The Challenge of Delivering an Effective Interlending Service

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Business as Usual?

- Review the current ILL environment
- Plenty of questions
  - What or whom are the internal and external influences?
  - The challenges and the opportunities
  - What is stopping us delivering on our services?
  - What are the actions we could be taking?
- ...hopefully suggest some answers too!
The Darkness and the Light

- Difficult times for libraries as well as ILL services
- Global and local financial budgetary issues
- Increasing patron demands for instant access
- Increasing electronic resource adding complexity
- Decrease in patron requests across the country
- BL service levels during refurbishment
Statistical Probabilities

• Poll of the interlending community
  - Not rigorous but substantive
  - Take the temperature of the community

• Views sought on current and future trends
  - What are requesting and lending levels?
  - How can we meet patron demands?
  - Are there opportunities as well as challenges?
Employment Sector of Responses

- Academic: 73%
- Public Library: 18%
- Governmental: 5%
- NHS: 2%
- Private: 2%
Patron Request Levels

A significant increase (>+20%)
A moderate increase (+5-20%)
A moderate decrease (-5-20% on previous years)
A significant decrease (> -20% on previous years)
Little to no significant change

Source: ILL Trends Survey (2011)
Interlending Requests Levels (non-BL)

Source: ILL Trends Survey (2011)
Vox Pops

- “With the general reduction in budgets across all sectors I see ILL departments becoming more marginalised. The service is already, in Public libraries, considered the poor relation”
- “Significant lost expertise following redundancies and early retirement in the public sector.”
By Inferno’s Light

- Reducing interlending services and staff
  - Perceived as a soft target for “savings”?
  - Loss of key staff expertise overlooked
  - Loss of unique revenue recovery/generation

- Budgets reduction means acquisitions decrease
  - But this increases the need for interlending

- Introducing or raising patron charges for ILL
  - Increases cost recovery but harms service image
  - Unis charge much more than Public libraries
Vox Pops

• “The asbestos problem at BL is having the effect of causing a marked increase in outgoing loans and article supply.”

• “Changes in the British Library procedures and the introduction of the next pricing model could make a significant impact on interlending in the next few years.”
Trials and Tribble-ations

- Knock on from BL asbestos work
  - Increased time for supply reducing service efficacy
  - Helps reinforce key organisational role of interlending

- British Library not immune to budget cuts
  - Strategic aims to do “more with less”
  - Cuts in acquisitions budgets
  - Seeking to increase revenue streams elsewhere

- New ILL Management (BLDSS)
  - Aiding supply or adding a workflow complexity?
Vox Pops

• “Might be forced to investigate or utilise alternative methods of document delivery, eg: pay-to-view.”

• “At least one supplier allows you to buy credits and you can make these available to users to buy pay-to-view access - this being cheaper than subscribing to some expensive packages or titles.”
Rules of Acquisition

- Competition from Publishers and other Suppliers
  - Direct supply and cheaper than BL?
  - Should we be more canny consumers?
  - Is loaning within consortia more cost effective?
- Offsetting a portion of service costs
  - University of Edinburgh cost neutral for ILL
- Highlight rare or unusual collections
  - Local studies material and genealogical resources especially valuable
  - Interlending *should* be attractive for library services
  - But do senior managers see it in these terms?
Vox Pops

• “Because of the strict DRM rules on most of the documents, patrons are unable to work with them as electronic docs”

• Someone has carefully gone through all of our e-journal licences...a surprising number of licences do permit supply [to other libraries]. “
Broken Link

- DRM - one of the biggest pains for end users
  - Software woes and time limits use for patrons
  - FileOpen an improvement for electronic documents
  - eReader and mDevices want to access documents

- Increasing eBook and journal acquisition
  - Digital objects not readily loanable
  - Confusion over licenses and rights
  - Use of ERM or local databases but nothing central

- Frustration over lack of supply from interlenders
  - Encouragement to check licenses and loan
Vox Pops

“Overhauling copyright laws for the new digital world is desperately needed to aid ILLs. As is better electronic delivery, sans DRM.”
Inter Arma Enim Silent Leges

- Galloping technology and lumbering legislation
- Copyright rules are being reviewed
  - But aim is to help business grow
  - Enhancement of interlending not a priority
  - Lobbying role for professional organisations?
- Digital signatures for document supply
  - Policy and technology challenges
  - Major boost to end users satisfaction
Vox Pops

- “Institutional repositories and the BL's Ethos service provide alternative, often free, access to PhD theses and journal articles. We make use of these where possible to supply our requesters.”
Second Sight

- EThOS a curate’s egg of a service (?)
  - Increasing theses availability but reducing ILL work
  - Future sustainability and evolution
  - Whither Oxbridge?

- Open access repositories and journals
  - Locating items for free supply to a reader benefit
  - Speed and ease of access advantage
  - Are these used by patrons or interlenders for supply?
  - Patron concerns over content versions
  - A competitor or complimentary service?
Vox Pops

• “ILL is the only area within the library world where I feel there is a great camaraderie as we have a national and international willingness to help and share resources with our colleagues and are always delighted to assist.”
Far Beyond the Stars

- Role in support and exchange of best practice
  - Outside of “public” or “educational” silos
  - What others do can impact and influence us
- Lobbying & advocacy to senior decision makers
  - An external voice can be a powerful persuader
  - Conarls, FIL, BL etc can all provide input
- The power of the IFLA scheme to supply
  - Global reach and remind of ILL services
  - Local collaborations agreements to reduce costs
- Provision of benchmarks and standards
  - Your organisation must have these services because...
In the Pale Moonlight

- There are major challenges to overcome
  - Embrace challenges as an opportunities to evolve
  - Doing nothing or more of the same not a viable option
- Must be honest about out limitations
  - Revisiting tired/redundant workflows or procedures
  - If it isn’t essential why are you still doing it?
- Able to demonstrate ROI/VFM ILL offers
  - We deliver what your local collections can’t afford
  - Facts and figures to prove the value of interlending
- Interlending community is a major resource
  - Training and experience sharing is crucial
  - Reduce costs through collaboration
A Time to Stand?

- “[There is] pressure to provide evidence to support work practices so there are great opportunities for the library to show that we can get just about anything.”

- “Surrender is not an option”
  - Benjamin Lafayette Sisko

Image source: http://en.memory-alpha.org
For the Uniform

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THE AWARDS

2008/9
UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

2009/10
OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS