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# We Didn't Fear the Reader: Embracing New Service Models With Staff and Patron Input

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# **Transforming Acquisitions and Collection Services**

**Perspectives on Collaboration  
Within and Across Libraries**

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## CHAPTER 11

# **We Didn't Fear the Reader: Embracing New Service Models With Staff and Patron Input**

**Daniel L. Huang and Sharon Wiles-Young**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As librarians we see much written in our professional literature about organizational change in libraries. In the Lehigh experience of “not fearing the reader,” our library has a long tradition of work ethics and patron-centered values. However, principles by themselves are insufficient without actively building librarian and staff collaboration to develop a customer-centered culture along with supporting workflows. Our library’s leadership endorses that set of values and allows for our organization to have the agility to explore and fulfill those goals.

Lehigh University Libraries serves 5,000 undergraduate students and 2,000 graduate students and about 521 faculty. Lehigh University has two libraries on campus: Linderman Library, the humanities library, which also houses Special Collections and rare books, and E. W. Fairchild-Martindale Library, the science, engineering, and social sciences library. In addition, we have an onsite storage facility, the Library Materials Center. In order to serve this diverse set of facilities and patrons, our vice provost empowers us to work toward meeting the University Strategic Plan and LTS (Library and Technology Services) Strategic Plan goals.

Our story of philosophical change comes during a time of many shifts in Lehigh’s approach to library services. Print collections were being analyzed and moved to increase user space in the libraries and

more collection dollars were being allocated to electronic and digital collections to help reduce the need for more collection space. The use of approval plans and other “just in case” purchasing plans were being reviewed for effectiveness in collection building, so Lehigh’s collection philosophies were in flux. However, even amid such dramatic changes, what did not change was the working ethos of Library and Technology Services at Lehigh University, which has always been to evaluate services for continuous improvements.

Our librarians and support staff focus on the needs of the library user and do their best to understand the rapidly evolving teaching and research needs of both students and faculty. This was recently reflected in the LTS survey, in which campus-wide respondents cited 81% satisfaction with LTS staff courtesy and 85% satisfaction with the circulation desk and access services in general.<sup>1</sup> The service areas with the highest ratings were interlibrary loan (ILL) services and information services, and we wished to keep expanding upon those services. Under the leadership of the vice provost of LTS and with a newly published LTS strategic plan, the Libraries aligned the user survey findings with the strategic plan and strived to enhance our commitment to continuous improvement.

## **EXPANDING ILL SERVICES**

One of the first ideas was to expand ILL services and to think more about how our service models could change or improve. Could the Libraries extend ILL services by collaborating with other library departments to improve customer service? What could change in the ILL workflows and our departmental business processes to increase user satisfaction? At this time, other changes were happening at the Lehigh Libraries. A more user-centered collection philosophy was beginning to emerge as the Libraries examined acquisition expenditures, discussed expanding ILL services, and shifted to more electronic collections. Lehigh’s new acquisitions librarian came from the ILL department and had knowledge of ILL workflows and a deep understanding of the ILL software.

This knowledge of ILL software allowed the Library Technology Team and the acquisitions librarian to rethink the options of library

services. Together they examined the business process of purchasing a title rather than filling an ILL request and the workflow of purchasing titles identified by the ILL staff for known repeat ILL requests. Why would a library purchase a permanent copy based on ILL statistics instead of getting another copy through ILL? What changed in libraries so that an acquisitions workflow could now be applied to an ILL request?

This led to further inquiry on how the lessons from ILL and other frontline service points applied to other aspects of Lehigh Libraries' collection. Should libraries move toward user-identified needs of collections instead of mainly purchasing on the "just in case" model? Are libraries using usage data and ILL statistics data to make purchase decisions? Are libraries soliciting user feedback about collections to make decisions? And are we held back by fear, or what might just be fear of radical thinking, even if the changes made are not particularly radical? Do we adequately empower our staff in addition to our readers? As the reader proceeds through this chapter, the descriptions of some of the changes Lehigh made in Acquisitions, ILL, Technology Services, and Collections will answer the questions posed above. We will give the reader some ideas of possible changes that can be made in library organizations and in business processes without the need to dramatically change organizational structure or roles.

