

Copyright Charges: A Library's Approach to Reducing its Copyright Fees

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Introduction

In Interlibrary Loans, most libraries follow the rule of 5 for copyright: in one year, the first five articles of one journal from the past five recent years are free. Afterwards, a copyright charge must be covered by either the library or the patron requesting the article. The interlibrary loan service provided by the Medical Sciences Library (MSL) of Texas A&M University is a highly prized service. One of the factors that possibly impacts this high level of value is that the MSL offers its interlibrary loan services free of charge to all students and faculty. In the year 2013, the slow annual increase of these charges rose to copyright costs totaling over \$17,000. The librarian overseeing the Interlibrary Loan department met with several team members with the goal of addressing these increasing costs, while maintaining the exceptional level of service and satisfaction that MSL clientele had come to expect.

Method

Based on historical data, a scale was created that established purchase limits when a request was made dependent upon the status of the requestor.

| Status | Range |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Faculty | < \$111 |
| Graduate/Professional Student | < \$56 |
| Undergraduate/Staff | < \$41 |

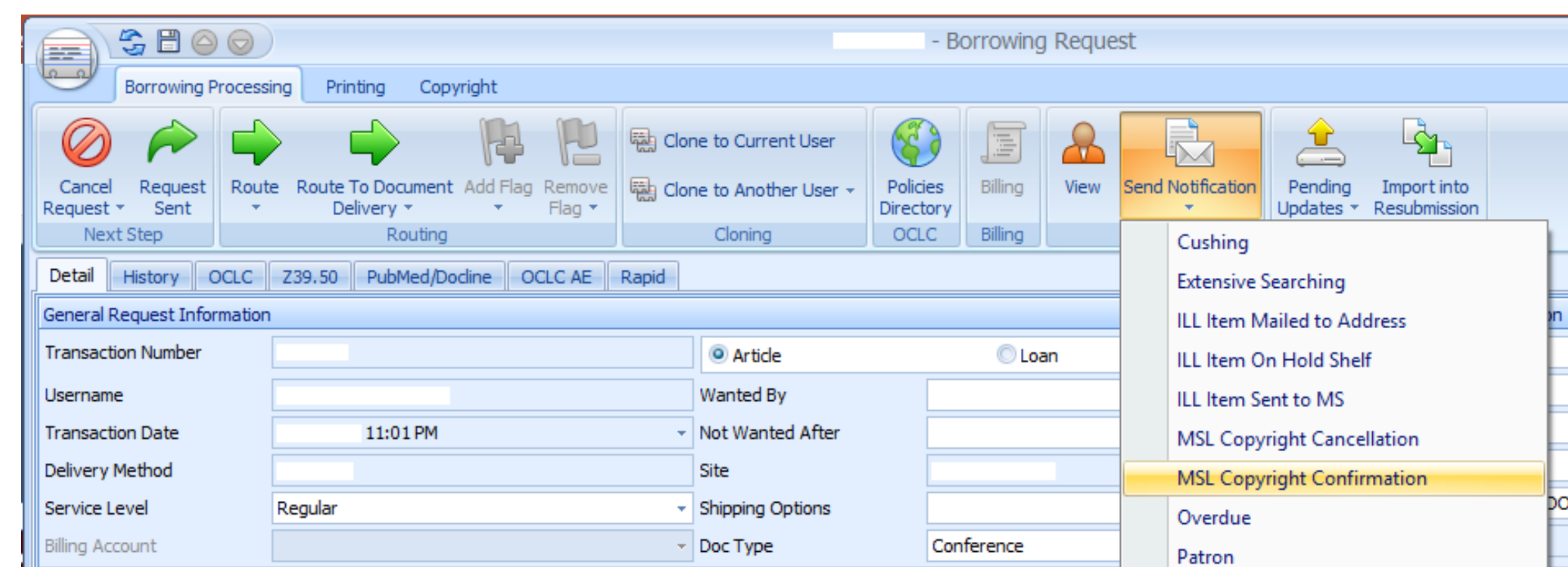
A script was written to email patrons if the copyright price of their request was above their designated limit.

The script and copyright limits were communicated with all ILL staff through both email and a team meeting.

An Excel sheet was created to keep track of all requests that exceeded the limit.

