

Interlibrary loan and document delivery in the larger academic library

Lee Andrew Hilyer

Binghamton: Haworth Information Press, 2002, 130p.

ISBN 0 7890 1950 7 (hb); US\$39.95 (Hb)

ISBN 0 7890 1951 5 (sb); US\$24.95 (Sb)

An Interlibrary Loan Department has the potential of turning a library into a very large one indeed – provided it runs efficiently. In constructing the best practice for any Interlibrary Loan (ILL) department, it is imperative that those responsible for laying down and implementing the policy in terms of which it is run, should be aware of the possible solutions that exist in ILL departments. A comparative approach, quite simply, saves one from re-inventing the wheel and ensures that the latest developments e.g. regarding electronic requesting elsewhere can immediately be implemented in one's own environment. Lee Hilyer is enormously experienced in ILL operations and he shares his expertise in this book, which he offers as “a desk reference/practical handbook for library staff new to Interlibrary Loans”, although he adds “veteran users may also benefit from some of the suggestions and examples provided” (Preface: xv).

The author has presented a book that has a clear, logical structure and which can be used in different ways.

The first four chapters of the book give an overview of what ILL is all about. In these chapters the author not only provides formal definitions and descriptions, but also sets out – in two short and very accessible chapters (3 and 4) - what a typical day in an ILL department is like. Chapter 5 provides an invaluable sketch of ILL operations from the perspective of the patron. Chapters 6–10 are detailed “how to” chapters. Here the author introduces the reader, with the aid of a host of examples, to the policies and procedures necessary to sustain a properly functioning ILL department. Chapter 6 sets out both the necessity for having a borrowing policy for patrons and the elements that it might conceivably contain. Chapter 7, again, describes the general policies and codes in the USA that govern libraries more generally. This chapter might not be the one most relevant to South African librarians, but, on the other hand, it is certainly not completely irrelevant, since it is necessary to know which policy guidelines inform the practices of the libraries that South African librarians come up against when dealing with libraries in the USA. Chapter 8 contains a concise and clear discussion of copyright law in the USA. South African copyright law is of course not the same as that of the USA, but the two systems have much in common. Any librarian will benefit from having an idea of the US copyright laws, while a perusal of this chapter also drives home certain basic principles surrounding copyright issues that have universal significance. Chapters 9 and 10 describe possible procedures and workflow regarding borrowing and lending respectively. Chapter 11 deals with the crucial question of evaluating the effectiveness of one's work. This is followed by a host of really useful appendices: Appendix A is entitled “Assorted Tips and Tricks”, while Appendices E and F provide examples of both borrowing and lending workflows, which any manager of an ILL department could profitably use as templates when he or she draws up (or perhaps refines) a blueprint for the operation of their own ILL department.

Who should read this book? Anyone starting out in an ILL Department would immediately be orientated to the world of information-sharing by reading the first four chapters, and experienced librarians would be stimulated to reflect on the nature of their tasks and their approach to ILL generally. The rest of the book is a superb desk manual. Of course, certain sections would not be relevant or even helpful in one's own library, but all working in the field of ILL would benefit from reading this exposition of how some other libraries go about the specific aspects of the very demanding process required for an effective sharing of resources. No academic library should be without this book.

Introduction to serials work for library technicians

Scott Millard

New York: Haworth Information Press, 2004. 143p

ISBN 0 7890 2155 2 (pbk). US\$24.95

The twelve chapters of this indexed volume cover the typical life cycle of a serial, touching on most issues that people who work with serials in libraries need to know. After an *Introduction to Serials Work*, the chapters cover acquisitions, ordering, receipt and check-in, cataloguing, processing and shelving, claims, binding, renewals, cessations, automation, and a look at new technology. Each chapter begins with an *Objective* that serves as a good summary of the aim of the chapter. The volume concludes with a useful glossary of terms that were used in the work and a bibliography.

Having worked in the serials field for several years Scott Millard writes this book from personal experience and gives it a very practical focus. As the author mentions in his introductory chapter, the size of the library will dictate what tasks are assigned to a library technician. In a smaller library the technician might handle all the tasks associated with serials, whereas in a bigger library the technician might be responsible only for the check-in of serials. This monograph successfully introduces the reader to serials related tasks from the simple to the more complicated. Even those at a higher level who work with serials are sure to find some words of wisdom in this book.

Scott Millard successfully covers both the manual and the automated serials environment. He describes the Kardex system and various types of cards used to reflect varying frequencies for manual check-in of serial issues. Illustrations of the various frequency cards are included. One of the topics that Mr Millard discusses in automated systems is chronology and enumeration. These are two crucial concepts for setting prediction patterns that form the foundation for the checking-in and automated claiming functions available in an automated library system.

The chapter on cataloguing is very detailed, with close attention paid to the rules of chapter 12 of the AACR2 that deals with the cataloguing of serials.

Wonderfully practical tips are given. For example, the author suggests that when using the type of shelving commonly used to display current issues, where only the most recent issue is on view with previous issues underneath, a notice will need to be displayed informing library users to "Lift the shelf for earlier issues."

However, I was disappointed at the minimal mention given to online serials. Although in many respects they can be treated exactly as their print counterparts, there are some additional issues that need to be considered. For example, although the book contains a fairly detailed section about the cataloguing of electronic serials, there is no mention about the fact that online access is governed by the terms and conditions of a license that has to be signed.

I was also a bit perturbed about the repeated statement that "some library personnel take the easy way out when dealing with supplements: they simply discard them." Given that supplements are often difficult to handle, it would have been more beneficial to describe ways to evaluate the importance of each supplement to the library collection.

On the whole, this is an excellent work to teach library workers about the basics of serials, especially in the print environment. However, its value is somewhat diminished by its lesser impact for the world of electronic serials.

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