

Neither a borrower nor a lender be...

Selective collection development through Interlibrary Loan

I was granted a three-month study leave from July to September, 2017.

Ideas for my project emerged from conversations I had with interlibrary loan staff about buying books instead of borrowing them. At the time, the Canadian dollar was losing strength against the U.S. dollar and the costs of borrowing (particularly through OCLC) were increasing. A bit of research revealed several U.S. libraries who discovered that borrowing materials was actually costing them more than buying the book, once the costs of borrowing were tallied – shipping, exchange rates, OCLC charges and staff time.

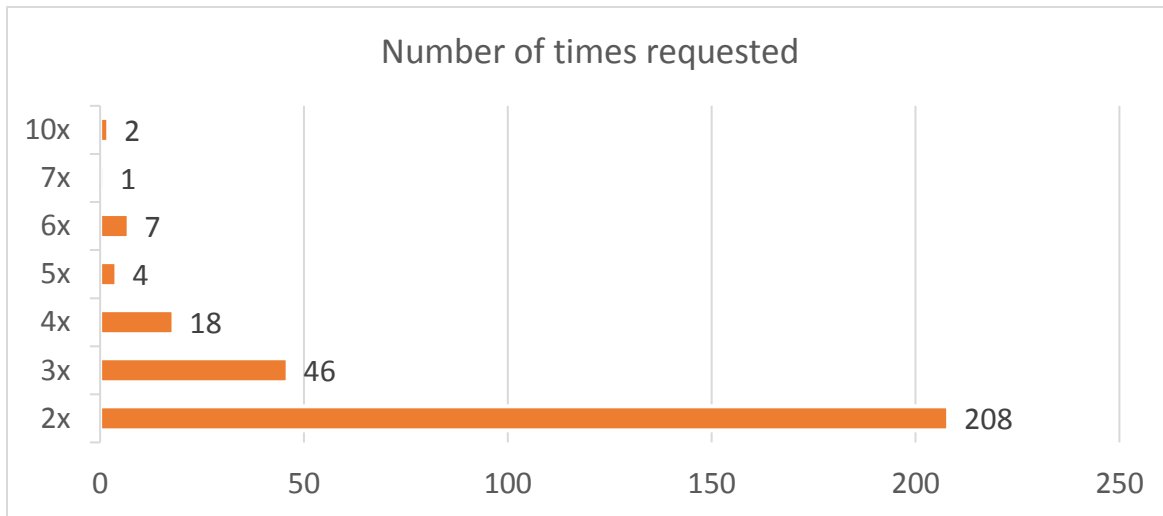
I started to wonder if the same might be true for our library. Buying the item for the library (given that it was being requested and we didn't have it) might save the library money as well as fill small gaps in our collection. I was curious to know how many of our requests were ordered through OCLC and how many we ordered in Canada. I also wanted to know if there was a way to use interlibrary loan requests as a collection-building tool. In attempting to address these questions, I divided my project into two distinct parts:

1. A look back: assess interlibrary loan requests for books from faculty, staff and graduate students over a two-year period to calculate costs associated with borrowing
2. A look forward: add a 'request for purchase' link to the existing interlibrary loan request for books form in an effort to see if a patron-driven approach might work as a collection development tool

Part One – Books requested multiple times (2015-2016)

I worked with a spreadsheet of approximately 300 titles of books requested through interlibrary loan two (2) or more times between 2015 and 2016. I checked requests in Relais -- our interlibrary loan software -- to see whether we ordered the book within Canada or through OCLC. I annotated the spreadsheet to include publication year, call number, whether the title was in GOBI, and if we were slipped for the title on a particular fund. I also added notes to indicate number of volumes and subject headings. I included the cost (US funds) for the paper edition, and if no paper the cloth edition. Several titles did not show up in GOBI at all, or were in GOBI but out of print. Table 1 shows the frequency of requests.

Table 1



The majority of titles in the spreadsheet came from Canadian libraries. Our costs to order these books include Canada Post shipping charges and staff time. Most of the literature on interlibrary loan suggests one request costs about \$30.00. Approximately 55 titles were ordered through OCLC which adds an additional \$30.00 - \$40.00 US cost plus shipping.

