May 31st, 12:00 AM

The Development of DOCLINE - An Interlibrary Lending Link Between the BLLD and Chalmers University Library

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCLINE - AN INTERLIBRARY LENDING LINK BETWEEN THE BLLD AND CHALMERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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Introduction

No library can be totally self-sufficient in supplying the information needs of its user community. This is particularly apparent in scientific and technological university libraries, where the present size and rate of growth of information makes it practically impossible to maintain complete collections even with respect to the research being carried on at the university. This has led to a sharing of resources through interlibrary lending - one of the best examples of national and international library cooperation.

The aim of this paper is to describe an attempt to improve interlibrary lending services at Chalmers University of Technology Library, Gothenburg, with respect to satisfaction rate, speed and decreased costs, by the establishment of a computer-based link to the BLLD for the transmission of interlibrary requests.

Interlibrary lending in Sweden

In Sweden, the academic libraries developed an informal co-operative network for resource sharing. This network gradually extended to include the public libraries and specialized industrial libraries.[1] Interlibrary lending networks of this kind are usually based on union catalogues of periodicals and national acquisition catalogues of monograph literature. Attempts are often made to increase cost effectiveness through cooperative acquisition policies where responsibility is divided between the cooperating libraries for holding literature covering different subject areas/ regions/ languages. The Swedish interlibrary lending network followed this pattern - based on the use of the Swedish Union Catalogue for Foreign Acquisitions, first published in the 1880s, and a number of Swedish and Scandinavian Union Lists of periodicals. Literature acquisition costs were partially shared according to the Scandinavian cooperative acquisition plan - "The Scandia Plan" - with special committees for different types of library.[2 3] The development of the computerized EDP-system - LIBRIS, Library Information System -for the Swedish research libraries produced a useful localization tool - the on-line union catalogue for those libraries participating in the system.[4]

This Swedish interlibrary network, with its Scandinavian extensions, formed the basis for the interlibrary lending at Chalmers University of Technology Library.

Criteria for interlibrary lending

The three main criteria for an interlibrary lending system are speed, satisfaction rate and costs. With an interlending network of the Swedish kind, a loan request, which cannot be met out of the library's own holdings is sent to another library which one knows or hopes possesses the material requested. At present, there is no possibility of knowing at the requesting library whether, or not, the requested document is out on loan. This introduces a factor of uncertainty with possible delay, increased handling and cost.

There are two main types of literature that form the basis of interlibrary loan requests - high frequency material and peripheral low frequency literature. Line has pointed out that the greatest demand for interlibrary loan falls into the first category.[5] Requests for high frequency use material in a traditional multi-library cooperative are likely to be met with the information that the documents are out on loan. This results in low satisfaction rate, slowness and increased handling costs. In those cases where the document is available, this is sent to the requesting library, which in turn, informs the borrower. In this case at least four days are spent on postal communication.

The development of the DOCLINE link

At Chalmers Library, which serves both university users and borrowers from industrial firms, especially those in western and central Sweden, it was decided to try to speed up document delivery and reduce interlending handling and costs. First, lending of high frequency use material - journals and certain report series was severely limited. At the same time photocopying facilities were greatly increased - to help local users to obtain copies at very low prices. This resulted in more material available in the library so that many local and inter-library requests could be met directly. Second, it was decided to increase lending from the British Library Lending Division, BLLD, a library which has extensive resources and is specially designed for interlibrary lending.[6]

A computerized link system was developed, DOCLINE, in cooperation between the BLLD, and the MEDICINDATA department at Gothenburg University and Chalmers Library, to transmit requests and information about availability. The BLLD has equipment which allows the connection of a printer to a distant computer. A set of computer programs were developed at MEDICINDATA in Gothenburg for their DEC 10 computer.

The interlibrary lending operator at Chalmers Library dials the computer, before 11.30

a.m. every working day, in order to connect the time-sharing terminal to the computer and input those requests that cannot be met from Chalmer's own holdings. These requests are then printed out on standard loan forms on the BLLD printer, copies are taken, and these are dispatched directly to the borrower. In those cases where the BLLD cannot supply the request, information is sent back, via the computer, to Chalmers Library.