Our ILL services is one of the keystone services in the Access Services Department of LTS due to its patron-centered mission and its responsiveness to addressing the gaps in the Libraries' permanent print monograph collection. The ILL team maintains reciprocal agreements with both local and regional consortia and prides itself in rapid fulfillment of patron requests for ILL print book loans, delivering over a three-year total of 5,600 print book loans via ILLiad and an additional 16,000 ILL loans via the Relais D2D service (under the PALCI consortial ILL service PALCI EZBorrow). However, staff feedback and insight have traditionally affected little in the LTS Acquisitions Department, even if ILL staff were frustrated at repeated requests for the same item (often simultaneously) and their inability to purchase those materials or books that otherwise could not be obtained through ILL.

In 2015, our director of Collections and the director of Access Services both realized more could be done to address those concerns. One affirming statement made was that the Lehigh Libraries should

“encourage faculty to think institutionally about ILL book requests. Have the library buy the books that have demonstrated value to our patrons. And do so in a way that is on par or faster than ILL.”

Additionally, one director stated that “Acquisitions and ILL should work together to leverage their experience and talents so that both departments will deliver better customer service. We need to meet our patrons’ needs and provide permanent access to some collections instead of just relying on ILL.”

## **PHILOSOPHICAL CHANGE**

For narrative reasons, we will explain the philosophical change that took place in our organization as a result of those statements from Libraries leadership. Our experience creating and maintaining the resulting programs are what influenced the codification of this philosophy, which we called the Flipped Interlibrary Loan (F.I.L.L.) model. We realized that Lehigh Libraries was insufficiently leveraging the usage data from our ILL programs to affect collection development. In addition, we relied too heavily on ILL to cover for gaps in the stacks without trying to address them in a way that added intrinsic value to our collection. Nor did we ever fully address the speed and transparency that our users had become accustomed to in their daily lives outside of the library. This made for a natural breaking down of the walls between Acquisitions and ILL, codified in the F.I.L.L. Guidelines:

1. Usage data about materials and the increasing amount of data available for decision-making is evidence for potential collection development.
2. There is an intrinsic value to having permanent access to often-requested materials, especially in cases where temporary access is insufficient.
3. Delivery of materials to patrons must remain at competitive speeds to temporary methods of access to ensure patron trust.
4. Timely communication is crucial to patron relations.
5. Collaboration between ILL staff and acquisitions staff has benefits for collection development.

However, we were at a loss how to build that bridge between Acquisitions and ILL until we found a technology solution. Dan Heuer from Bucknell University used an IDS project-created ILLiad software add-on called the Getting It System Toolkit (GIST) to create a new workflow for acquisition requests to work within existing ILL services to generate, track, and notify users regarding patron-submitted purchase requests.<sup>2</sup> The GIST add-on also allows for the transfer of requests between Acquisitions and ILL borrowing, allowing for one coherent and flexible workflow that permits both teams to use the same interface to share information and seamlessly transform requests into another type, such as turning a print book borrow request into an acquisitions request and vice versa.<sup>3</sup> This combined workflow provided the means for patrons to submit their requests in the already familiar ILLiad web form but choose whether they wanted to have the library borrow or purchase the requested print book.

Using the existing ILLiad infrastructure offered both marketing and implementation benefits. Technology staff were already experienced with using and maintaining ILLiad, which allowed us to quickly install and configure the add-on within a few hours. This also reduced the amount of training in Acquisitions since internal ILLiad documentation and training practices were already in place within the ILL team. Furthermore, the patron user interface and notification system for ILLiad was already popular, so our users were not skeptical of an experimental service since it cohabited the same space with a familiar service. Lehigh has already published an article about its GIST implementation and the technical configuration used to create the Express Purchase workflow, so we will not go into many of the technical details here and instead stick to our focus on staff empowerment.<sup>4</sup>