As noted in Table 2, staff requests were by far the highest. Staff include Infoline requests, work study students, graduate students as TAs and RAs, and staff employed in departments across campus. Undergraduate requests appear to outnumber graduate student requests, but this may be false given the *staff* designation taking precedence over student status in Voyager and Relais.

Table 2

Requestors
by patron status

- Faculty (F) 36
- Staff (S)** 177
- Grad (G) 33
- Undergrad (UG) 47

- Most books were requested by the same status of patron - eg 4 requests by F
- In a few cases, the count was split -
 - eg 2 requests: 1 by F, 1 by UG
- I did not collect patron information so it's not clear if the same patron ordered the same title multiple times

▪ **includes requests from Infoline and may also include (F) and (G) requests



Requested books came from all LC classes. I expanded D to show finer classification along with the number of titles requested.

Table 3

Requested titles by class

▪ A	1	G	15	N	16
▪ B	28	H	30	P	34
▪ C	7	J	3	Q	20
▪ D	30*	K	9	R	5
▪ E	5	L	4	T	13
▪ F	2	M	14	U	1
				Z	2

*D 8 / DA 7 / DB 1 / DD 2 / DF 1 / DG 2 / DK 2 / DP 1 / DS 6

Findings

Canadian requests are less expensive for the library thanks to several consortial interlibrary loan agreements. We pay for shipping but we are not paying borrowing costs. With OCLC requests however, we are charged OCLC fees, plus shipping and the cost of exchange.

Costs

- Average cost for ILL orders is ~\$30.00 according to most literature which includes staff time, shipping, and costs of borrowing.
 - In Canada – lower costs thanks to consortial agreements
 - Majority of multiply-requested items ordered within Canada (n=245)
- Borrowing outside Canada = higher costs
 - OCLC borrowing \$30.00 - \$40.00 USD / item
 - Shipping costs
 - ~55 books ordered through OCLC

In most cases, books ordered multiple times are probably better purchased. For example, *Lithics after the Stone Age* / Steve Rosen cost \$32.95 in GOBI. It was ordered six (6) times. Even with exchange factored in, the cost to buy this title (and we did) was cheaper than repeated shipping costs.

Other examples of multiply-requested titles:

1. *Ostarbeiter mail in World War II: Documents and correspondence* was ordered twice. Both times we order the book through OCLC, so we paid approximately \$40.00 US per request plus shipping. The cost of the book is \$25.00 US. Borrow > buy
2. *Chert availability and prehistoric exploitation in the Near East* / Chris Delage was ordered 10 times. Each time we ordered the book from Canadian libraries, however, the number of requests for the same title suggests a gap in the collection. Buy > borrow
3. *Pochta* / S. Marshak was ordered six (6) times. We used OCLC at least twice to get this book for a faculty member. The book was published early (1934) and cost \$950.00. Borrow > buy
4. *7 Steps to a comprehensive literature review* / Anthony Onwuenbgizie was ordered four (4) times. Twice we ordered through OCLC and the cost in GOBI is \$38.00. Buy > borrow

It may be worthwhile running reports for multiply-requested items. We have procedures from 2012 about this practice. The reports were sent to Acquisitions staff who could order any book requested three (3) or more times as funds permitted. Any funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year could be considered for the remaining multiply-requested titles. A copy of the 2012 document about this procedure appears later in this report.

Part Two – Patron-driven requests

UVic Libraries has a robust Interlibrary Loan department, staffed by competent and professional people who have, quite rightly, earned a reputation for being detail-oriented, thorough, and quick to deliver. Hence, we are a net lender in the world of interlibrary loan: we lend more than we borrow which speaks well of our collection.

The collection is built with our approval plan profile and the expertise of selector librarians who consider their own rich subject knowledge, faculty, staff and student requests, and curricular needs. In spite of our best efforts though, there remain gaps in the collection and often these are best identified by interlibrary loan borrowing requests. Part 2 of my study looked at those requests.

In December 2016, we added a link to the book request form so patrons could ask the library to buy the book.