Programmes in the DOCLINE system

The following programmes are used in the DOCLINE system:
(For detailed description of these programmes see [7])

1) REQUEST programme

The REQUEST programme is run by the interlending operator to input requests which are to be transferred to BLLD. The requests are stored in a request file in the computer. The file is automatically assigned a name of the form "yymmdd. REQ", where yymmdd is the date of the day. When input is finished, the file can be printed by the BLLD (CUTPRT programme). When printed by the BLLD, the file is, as a confirmation, automatically renamed "yymmdd. CON".

It is possible to check if the BLLD has printed the request file for a specific day by using the monitor command

DIRECT yymmdd.x

The computer will then print the name of the file for that day.
If the extension is "CON" (e.g. yymmdd.CON) BLLD has printed the file. Extension "REQ" means that the requests have not been taken by the BLLD.
Each request is assigned a request number of the form:

ccc-yymmdd-xxxx

where

ccc	is user code
yymmdd	is date of the day for input
xxxx	is a sequence number of 1 to 4 digits which should be unique within the year and consequtive from one day to the next.

A request contains the following information:

REFERENCE:	Max 30 characters of reference.
TITLE:	Max 11 lines of 40 characters of title information.
ADDRESS:	Max 6 lines of 3 characters of address information.

Frequent addresses can be stored in the computer. Input of addresses are also carried out with the REQUEST programme.

Before the request file is made available for the BLLD, the user can print the file to obtain documentation of the requests.

2) NOFILL programme

The NOFILL programme is run by the interlending operator at Chalmers to print nofills, i.e. requests that the BLLD has not been able to supply. Information on these nofills are input by the BLLD with the CUTNOF programme.

The information is stored in the computer in a disk file with the name NOFILL.NOF. When run, the NOFILL programme looks for this file and if found, the requests are printed together with a message that explains the reason for nofill. When printed, the file is renamed to yymmdd.Nxx, where xx is a sequencial number within the day. The NOFILL programme can be run at any time and more than once a day.

The NOFILL files are renamed and saved for statistical reasons.

3) CUTPRT programme

The CUTPRT programme is run by the BLLD to print requests on standard forms.

When started, the programme checks if the user (the requesting library) has finished the input for the day. If not, the operator is informed that the file is being modified and asked to try later on.

If for some reason, for instance a paper jam, the operator wants to interrupt the printing, two CTRL C should be typed.

4) CUTNOFILL PROGRAMME

The CUTNOFILL programme is run by the BLLD to input information about requests that could not be fullfilled. The programme can be run at any time, except when the nofills are being printed by the user. The operator is, in this case, asked to try later on.

The systems contains the following files:

Request file
Nofill file
Address file

For details of the organization of these files see [7].

REQUEST: CUT-790302-0173

REFERENCE: CG 174 790219

SEN'I KOBUNSHI ZAIRYO KENKYUSHO
KENKYU HAPPYOKAI SANKO SHIRYO
52(1977)
PP 87-96 NAKANISHI, H
ONLY THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION IS
WANTED
CA 90:02, 0067060

BEROL KEMI AB
BIBLIOTEKET
S-444 00 STENUNGSUND
SWEDEN

Fig. 1. Example of a request printout.

CUT-790703-1102

4-Jul-79 CUT

JOURNAL OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY
AND BIOTECHNOLOGY VOL 29 1979 NO 1
P 56-67 WILKINSON, T G ET AL

BEROL KEMI AB
BIBLIOTEKET
S-444 00 STENUNGSUND
SWEDEN

INTERNATIONAL TELEX
PAYMENT COPY

ISSUED AS LOAN	
ISSUED AS RETENTION FICHE	
NUMBER OF PAGES OF ORIGINAL ISSUED AS PHOTOCOPY	12
NUMBER OF PAGES OF ORIGINAL ISSUED AS MICROFILM	

CUT-790703-1102
KK 502 790701

Fig. 2. Printout on a BLLD standard form.

