ILL Benchmarking recommendations: Trained staff✓, improved workflows✓, automation✓. What next!

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Abstract:

In 2001 the National Library of Australia participated in a Benchmarking Study of Australian interlibrary loan and document delivery services conducted by the National Resource Sharing Group. The study identified a number of key factors that maximised performance and made five recommendations; ensure staff are trained, improve work flows, report holdings on the union catalogue, explore cooperative agreements and automate. Five years later what has been achieved?

The National Library of Australia has main roles in resource sharing. Firstly, providing a national interlibrary loan and document delivery infrastructure supported by the Libraries Australia Service; secondly, as a major net lender offering document delivery and interlibrary loan services through the Library's Document Supply Service and thirdly as a leader in the development of national inter-library lending standards. Major changes have been achieved in all these areas over the last 5 years.

While this paper focuses on the changes in the Library's Document Supply Service over the last five years resulting from the Benchmarking Study, it will also touch on some of the developments the Library has undergone and will place these within the context of the Australian interlending environment. It also examines improvements made internally and externally to the Document Supply Service, with particular

reference to the Copies Direct Service for end users and the automation of the interlending and document delivery functions. The paper evaluates progress to date against the benchmarking recommendations and considers future areas for exploration.

Introduction

Interlibrary loan and document delivery by its very nature relies on cooperation and evaluation to provide resources to libraries and their users in the most cost effective and timely manner. Therefore it is inevitable that the use of management tools such as benchmarking found their way into the inter-library lending community.

Benchmarking is defined as the process "where organizations evaluate various aspects of their processes in relation to best practice, usually within their own sector. This then allows organizations to develop plans on how to adopt such best practice, usually with the aim of increasing some aspect of performance. Benchmarking may be a one-off event, but is often treated as a continuous process in which organizations continually seek to challenge their practices."[1] In 1998, Mary E. Jackson undertook a survey of North American research libraries to identify performance measures for interlibrary loan operations[2]. This study became the basis of several other surveys undertaken round the world[3].

In 1999 the National Library of Australia along with over one hundred Australian libraries participated in one of the most comprehensive surveys in inter-library lending conducted in Australia. Over 25,000 forms were received, input into spreadsheets and analysed. The survey was carried out by the National Resource Sharing Working Group (NRSWG)[4] with the assistance of the National Library of Australia. The key findings were published in the *Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery Benchmarking Study 2001*[5]. Four measures were used in the survey: turnaround time; fill rate; unit cost and user satisfaction. In turn these measures were used to identify the key factors that maximised performance and a number of recommendations were made. These included:
- redesign workflows to minimise steps
- implement an automation package
- ensure staff are well trained in bibliographic and other skills, and using systems
- add and maintain holdings on union catalogues, and
- investigate cooperative agreements with key libraries

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benchmarking (Accessed May 2006)
[2] Mary E. Jackson. "Measuring the Performance of Interlibrary Loan Operations in North American research and college libraries." Washington, DC: ARL, 1998.
[3] In addition to the North American and the Australia Studies on benchmarking interlibrary loan and document delivery services there was a study in 2003 of Nordic research libraries. Vattulaien, Pentti. Performance of Interlending in Nordic Academic libraries: Report for NORDINFO Board 2003 http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/nvbf/perform.pdf
[4] The National Resource Sharing Working Group (NRSWG) was set up to ensure that a robust, reliable and cost-effective interlending system, built on cooperation and agreed service standards and policies, is in place to serve Australian libraries and their users. See http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/nrswg/
[5] ILL/DD Benchmarking Study is available at http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/nrswg/illdd_rpt_sum.html