List Open Requests	List All Requests	Query Requests	Request Book	Request Article	Edit Profile
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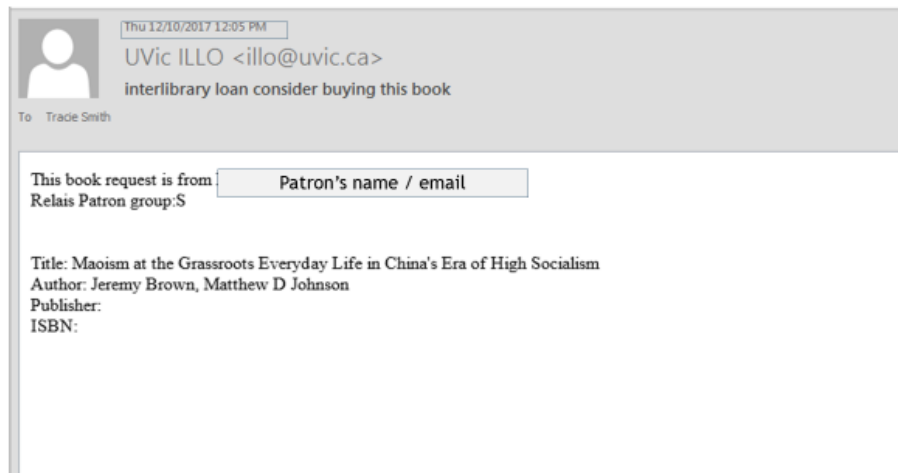
Book Request

[If you think the library should consider owning this book click here.](#)

Note: Enter as much information as possible and click Submit

** indicates required fields.*

Clicking the link generated an email message that came to me. I marked up these requests, sorted them by status (faculty, staff, grad, undergrad) and decided to consider requests from faculty, staff or graduate students only. Undergraduate student requests could be sent along to selectors for their consideration.



I checked titles against our catalogue and then in GOBI. I ignored titles we had except for a few marked *lost*, for which I ordered replacement copies. For books not in the catalogue, I searched GOBI and kept notes about price, call number, year, and whether or not the title had been slipped for a fund.

I sent titles not in GOBI to Acquisitions for prices and added those to the request. After completing all mark-up, I added titles to monthly folders within GOBI for possible purchase.

Example of marked up request

staff

Tracie Smith

From: UVic ILLO <illo@uvic.ca>
Sent: March-14-17 2:04 PM
To: Tracie Smith
Subject: interlibrary loan consider buying this book

This book request is from [REDACTED]
Relais Patron group:S

Title: From The Ruins of Empire : *The revolt against the west and the remaking of Asia*
Author: Pankaj Mishra
Publisher:
ISBN:

*in GOBI
slipped for HIST1
8/15/2012
2013 pb ed = \$19.00
added to ILL folder
mar 15/17
not handled on AP -
recent reprint*

1

From December 2016 to October 2017, the link on the book request form resulted in close to 200 requests. Analysis of these requests shows:

- most were from academic publishers
- about a dozen were in the library - eBooks, reference books, or in the stacks – or we had ordered them or they showed up as *Lost*
- the majority were requested by staff, faculty or grad students
- publication dates ranged from the early 90s to the present
- subject matter was scattered across all disciplines

Limitations

Two years of spreadsheet data is hardly a large enough sample size to make any findings particularly relevant; and, the spreadsheet of titles requested two (2) times or more provides some misleading data thanks to the vagaries of Relais. Revisions to requests, multiple requests in error by the patron, or

requests subsequently cancelled, all add to the total request number, so a title seemingly requested five (5) times, may have been ordered twice only. It's almost impossible to pull completely accurate data from Relais so that has to be considered in the overall evaluation of this study.

Basing decisions on shipping cost alone is ridiculous. However, in the event of a multiply-ordered item that isn't available in Canadian libraries at the time of ordering, shipping costs do play a larger role. Materials in emerging disciplines and cross-disciplinary research often have to be borrowed from libraries outside North America, increasing shipping costs dramatically.

Patron-driven requests provide more concrete information, however, these requests need to be carefully evaluated using the same collections standards we employ with other materials we buy for the library.