REQUEST: CUT-790215-0028

REFERENCE: L-U NILSSON 56891 PV KA 790212

AUTO-ZEITUNG NR 24 1977
ARTICLE DEALING WITH "AERODYNAMICS"

AB VOLVO
BIBLIOTEKET
S-405 08 GOETEBORG
SWEDEN

REASON: TNI

Fig. 3. Example of a NOFILL printout.

DOCLINE operation

The DOCLINE system has been in trial operation since February 15th 1979. After two months it appears to be running smoothly. During this trial period all industrial requests for non-Scandinavian journal articles, reports, conference papers, plus a number of requests from academic staff and research workers have been sent to the BLLD. The average number of requests per month has been 230 items. The BLLD have been able to supply 70 % of these requests. In those cases where copies can be supplied, fifty per cent are dealt with the same day as they arrive. The copies are sent by first class mail directly to the borrower and not via Chalmers library.

Discussion

Service to interlibrary borrowers, at Chalmers University Library, has been improved with respect to both satisfaction rate and speed. Satisfaction rate for all incoming interlibrary requests is now 80 %, photocopies or loans are dispatched within 24 hours. Of the requests for journal articles and conference papers sent to the BLLD from Chalmers, 70 % are available and distributed in photocopy form direct to the user within one or two days. Handling routines have been simplified, and costs reduced, in that all requests from industrial users are treated in the same way.

It is hoped to carry out a detailed evaluation of the DOCLINE interlibrary lending system, with regard to satisfaction rate, speed and cost. Preliminary observations indicate that the BLLD back-up system will enable Chalmers Library to provide an effective interlibrary lending service for industrial and university users.

References:

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3. AMUNDSEN, V., The Scandia Plan committee for technological libraries (Skandia plankommittén för tekniske biblioteker) Tidskrift för Dokumentation 23 (4) 1967: pp 45-48.

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5. LINE, M.B., Document access, British and worldwide In: Engelstad, K., & Roed, J.E. ed. Interlibrary lending - The Challenge of cooperation... 1978: pp. 23-37.

6. BARR, K., Systems and procedures at the BLLD. BLL Review, 4 (3) 1976: pp 71-78.

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DISCUSSION

Mr. L. Gärdvall: Could this link be used by other libraries?

Fjällbrant: Yes, other libraries connected to SCANNET could use this system.

Prof. A.J. Evans: With regard to satisfaction from the British Library what kind of material is hard to obtain?

Fjällbrant: Many of the items which are no-fills material that has not yet been received by the BLLD.

Dr. D. Shaw: I believe that Swets & Zeitlingers' comprehensive database could provide valuable information on not yet published serial parts. Could this be linked to DOCLINE to eliminate abortive requests for items not yet delivered?

Mr. J. Nouwen: The Swets special service, at present, covers about 30,000 titles. We would like to have a subscription for every serial publication in order to know all about all titles. But this is too costly at the moment. Swets is trying to extend the coverage of titles and we aim to reach eventually 65,000.

Mr. J.E. Skipper: Are there standards for bibliographic verification for Swedish loan requests?

Westberg: Yes, but smaller libraries may not have resourses for tools for adequate bibliographic verification.

Mr. G.A. Hamel: Two observations: First - Holland has some 4 union catalogues operating separately from one another. The procedure is rather slow. The satisfaction rate is about 75-80 %. The applicant receives a positive answer and is satisfied within 10-20 days. Request forms continue to circulate unless the applicant stops the circulation process, but he does not know what stage his request has reached in the system. Secondly - any union catalogue whatever its structure (computer-based or manual) is as reliable as the individual participants both with regard to input and output.

Mr. P. Durey: Is there not a risk in relying on an international system? Are you trying to improve the Swedish system?

Fjällbrant: We hope that LIBRIS will help us in improving the operation of interlibrary lending within Sweden.