## **EXPRESS PURCHASE**

Our teams decided to brand the Lehigh implementation of the service under “Express Purchase.” The name intentionally implied speed, under the assumption that users would not use the service to request an expedited purchase of a print book if the delivery time was significantly longer than the typical ILL request of the same



monograph. Initial testing showed that using the Amazon Business and Prime shipping services resulted in a two-to-three-day time frame from point of order to delivery, which was on par with average ILL fulfillment times as cited by staff. The catalogers developed a “rapid cataloging” workflow to prioritize and quickly move the book to the circulation desk. Lehigh’s initial pilot program included only faculty users but added undergraduate and graduate student users as of November 2017.

The hurdle we encountered in developing Express Purchase was subject librarian fear that library users would quickly expend the monograph budget. This fear was not unique to Lehigh nor was the fear necessarily misplaced. The 2014 article by Tyler, Melvin, Epp, and Kreps titled “Don’t Fear the Reader” goes into more detail about librarians’ anxiety over safeguarding their role in the collection development process and guiding the direction of the collection, as well as their fears that patrons might not make good decisions about which books to read. In response, our directors reaffirmed that we had an organizational commitment to fear user input and our values were indeed patron-centered. To further reduce this anxiety, we imposed a price cap per request, limited users to five requests per month, restricted the purchase of textbooks and dissertations, and limited Express Purchase to items published within the last five publication years. But the message from our leadership was clear: We Didn’t Fear the Reader.

The result of the Express Purchase pilot was a system with which a library user could fill out a quick order form in the familiar ILLiad web interface then Acquisitions could order the book via Amazon and receive the package, have Cataloging process the bibliographic record, and have the book ready at the circulation desk shelf within a total of three to five business days. Faculty users in particular loved the service and respected that they had the option to help the library grow its collection versus waiting for a traditional Acquisitions request or asking for yet another ILL request. Our users also appreciated the consistent notifications that were built into the ILLiad interface. This led to trust in the program to provide print books at a speed equivalent to or faster than ILL, giving users a true complementary service to ILL with the advantage of a longer loan period for the user and building value in the Libraries’ permanent print collection.

The program's success has led to the Libraries allocating more funds to the program and utilizing the campus mail system to facilitate office delivery to faculty for both Express Purchase and ILL requests. It was at this point that we began to coalesce this success into the F.I.L.L. guidelines and to inject those ideas into other projects. Express Purchase added value to our permanent collection, took into account reader input, communicated those goals, provided transparency to the acquisitions process, and did so in a way that made patrons feel that their requests were being responded to in a customer service–focused manner.

Lehigh's success with Express Purchase led the library to examine internal statistics and how those statistics reflected the growth of those collections and the libraries were addressing research needs in academia. When we initiated the Express Purchase program, the Lehigh University Libraries still depended heavily on its YBP Library Services (now GOBI Library Services) approval programs for “just in case” purchasing. The 2015 annual review of the Libraries' expenditures and usage statistics revealed some startling revelations. Although our expenditures through YBP were less expensive on a per item basis compared to the Express Purchase program's Amazon expenditures (table 11.1), the actual cost per circulation was significantly lower via Express Purchase when compared to the YBP approval plan (table 11.2). We discovered that in order to build a more efficient and responsive library, our goals went beyond We Didn't Fear the Reader to We Need to Empower the Reader.

We took the time to consider the organizational implications of what we had accomplished with the Express Purchase program. First, we realized that patron requests, and by extension ILL, were crucial

**TABLE 11.1** 2015 Lehigh University Pricing Study of YBP Library Services Versus Amazon (total cost over 76 purchases)

	YBP Library Services (\$)	Amazon (\$)	Difference (\$)
<i>Cost of Monographs</i>	1,462.28	1,620.00	-157.72
<i>Shipping and Metadata</i>	47.88	29.64	18.24
<i>Total Spent</i>	1,510.16	1,649.64	-139.48
<i>Cost per Item</i>	19.87	21.71	-1.84