Background

In order to evaluate the changes the National Library has implemented since the survey it is useful to describe the Australian resource sharing environment and the different roles the Library plays in this arena. The *National Library of Australia Act (1960)[6]* defines the role of the Library in terms of "developing a national collection of Library material, including a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Australia and the Australian people; making library material in the national collection available; providing library services and cooperating in library matters with authorities or persons, whether in Australia or elsewhere, concerned with library matters"[7]. With this mandate the National Library of Australia is one of the largest net lending libraries in Australia and the Document Supply Service handles over 60,000 requests, primarily from Australia libraries, with approximately 15% from overseas. While the Library has always supplied copies from its collections to library users, in 2003 a new online service, linked to the Library's online catalogue, was developed. "Copies Direct[8]", which is aimed at providing copies directly to end users, contributes to the Library's key goal as articulated in our public strategic directions statement for 2006-2008 "…to enhance learning and knowledge creation by further simplifying and integrating services that allow our users to find and get material…"[9].

One of the avenues the Library has taken to support resource sharing amongst Australian libraries is in providing access to union catalogue data, firstly on microform and from 1981 online. The resource sharing network commenced as union catalogue tool but it soon became evident that this data provided a rich source of information for other forms of resource sharing and in the 1989 an interlibrary loan module was introduced to facilitate a national online inter-lending system. By the early 1990s it became obvious that an online payment system was required to support and streamline the service. The payment scheme introduced in 1993 enabled libraries to be charged for items requested or paid for material supplied.

The service began with 6 libraries and grew quickly; today Libraries Australia[10] has more than 1,000 members who have added over 40,000,000 holdings and are creating over 250,000 interlibrary loan requests per annum. Libraries Australia while not the only union catalogue available to libraries in Australia[11] is the largest and most comprehensive and it would be fair to say that it provides the backbone of Australian interlibrary loan and document delivery (ILL/DD).

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[6] http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/nla1960177/

[7] ibid

[8] http://www.nla.gov.au/copiesdirect/index.html

[9] National Library of Australia, Strategic Direction for 2006-2008 at http//www.nla.gov.au/

[10] The Australian Bibliographic network was launched in 1981 using Western Libraries Network (WLN) software. In 1999, the service was renamed Kinetica and a new software platform introduced. This service used a distributed architectural solution based on AMICUS for the bibliographic services and Virtual Document eXchange (VDX) for interlibrary loans. In 2005 the library moved to the current software platform using the OCLC PICA product CBS for bibliographic Services, Terra-text for the search interface and VDX for the ILL/DD service. This new service was renamed Libraries Australia. In February 2006 a free version of the service was launched http://librariesaustralia.nla.gov.au/apps/kss.

[11] List of Australian union catalogues http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries/resource/cat.html

The National Library of Australia, in its leadership role, has participated in and supported the ILL/DD community for a very long time. It works with the library sector to set up summits, forums and bodies to regulate and support standards for resource sharing; for example, the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (ACLIS) and later the National Resource Sharing Working Group (NRSWG)[12]. The Library also collaborates with different peak sectoral library bodies such as the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) in setting the direction for resource sharing in Australia. The National Library is committed to continuous improvement within the sector and in May 2006 hosted the Resource Sharing Consultation Forum with representatives from the library peak bodies attending a full day meeting to determine the future direction and standards for ILL/DD in Australia. This Forum is expected to convene on an annual basis.

This paper explores the changes the National Library has undertaken to implement the findings of the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study from three perspectives; as a leader in coordinating resource sharing standards; as a net lender of resources and in providing the infrastructure that supports the resource sharing community. There is considerable overlap between these roles as each one tends to influence and inform developments in the other. Over the last few years there has been a convergence of these three roles, with the Library looking more broadly at national needs and collaborating with and the library sector to develop an infrastructure to support these goals. The evaluation will report against the key factors maximising performance from the Benchmarking Study and reflect on the future.

Eliminate steps

The ILL/DD Benchmarking Study recommended workflows be examined to ensure there are as few steps as possible in order to improve turnaround times. The recommendation covered such processes as: reviewing internal processes, enabling patrons to create their requests electronically and enabling requestors to obtain the bulk of material requested from the first library approached.