Recommendations

1. Review and revise the procedure titled *Ordering Titles that have been requested multiple times via Interlibrary Loan*, dated Feb 27, 2012:

In the past the ILL request slips were sorted and sent to subject librarians for selection purposes. The process was inconsistent and time consuming for ILL staff and selectors.

From the library literature it has been reported that each ILL request costs the institution about \$30. Therefore it may be more cost effective to actually just purchase a title that has been requested 3, 4, or more times.

ILL has produced a report found at [http://cabra.comp.uvic.ca/DotNetILL/Web/Circulation .aspx](http://cabra.comp.uvic.ca/DotNetILL/Web/Circulation.aspx) which lists by title the items requested multiple times. The report is called 'Bib Titles Requested Repetitively' and is found under the heading ILL Analysis Reports.

Procedure: Acquisitions staff will go through the report. The titles should be searched in the UVic Libraries catalogue to ensure UVic has not already purchased the title. Always check the item status, if the title is found in the catalogue. The record may be suppressed as the title may be missing and has not been replaced.

The report is sorted by Request count, descending. As funds permit, titles requested 3 or more times should be ordered. Judgment may be required for titles requested twice. As of March 2012, Acquisitions staff will take on this task each year at the end of the fiscal year to use up unspent funds.

2. Retain the link on the book request form and re-direct the email to Suggest-a-Book*

From December 2016 to October 2017, only four percent of the over 5,000 requests for books originated from the link on the interlibrary loan form. Re-directing that email to Suggest-a-Book seemed logical as the existing workflow would be able to accommodate the extra requests. Also, those requests are sent to Selector Librarians, and this could expedite review and possible purchase of these titles.

*The email was re-routed as of November 1, 2017

3. Selectors, the Interlibrary Loan Manager and Acquisitions staff establish a workflow to accommodate interlibrary loan 'patron-driven' requests for purchase.

To date, I created shared folders within GOBI for requests from faculty, staff and graduate students. Acquisitions bought some of these titles with funds assigned to ILLO1, however, this is not ongoing funding. This process was also only meant to be temporary during the course of my leave.

In future, developing and refining an efficient workflow to evaluate and order titles requested through the 'patron-driven' requests would be ideal. So far, Acquisitions has proposed notes/actions for four scenarios that could feed into a workflow:

- When requested title is already owned by the library
- When requested title has eBook options available
- When requested title has a newer edition available
- When the title is being ordered outside GOBI

4. Review patron-driven titles list for circulation statistics

It would be interesting to review patron-driven titles for circulation statistics both within the library and through interlibrary loan lending.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Dave, Jacquie, Carolyn, and Vivian in Interlibrary Loan, Ben in Systems, and Sherry, Lisa, and David in Acquisitions without whom this project would have floundered.

Select Bibliography with Abstracts

Bailey-Hainer B., Beaubien, A., Posner, B., & Simpson E. (2014). Rethinking library resource

sharing: new models for collaboration. *Interlending & Document Supply*, 42 (1), 7-

12. doi.org/10.1108/ILDS-12-2013-0038

The purpose of this paper is to highlight significant changes in the information discovery landscape; discuss evolution in discovery systems and their connection to resource sharing; discuss the use of best practices by resource sharing practitioners; and describe new collaborations among libraries that change the definition of resource sharing.

Duy, J., & Lariviere, V. (2014). Relationships between interlibrary loan and research activity in Canada.

College & Research Libraries, 75(1), 5-19. doi:10.5860/crl12-378

Interlibrary Loan borrowing rates in academic libraries are influenced by an array of factors. This article explores the relationship between interlibrary loan borrowing activity and research activity at 42 Canadian academic institutions. A significant positive correlation was found between interlibrary loan borrowing activity and measures of research activity. The degree of correlation observed depended on the category of institution, with undergraduate and comprehensive universities showing the largest correlations. This is the first study to quantify the relationship between interlibrary loan and research activity, and the findings suggest that interlibrary loan plays a role in supporting academic research at Canadian universities.

