to faculty members by over one-third (39 per cent) of the libraries and to others by almost one-half (44 per cent). A few libraries charge a service fee to faculty members (5 per cent) and to others (8 per cent). This fee

ranges from five cents to one dollar. More public libraries charge costs back to the patron than do college and university libraries. As to the reasons why libraries charge costs to the user, almost one-third (30 per cent) use the practice because the library budget would not cover the costs. A few (5 per cent) use the charges as a method of restricting the loans requested. Almost one-quarter (22 per cent) charge for a combination of the above two reasons. Public libraries seem to be more interested in charging to get their own costs reimbursed, while college and university libraries are more interested in a device to restrict the number of loans requested to genuine needs.

The major problems of borrowing libraries are reported to be the difficulty of finding out what library might have the material wanted (46 per cent), difficulty of getting patrons to observe due dates and other rules (21 per cent), amount of time and money spent on this service not being in proportion to the results obtained (17 per cent), reluctance of libraries to lend certain types of materials (12 per cent), inability to verify references (6 per cent), volume of borrowing increasing too fast (4 per cent), slow service on loans (2 per cent), detailed work of keeping records (2 per cent). Only a few borrowing libraries (17 per cent) indicated that they had no serious problems.

The major problems of lending libraries are reported to be unverified citations (55 per cent), unreasonable amounts of material requested by some libraries (29 per cent), unreasonable kinds of material requested by some libraries (16 per cent), heavy drain of this type of service upon the library budget (15 per cent), lack of information as to the purpose for which material is being requested (4 per cent), and reluctance of libraries to accept photographic reproductions instead of the material itself (2 per cent). Only one-quarter of the lending libraries (25 per cent) indicated that they had no serious problems. The university libraries reported more problems than did the college and public libraries.

It has been obvious for some time that the interlibrary loan routine followed in libraries is full of details, is time-consuming, and is expensive. The complexity of the routine can and should be questioned. The A.C.R.L. Committee on Interlibrary Loans, starting from a form used by the University of California, developed a multiple carbon interlibrary loan request form<sup>24,25</sup> which can result in about 50 per cent savings in clerical costs over older methods. These forms are now used by many libraries and may be purchased from library supply houses.

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One of the most recent mechanical devices used to facilitate interlibrary lending is the teletype. RACMIL, the coined word for teletype communication between the Racine and Milwaukee public libraries,<sup>26</sup> was started in 1950. In 1951 the libraries of the Midwest Inter-Library Center<sup>27</sup> joined the TWX teletype system, making it possible for them to call the Center and each other, as well as any other of the 29,000 teletype subscribers in the country, including the Library of Congress.

An interlibrary network of facsimile communication has recently been described by Scott Adams.<sup>28</sup> While still in the developmental stage, this device offers great possibilities for quick transmission of exact, durable, and cheap copies of material from one library to another.

Mechanical devices such as Ultrafax<sup>29</sup> (which is said to be able to transmit one million words per minute) and closed circuit television transmission offer unlimited possibilities for library application, but appear to be too expensive for extensive use in the near future. But the day will come when the delivery of a document from another library at some distance will take no more time than is now taken in getting a book from the stacks to the delivery desk.

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