**TABLE 11.2** 2015 Lehigh University Circulation Comparison Between YBP Library Services Approval Plan and Express Purchase

	Approval Plan	Express Purchase	Difference
<i>Cost per Item (\$)</i>	50.76	65.31	-14.55
<i>Cost per Circulation (\$)</i>	320.98	68.73	252.25
<i>Circulation Rate (%)</i>	16.62	91	-74.38

to collection development because the print collection and supporting services must first serve the user above all else, in accordance with the five laws of library science theory. Second, we concluded that along with developing cross-functional collaboration in the organization, we could use off-the-shelf technology to implement new workflow changes. Third, we came to understand that ILL usage was a barometer of patron behavior and that there was value in analyzing those statistics, even if the outcome was reactive to patron use rather than predictive of patron behavior. These realizations helped Acquisitions gain the organizational confidence to move forward with other programs, embracing the concept of We Didn't Fear the Reader, in addition to creating a new collection development methodology that we codified into the F.I.L.L. guidelines.

One of the first practical outcomes was addressing the overall low performance of the YBP approval plans. The previously mentioned study showed that at best those plans yielded a 16.62% circulation rate, but our librarians were uncomfortable with discontinuing those plans out of the concern that users would not be able to find needed books in a timely fashion without prepurchased books on the shelf. Since the Express Purchase program performed well and few requests went unfilled, the librarians were confident that they could finally discontinue those approval plans, with the knowledge that any gaps in the print collection could be filled in a timely fashion by Acquisitions and ILL. By not fearing the reader, the library could do away with predictive "just in case" purchasing and move toward a more user-centered "just in time" model of acquisitions.

If a library user initiated an ILL request and realized that the book was appropriate for the permanent collection, we wanted the user to communicate that valuable information. Express Purchase was

a success and ILL staff loved being able to refer users to the online form so that frequently borrowed items could be formally requested. Circulation desk staff made good use of being able to refer patrons to request books via Express Purchase, allowing them to provide even better customer service. This was our first big step in building a useful and practical cross-functional environment in which ILL and Acquisitions could coexist and work together. Our goals were not solely financial efficiency, using our data and statistics in more inspired ways, speed of service, or raising customer service survey numbers, but to empower our staff to use their knowledge of their daily work to help the Lehigh University Libraries grow a better user-centered collection. We gave a voice to library staff who did not traditionally have input in other parts of the organization by seeing the connections between ILL and acquisitions work and providing both sides with the technology tools to assist patrons without changing their existing positions.

## **LOGRECO PLAN**

Our organization was moving past fearing the reader, but we had not necessarily made all readers come to us with feedback on which titles requested via ILL should be added to the permanent collection. One method in which the Libraries had previously addressed the collection of that data point was via a white sticker on the ILL book, where the user could communicate that intent by circling “Yes.” Both the stickers and Express Purchase worked well for immediate use and reaching out to users in response to their communication of a specific request, but we did not want to rely entirely on user feedback and wished to include usage data to inform our collection development. We sought to create a more holistic methodology to capture the overall patterns of behavior—one that did not solely rely upon voluntary user input. In accordance with the F.I.L.L. principles, we wanted to leverage the usage data even if the patron chose not to communicate the significance of the request and the collection development implications. The Lehigh Libraries had always looked at the ILL data but struggled to do anything large-scale with that information or in a way that linked the significance of that information with other processes and services, whether internal or vended.

Our team reached out to the administration of the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium (PALCI) to acquire the consortium's Relais D2D ILL data for Lehigh's usage of PALCI's direct borrowing service (PALCI E-ZBorrow). We also exported the usage data from ILLiad for the same three-year time period (2014–2016). We discovered we were now in possession of approximately 80,000 lines of user requests, with no easy match point between the two data sets, and no way to link together books that we considered the same written work, because even different bindings, editions, and other variances produced ISBN inconsistencies. Much of the ILLiad data lacked proper standardization, further complicating those issues. However, even if we did sift through all that data, we lacked the funds to purchase all of the high-use titles. Even though we didn't fear the reader, we certainly feared the difficulty of sorting through the volume of data generated by our readers.

