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# Interlibrary Loan Patron Use Patterns: An Examination of Borrowing Requests at a Mid-sized Academic Library

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# Interlibrary Loan Patron Use Patterns

Interlibrary loan is a heavily used and essential service in academic libraries. Identifying the use patterns of patrons would be of much assistance in managing the efficient operation of interlibrary loan in terms of the effective use of staff time as well as the expenditure of library funds. Which patron groups use interlibrary loan? How often do individual patrons submit borrowing requests? What types of materials are being requested through interlibrary loan? How often are the same titles requested by different patrons? Is it cost effective to purchase an item rather than borrowing the title through interlibrary loan? This poster session uses data gathered from Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University, to show how interlibrary loan services are being utilized. Statistics from three years of OCLC data will be presented to demonstrate patron use patterns.

## Background Information

Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University  
Charleston, Illinois

Patron Group: 10,000 students, 900 staff  
and faculty

Interlibrary loan unit: three staff members and 10 student assistants

Three Year Interlibrary Loan Borrowing (UB, OCLC, etc.) 39,467 requests filled  
(January 2007-December 2009)

OCLC Borrowing Fill Rate: 86.1%

Three Year OCLC Fee-based Borrowing: 3,074 Requests Filled  
(January 2007-December 2009)

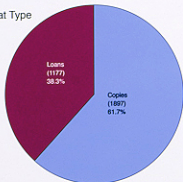
Fee-based Borrowing as percentage of all Borrowing: 7.8%

Total Costs of Borrowing Requests: \$42,400.57 for an average cost of \$13.79

## Monthly Usage Over 3 Year Period



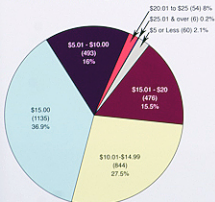
## Format Type



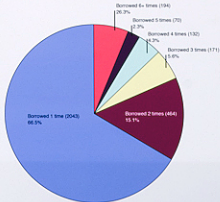
## Average Monthly Usage



## OCLC ILL Fee Management Charges



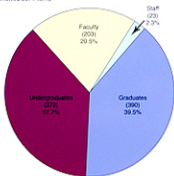
## Frequency of Same Title Borrowed



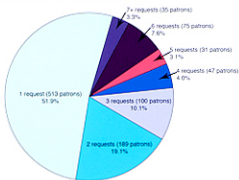
# Interlibrary Loan Patron Use Patterns

## Patron Status

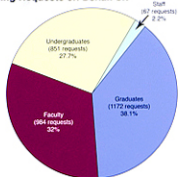
988 patrons borrowed 3274 items



## Frequency of Borrowing Patrons



## Borrowing Requests on Behalf of:



## Top Ten Most Frequent Borrowers

# of Patrons	Borrows
1	142
1	111
2	69
1	66
1	53
1	32
1	31
2	30
1	27
1	24

## Subscribe vs. Borrow Comparison (Using Top Five Borrowed Periodicals)

*European Journal of Sport Science*  
(borrowed 15 times by 7 different patrons)  
\$543 per year vs. \$181 to borrow

*Eating Behaviors: An International Journal*  
(borrowed 14 times by 11 different patrons)  
\$561 per year vs. \$164 to borrow

*Public Health Nutrition*  
(borrowed 14 times by 9 different patrons)  
\$1337 per year vs. \$131 to borrow

*Cozsa*  
(borrowed 10 times by 1 patron)  
\$41 per year vs. \$123 to borrow

*Sleep Medicine Reviews*  
(borrowed 10 times by 3 different patrons)  
\$506 per year vs. \$106 to borrow

## Buy versus Borrow Comparison (sample group of 200 titles)

\* 200 items loaned at cost of \$250

93 titles unavailable for purchase  
96 titles cheaper to borrow than buy  
2 titles same cost to buy as borrow  
9 titles cheaper to buy than to borrow

## Conclusions

- The incoming borrowing requests requiring OCLC fee-based borrowing have significantly increased over the three year period. The requests filled each month have almost doubled.
- Most patrons submit less than five requests over the three year period and only 35 patrons submitted more than seven requests during that period. As a result it can be concluded there is no need to limit borrowing and the central goal can be continued of filling every request that comes in.
- It is not cheaper to buy than borrow, particularly in the case of periodicals.

2010 IACRL Conference Poster Session  
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