Gee, C. W. (2014). Book-buying through interlibrary loan: Analysis of the first eight years at a large public

university library. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve*, 24(5),

133-145. doi:10.1080/1072303X.2015.1018473

Purchasing recently published books rather than requesting them through interlibrary loan provides rapid service to patrons and builds the collection with relevant materials that circulate at least as much as books purchased through traditional methods. This article is a case study of how Joyner Library at East Carolina University has used interlibrary loan to purchase requested titles from 2006 through 2014 and provides an analysis of the results. The mechanics, changes, and successes along the way of the eight years of the service are discussed.

Huang, D. L. (2015). Flipped interlibrary loan (F.I.L.L.): Putting interlibrary loan in the driver's seat of acquisitions. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve*, 25(3-5), 61-74. doi:10.1080/1072303X.2016.1254704

Interlibrary loan (ILL) is an important service point in the academic library, a channel through which patrons can ask for specific books and expect that those books will be made available to them. Examining the methods in which libraries handle those requests may reveal new workflows wherein ILL can influence the direction of the library's permanent acquisitions. ILL data is able to drive immediate purchases of user-requested titles but also more complex models of acquisition. By comparing circulation rates and expenditures against traditional book-approval plans, acquisitions departments may also measure the financial effectiveness of purchase-on-demand programs and use them to both supplement and supplant those approval plans. At the core of Lehigh University's efforts is an internal library philosophy called "Flipped Interlibrary Loan" (F.I.L.L.), by which ILL can and should inform permanent acquisitions for the library collection.

Imamoto, B., & Mackinder, L. (2016). Neither beg, borrow, nor steal: Purchasing interlibrary loan requests at an academic library. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 33(4), 371-385. doi:10.1080/07317131.2016.1203642

The University of California Irvine Libraries conducted a series of pilot projects involving staff from access services, acquisitions, and collection development to purchase interlibrary loan requests of print books, e-books, and articles. Staff measured the cost of interlibrary loan services and the time to delivery and improved the workflow through existing technology. In many cases, the library was able to purchase titles and get them to the patron more quickly than through traditional interlibrary loan. This purchasing service is now part of The University of California Irvine normal library procedures.

Kochan, C., & Duncan, J. (2016). Analysis of print purchase on demand titles ordered via interlibrary loan: A collection development perspective. *Collection Management*, 41(2), 51-65. doi:10.1080/01462679.2016.1174653

This article examines data from five years of titles ordered as part of an academic research library's purchase on demand program (POD-ILL) for print titles originally requested through interlibrary loan. The study evaluates a variety of factors: patron departments, campus location, and status; the subject areas of the books acquired; cost; and publishers. Assessment of POD-ILL data may assist a collection management librarian to determine the value of having patrons contribute to collection development decisions. In addition, subject librarians can use the data to evaluate approval and demand-driven acquisition profiles.

Tyler, D. C., Melvin, J. C., Xu, Y., Epp, M., & Kreps, A. M. (2011). Effective selectors? Interlibrary loan patrons as monograph purchasers: A comparative examination of price and circulation-related performance. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve*, 21(1-2), 57-90. doi:10.1080/1072303X.2011.557322

In the library literature, a great deal of interest in patron-driven collection development has recently been expressed, especially in those programs that link acquisitions with interlibrary loan. However, the implementation of such programs has been limited, at least in part because of concerns over the potential for wasteful spending. The authors will attempt to address this common concern by assessing whether monies spent via a patron-driven acquisitions program were more or less effective than monies spent via traditional modes of acquisition.

van Dyk, G. (2011). Interlibrary loan purchase-on-demand: A misleading literature. *Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services*, 35(2), 83-89. doi:10.1016/j.lcats.2011.04.001

Many libraries are engaging in interlibrary loan purchase-on-demand without fully acknowledging all of the costs of adding such titles to their collections. This study compares the costs of monograph interlibrary loans and the costs of monograph accession, including staffing overhead costs for both. In order to be truly cost-effective, interlibrary loan purchase-on-demand titles must have a minimum projected circulation, depending on the base price to purchase the item. A review of current patron-driven acquisitions models associated with interlibrary loan purchase-on-demand is included. Adapted from the source document.