In 2016, Acquisitions reached out to ebrary (now ProQuest Ebook Central), our primary e-book aggregator vendor, to see if there was an e-book solution for this problem. Our contact person at ProQuest, Michael LoGreco, assembled a proposal: ProQuest would take the PALCI Relais data and attempt to use its proprietary systems to analyze the title and ISBN information and to try to create some standardization from over 15,000 requests. Upon completion, ProQuest would present the results along with a discounted bulk purchase plan.

LoGreco returned to us with the results of his analysis. Of the 15,000-plus requests, upon his elimination of title duplication he found 2,342 unique titles that were borrowed at least once. Of those books, he discovered that 1,933 were borrowed more than once by Lehigh users in the three-year report period. Within those 1,933 titles, Lehigh already had access to 128 of those as subscription e-books and owned 6 as perpetual titles, revealing a possible e-book deficiency within our collections. LoGreco then identified 715 titles that ProQuest could sell on the ebrary platform with a permanent license at a significant discount. We internally titled the resulting contract and collection the "LoGreco Plan."

Upon purchasing the 715 permanent e-books, we decided to not overtly publicize the program but allow for serendipitous discovery

of the titles in the library catalog. In the June 2016 to February 2017 report period, we took a closer look at the usage data of the LoGreco Plan and benchmarked that against our existing and rapidly growing permanent e-book collection selected by Lehigh's subject librarians (110 titles total). Our analysis revealed that of the 715 LoGreco Plan items, 60 were used at least once, accounting for 54.55% of the permanently licensed e-book usage in that time period (table 11.3). Additionally, this accounted for 36.49% of all pages viewed and 39.83% of all pages downloaded in the permanent ebrary e-book collection. We considered these numbers significant since many of the librarian-selected titles were for course reserve, found on recommendation lists, and in response to faculty requests.

Although we considered this to be a successful method of selecting titles and saw high use in comparison to librarian selection, the Lehigh Libraries could not sustain purchasing hundreds of e-books every fiscal year based on speculated use. No matter the data source, means of selection, format of the book, or even the good performance of the LoGreco Plan, we did not want to replace one approval plan with another approval plan. Nor did the LoGreco Plan or other options on the table at the time allow for direct input from the ILL or circulation desk staff.

LoGreco suggested that since ProQuest was already familiar with the data, Lehigh and ProQuest collaborate with ProQuest's new Access-to-Own (ATO) program for e-books through Ebook Central. Lehigh had previously experimented with demand-driven acquisition (DDA) programs for e-books but had limited results with short-term loans (STLs) and acquiring permanent e-books because STLs added

**TABLE 11.3** Fiscal Year 2017 Usage of LoGreco Plan Versus Ebook Central Librarian-Selected E-Book Titles

	LoGreco Plan	Librarian Selection	Percentage (LoGreco) (%)
<i>Titles Used</i>	60	110	54.55
<i>Pages Viewed</i>	4,029	11,040	36.49
<i>Pages Printed</i>	4,097	10,286	39.83
<i>User Sessions</i>	281	673	41.75

additional costs on top of the e-book list price. We reached out to LoGreco's colleagues, who explained that the ATO model of e-book acquisition was different from other DDA programs because ATO STL fees act as installments toward an eventual purchase. So for every use of the e-book a cost is generated, but that cost adds toward the list price of the e-book, generating an automatic purchase of a permanent copy once 100% of the list price has been expended.

Further research verified our general assumption that if used by one user, an e-book tends to be used by others. One such example was the Swinburne University of Technology program, which cited 654 ATO-generated permanent e-book purchases in a six-month period, with an impressive 61% rate of reuse after the initial cost generation.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the Ebook Central interface provided the ability for any librarian or staff person to do title-by-title selection within Ebook Central. LoGreco and his colleagues further explained that access to Ebook Central ATO e-books could have access opened to the library user within an hour of an ATO title being added to Lehigh's collection for potential STL or ATO automatic purchase. However, we did not want to just initiate another DDA program at Lehigh and instead wanted to build a means of opening up e-book selection to our ILL and circulation desk staff and further develop the cross-functional environment.