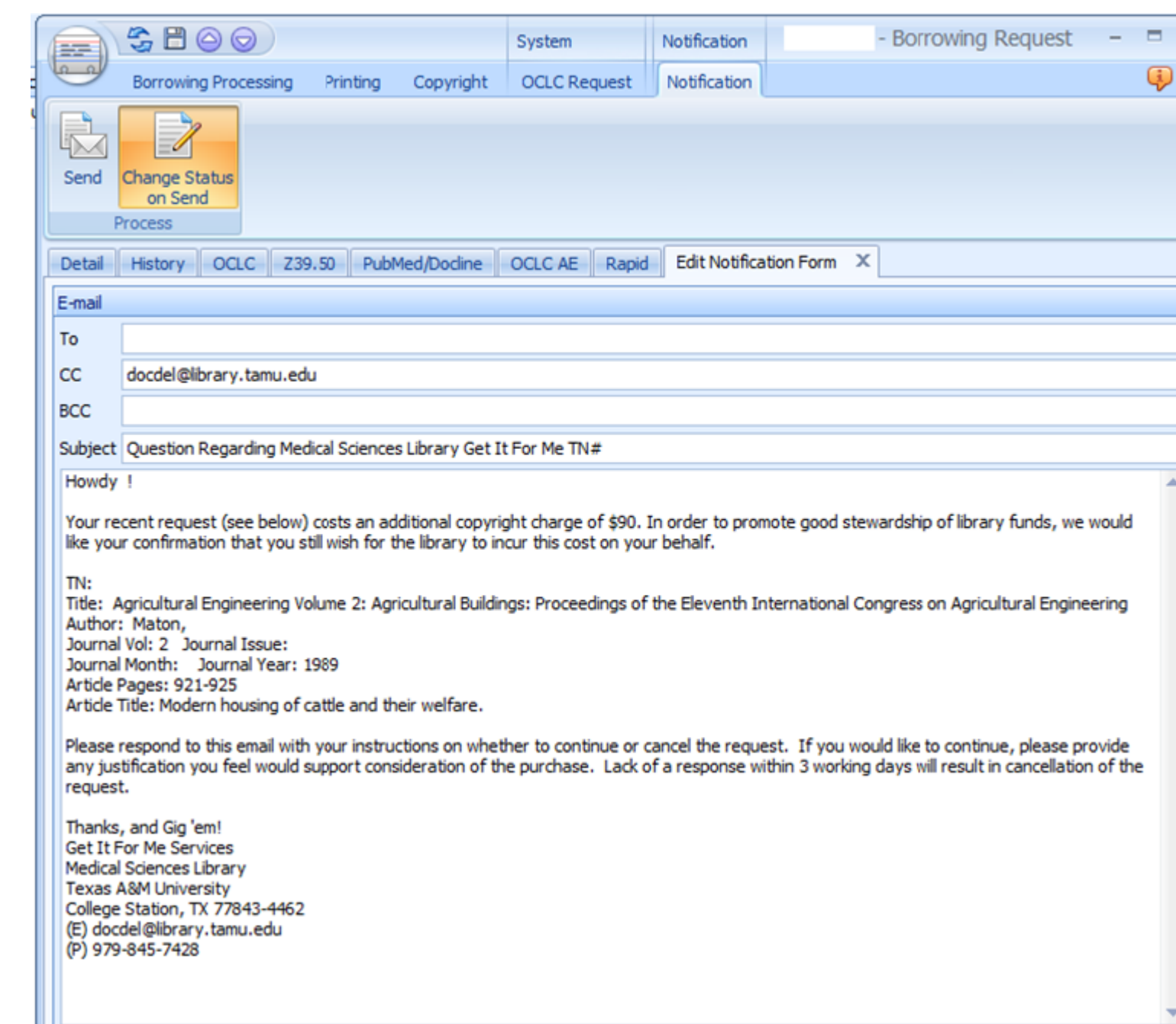
ILL personnel used an email template already available in ILLiad to copy and paste the script and notify the patron.

Later in 2015, two separate email templates were created in ILLiad for the purpose of contacting patrons and cancelling requests.