To work toward this goal, the Lehigh Libraries used the lessons learned from the LoGreco Plan and Express Purchase programs. The success with the LoGreco Plan had already taught us the benefit of building vendor relationships to help analyze existing user statistics and further showed the power of analyzing ILL usage data, which showed us that the F.I.L.L. principles had merit on an organizational level for building more user-centered collections. Furthermore, the Express Purchase program showed that we could use off-the-shelf technology to implement programs quickly and easily without excessive development time or staff training, while empowering our library staff to assist in the decision-making process. We put those two lessons together and dove into another collaboration with ProQuest, who had both the tools for analysis and a proven e-book interface, but now with the addition of a potentially staff-empowering selection model.

## **ILL-ATO PLAN**

Acquisitions wanted to create a more financially sustainable model of ILL data-based e-book acquisition, so in June of 2017 we asked the ProQuest sales team to take a fresh look at the original PALCI D2D Relais ILL data. Instead of building a traditional DDA profile of titles, we asked ProQuest to analyze and select all PALCI Relais titles that were used more than once and available as ATO e-books. ProQuest's analysis showed that of the 2,342 titles used more than once, 473 were available through ATO on Ebook Central. Our Cataloging Department further examined the results and discovered that 88 of the titles overlapped with other e-book programs, so in total Lehigh added 385 ATO e-book titles to the library catalog. We intend to do further analysis of both ILL statistics and traditional print circulation numbers to further add more ATO titles, including analysis of course reserve lists and addressing our spreadsheets of books missing from the shelves.

This is currently internally titled the ILL-ATO Plan, and we hope to report on its results at the end of the university fiscal year. Although our subject librarians once again feared the reader and that users would immediately rush to generate expenditures on the 385 ATO e-book titles, the fact that the ATO STL model strategically throttled the rate of the expenditures was important in reassuring those fears. The Express Purchase and GIST implementation experience had also helped develop an organizational cultural change: not fearing the reader had its benefits for collection development. With both evidence and reassurances and librarian buy-in, we are launching the ILL-ATO Plan for the fall of 2017.

Our organizational cultural change also included a new respect for our frontline staff, inclusive of ILL and the circulation desk. Since the ILL-ATO Plan allowed for quick turnaround of e-book activation within an hour, we expanded the success of the Express Purchase program and allowed those frontline staff persons to do title-by-title addition of ATO titles to the original 385 e-books. This helps our frontline staff offer a new and exciting method that assists users with obtaining access to e-books in minutes or hours, something that would take days via ILL.



All levels of staff in the library organization are authorized to add ATO titles. We have developed a workflow in which the ATO selector adds the new book to a specific list in the Ebook Central administration portal. In accordance with F.I.L.L. principles of communication and transparency, the selector also sends a standardized communication to the patron via email, enclosing the Ebook Central hyperlink. Since the ILL-ATO Plan handles funds by deducting from a ProQuest deposit account and Acquisitions monitors the expenditures, there is no handling of invoices or order records by librarians or frontline staff, so there is no additional need to expand job responsibilities to include acquisitions duties.

The intent of the ILL-ATO Plan is that both librarians and frontline staff will add ATO e-books regardless of the venue or point of need. This expands on the empowerment from the Express Purchase program, leaving it to the staff person to determine how to utilize this new tool and to do so in innovative ways. However, we did instruct staff on potential uses of the ILL-ATO Plan, including addressing an unfilled ILL book request, serving a user who needs a book immediately and cannot wait for ILL, and adding titles that are popular with patrons. Additionally, we utilize ATO e-books to facilitate access to books on the missing list or if the replacement cost is prohibitive. We are choosing to empower our frontline staff, who already do not fear the reader since they have frontline knowledge of them already, whether they are readers of print titles or e-books.

We find it important to emphasize that the ATO product was not necessarily designed to handle this workflow, but we are repurposing it and applying an off-the-shelf technology for innovative and empowering purposes. But we recognized that the product could be used for something other than its original intent, just like how ILLiad was not originally designed to handle acquisitions requests. However, since we are working “around the product’s design” but working within its capabilities, we had to train our staff and empower them to find their own path whenever an outlier situation pops up outside of a rote ATO request. But most importantly, the message we want you to hear is that we went from a situation in which a frontline staff person would have a patron asking for an item Lehigh did not have access to but the staff person would have to refer the request to a subject librarian, ILL, or

Express Purchase to an empowered frontline staff person who could turn on access to that requested item immediately.

## **AUTOMATED REPORTS**

Concurrent with the development of Express Purchase, the LoGreco Plan, and the ILL-ATO Plan, we experimented with automated reports that combined ILL data with traditional library reports. Our hope was that this would not only help us not fear the reader but also assist us in not fearing the volume of library data generated by our users. Although the Lehigh Libraries uses the Open Library Environment 3.0 (OLE) integrated library system (ILS) and the open source aspect of the software provides for easy data extraction, the lessons we learned from the experience are applicable to any technology environment where library data can be extracted. The choice of ILS is not as important as being able to extract the data in a meaningful way for your organization, since all systems more or less have some means to do so but implementation of that technology varies by organization. Conceptually speaking, by cross-referencing ILL usage data with other library data sets, we were able to leverage known patron behavior to enhance traditional library functions.

Acquisitions reached out to library technology staff to build automated reports, which happened fortuitously with Lehigh's investment into OLE development. We were already building various reports from the ground up, and adding some custom reports on ILL data was a natural extension of that process. Our senior analyst who was already working on OLE, Michelle Suranofsky, helped collate the PALCI ILL data since the Relais technology creates temporary records in the ILS in order to manage circulation, which allows for OLE to generate an ILS-based report that shows usage data. We could not have accomplished this without a technical specialist or other staff member that understood how such systems are interrelated.

We took the F.I.L.L. principle that "usage data about materials and the increasing amount of data available for decision-making is evidence for potential collection development" and guided Suranofsky in creating a PALCI Relais ILL report. This report was designed to

export on a weekly basis any monograph titles that were borrowed more than once. At this point, OLE had already been active for three years, so we had three years of Relais temporary records in the database, upon which Suranofsky ran matches based on the titles, which worked with sufficient accuracy to assure us that most connections between requests were made even if title was an imperfect match point. To limit the size of the report, we only matched on requests in PALCI ILL that were made that same week. As with the LoGreco Plan, the results showed that we were borrowing via ILL many titles repeatedly. Furthermore, many of those titles were already owned in print at Lehigh, revealing a gap in our ability to handle multiple persons needing the same book. This was a gap easily filled by e-books, but we previously lacked any systematic process to analyze ILL data to show that demand. The ILL report helped our librarians realize that internal circulation data from our permanent print collection was insufficient to show the entire overall pattern of use of requested materials inclusive of ILL; however, this new tool helped them make new choices that reacted to patron requests in a more timely fashion than waiting for the fiscal year analysis.

By seeing in near real-time the ILL borrowing trends, subject librarians could make faster acquisitions decisions, allocating resources to print or e-books as they saw fit, with the intent of building a collection more responsive to patron needs. Not only did this weekly report assist our librarians in collection development, but it also alleviated (in theory) some of the burdens placed on our staff with regard to physical ILL book processing.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Lehigh Libraries intends to further extend the coverage of this report to help with other library tasks that are currently relying on an incomplete picture of patron usage patterns. This is not to say that including ILL data completes the picture, but it helps fill in some of the blanks. In accordance with F.I.L.L. principles that ILL data can be useful for assisting with collection development, one such example is our project to match ILL data against our missing item lists in order to discover whether users are requesting items that should have been available in the stacks.