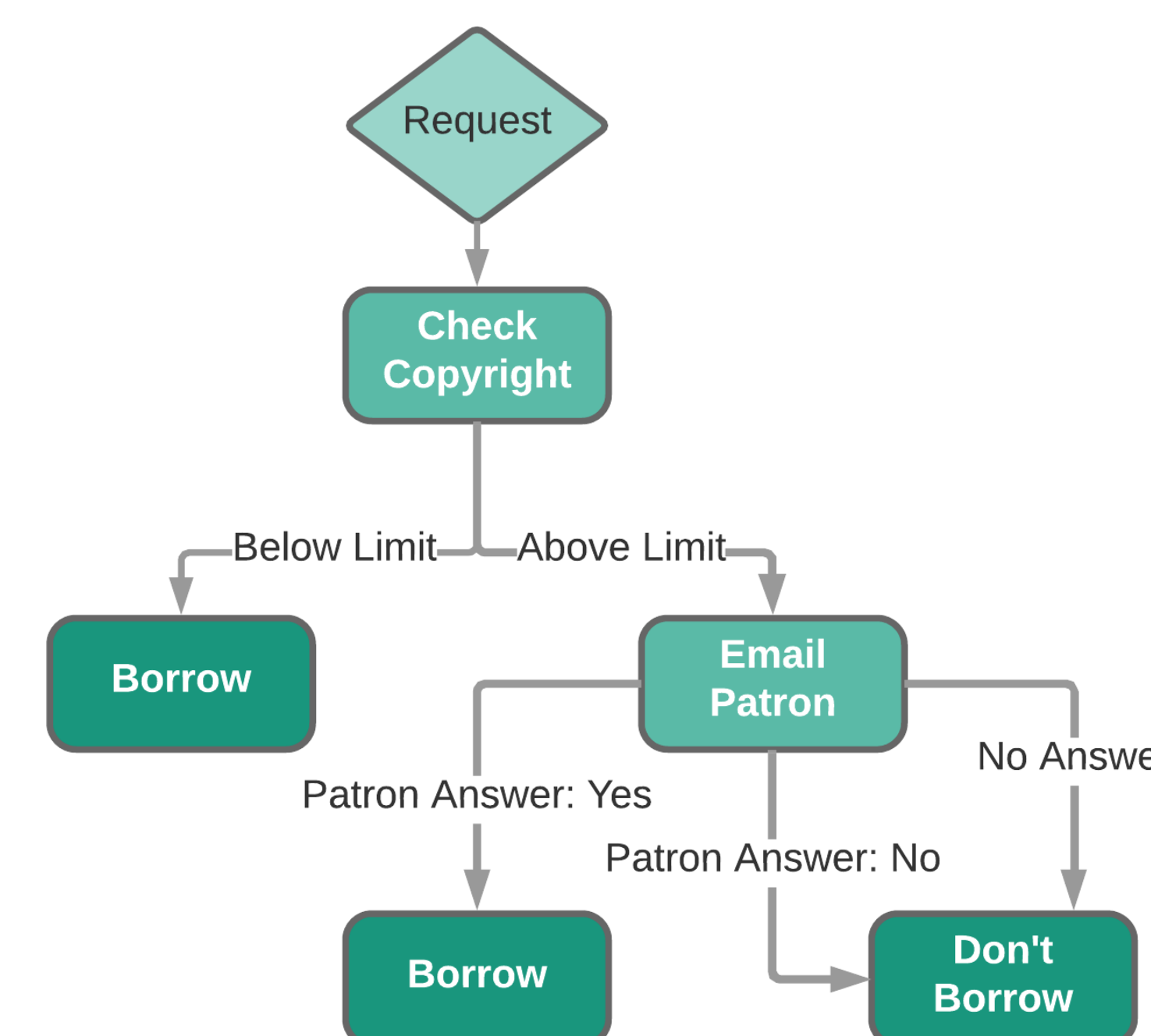


Workflow

- First 5 articles are free
- Afterwards, check copyright price with status limits in the word document
- If over the limit, email the script



- Add any copyright over status limit to the spreadsheet
- If patron answers that they need the article, email ILL supervisor and then borrow
- If patron doesn't reply in 3 days or declines the need for the article considering the copyright cost, cancel request using provided script



Results

Since the new procedure started in November 2014, only \$2,496.50 could be saved in that year. In 2015, copyright fees were cut in half and the library only paid \$4,970.30. However, we saw a rise in 2016 due to the larger number of requests being placed by faculty for articles from some of the more expensive journals. Faculty have the highest copyright limit of \$111 therefore most requests placed by them are usually borrowed. At the time this poster is being written, copyright fees for 2017 have not been calculated yet. Additionally, upon receiving the library script, several faculty responded with surprise at the revealed copyright cost, and gratitude towards the library for sharing the information and bringing them into the decision-making process. Many elaborated that they had plenty of information from other sources and that there was no need for specific cost prohibitive articles.

| | Total Requests | Copyright Paid | Copyright Saved |
|------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2013 | 23996 | \$17,457.99 | |
| 2014 | 29966 | \$8,483.75 | \$2,496.50 |
| 2015 | 32911 | \$4,970.30 | \$4,333.52 |
| 2016 | 35693 | \$6,996.10 | \$1,682.70 |

Conclusion

Copyright costs, if not monitored, can add up rapidly and surprise the library at the end of the year. Medical Sciences Library started a new process to manage its copyright fees, while still providing the service free of charge to students and faculty. During the past three years, this new process saved a total of \$8,512.72 in copyright fees for the library. The process has been successful and several patrons have thanked the ILL staff for informing them of the copyright price.

I do not require the paper at that cost. Thank you very much.

Thanks for letting me know about the additional cost. I would like to cancel this request please.

Thanks for the email. I did not think that it will cost this much of money, so please cancel the request.

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