We would like to integrate not only the ILLiad ILL data of our institution but also the ILL and circulation data of other institutions, perhaps creating a data dashboard that shows overall regional usage and scholarly patterns of use. Not only do we want to empower all sides and levels of our organization, but we want to supercharge our librarian colleagues to help their own institution make slam dunk choices, while adding intrinsic value to their permanent collections in accordance with our traditional role of guardians and curators of information.

However, the full extent of these goals may be out of reach since we identified several key weaknesses in library systems and infrastructure, whether vended, open source, or from other sources. For example, even though we were able to use ILLiad and OLE to quickly serve our patrons via Express Purchase, there is no way to link those systems together into one seamless workflow. Off-the-shelf systems can be repurposed for cross-functional tasks, but there remains a gap that can only be filled by either open systems that facilitate true links or vended options that provide that level of interoperability. Our collaboration with Suranofsky has also led to the development of a prototype of a purpose-built acquisitions and ILL collaboration application, tentatively titled Project Wayfinder. Furthermore, there is no coherent methodology that is currently able to be implemented in existing systems to link together the disparate standards between ILL data, ILS, and vended print or e-book acquisition interfaces in a way that creates a standard data object that gives coherence to the similarities between different editions, formats, bindings, and other instances of a book. This limits the ability of any organization to fully embrace feedback from the reader across the myriad of platforms and fulfillment methods.

At the time of publication, no book jobber has stepped up to deliver a competitive option to Amazon Prime for rapid fulfillment of print book requests, even if book jobbers have significant experience with outputting data to library systems. With the decreasing returns in circulation from approval plans and traditional selection, the Lehigh Libraries asks the question, might we actually be at the end of significant “just in case” purchasing? If so, then there is a decreased need for the book jobber and an end to the need for large-scale warehousing of new titles at the point of publication and, alternatively, there is an increased need for a sustainable guarantee for access and purchase of those titles at a speed that meets patron expectations long after the

original date of publication. If Lehigh decides to expand the Express Purchase program, we have to ask ourselves if an expanded program can be supported without a vendor solution that is integrated with our systems and institutional structure. Building just the capability is insufficient if the workflow facilitated by the system does not match the culture and philosophies of a library organization, which vary tremendously by size and nature. Even though we no longer fear the reader, industry solutions have yet to fully capture that shift in library culture. Project Wayfinder is an experiment in bridging these gaps independent of vendor innovation, integrating our Express Purchase acquisitions processes with ILL statistics and automation of certain workflows to reduce staff time, decrease vendor costs, and further improve our service standards.

Lehigh Libraries seized the opportunity of changes in collection philosophies to explore new acquisition purchasing models and new services. It discovered more collections usage data and implemented more consortial e-book collections, and its ILL software and new ILS open source system allowed for integration of acquisitions processes. The time was right to work together under a common goal of providing the best customer service and fully establish cross-functional teamwork. This cross-functional work allowed for the opening of silos from Library Technology to Circulation to Acquisitions to Cataloging, and each team was ready to offer input and implement different workflows. It was time to empower our staff and integrate them into the acquisitions process. Libraries have already been implementing PDA (patron-driven acquisition) and DDA ordering plans and have trusted users to find content, so we decided to extend that philosophy to further encourage more patron participation. Circulation staff have users standing in front of them with demands such as meeting tight academic deadlines, and our users understand the potential and timeliness of ordering online. Libraries need to empower their staff by letting them suggest to the user other service options to fill their needs instead of slowing the process and referring requests on to another staff member. The natural extension of these principles is trusting the circulation staff and others who are dealing with our users to make collection decisions based on those user needs.

The Lehigh Libraries has more data to analyze, more experiments to conduct, and more brainstorming to do. This is all exciting and

challenging work. Even if not all of our changes end up being successful, we always succeed at challenging our staff to be proactive and discover potential positive service changes. We recognize that embracing input from staff always leads to learning something and inspiring new ideas. As leaders we need to make sure we are listening and allowing staff from different areas of the library to weigh in on services. If your organization is fearing the reader, what is your library doing to enhance cross-functional collaboration and to change your philosophical approach to collection development?

## NOTES

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