On the national front, the ILL/DD benchmarking study was fundamental in identifying the characteristics of high performing ILL/DD operations and was the major instrument for raising awareness and changing ILL/DD practices, not only in Australia but internationally. The recent evaluation of the ILL Benchmarking Study found that 51% of 161 respondents to the survey reviewed their processes to eliminate steps in the ILL/DD process. Of the 82 libraries that reported reviewing their workflows, 52% also implemented an automated ILL/DD system.

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[12] The National Resource Sharing Working Group (NRSWG) which operated between 1999 -2004 was an initiative of the National Library in response to concerns expressed by users and librarians about the effectiveness of the interlending system. In setting up the group, the Library received strong support from industry bodies including the Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL), the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Library Collections Task Force. The aim of the group was to ensure that a robust, reliable and cost-effective interlibrary loan and document delivery system, built on cooperation and agreed service standards and policies, was in place to serve Australian libraries and their users.

At the same time that the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study was undertaken, the National Resource Sharing Working Group also took on the responsibility of reviewing ILL/DD service levels and defining a new Interlibrary Resource Sharing (ILRS) code that not only clarified the service levels but assigned turnaround times and set recommended charges.

The code has been reviewed twice since then, firstly in 2003 and again in 2006. Each time the code has been reviewed there have been improvements either in reducing the turnaround time or in refining the standards and principles. The adoption of the code is significant as it defined for the first time a *maximum* five working day turnaround time for regular requests. This benchmark was recently reduced to a *maximum* of four working days and there is an expectation that this will decline with future reviews. The code has also been instrumental in changing library thinking; five years ago libraries would not have contemplated setting a minimum loan period, yet this year (2006) a minimum loan period of three weeks was adopted nationally.

The National Library's Document Supply Service undertook an internal process review to eliminate as many steps in our workflow as possible, while at the same time recognising that automation offered the best option for maximising efficiency. As a first step the library has developed a simple web application that allows individuals to place requests and give their payments details within a secure environment. The Copies Direct service has brought together seven separate requesting services, based on the format of the resource, under the one umbrella. It has streamlined requesting for individuals by enabling standardised pricing and ordering. Another feature of the service was a move to electronic delivery of resources wherever possible, in most cases using the Ariel software.

In 2002-3, Libraries Australia established an expert advisory group to look at ILL/DD infrastructure improvements. The report[13] made a number of recommendations; namely that Libraries Australia Document Delivery can provide libraries with efficiencies in ILL/DD; promote efficient work practices using the network and payments systems and increase the number of non-library suppliers available through the network. To date progress has been made in improving services, primarily through simplifying the interface and offering electronic delivery via a document store on the national system.

The National Library of Australia's major goal is to provide end users to with fast, direct and easy access to information resources. To support this, the Library subscribes to a growing number of electronic databases and is digitising significant amounts of its Australian collections, including music scores, audio recordings and photographs. In 2006-2007 the Library will also commence a major newspaper digitisation program. The availability of free digitised collection items, accessible through the Library's catalogue and other online services such as PictureAustralia[14] and MusicAustralia[15], is contributing to a reduction in ILL/DD requests. However, the work of the Document Supply Service complements this activity through the digitisation of out-of-copyright resources for the Copies Direct service. Items digitised for Copies Direct are added to the Library's Digital Collections Management

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[13] http://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/download/EAGDD_final.pdf
[14] http://www.pictureaustralia.org/index.html
[15] http://www.musicaustralia.org/

System and are made accessible to all users through the online catalogue. To date over 200 out of print Australian books have been digitised.

In 2003-4 the National Library conducted a pilot project with public libraries "…to better understand how the Australian library network could meet the needs of Australians, be they in major capital cities with access to many collections or in regional Australia with access to their local public library."[16] The Information Australia pilot[17] offered public library patrons access to both bibliographic databases and selected electronic resources via a portal service, supported by free interlibrary loans from the participating libraries and the National Library. Five public libraries across Australia participated.

In 2003 the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Inquiry into the Role of Libraries in the Online Environment[18] recommended:

- *that the National Library of Australia receive additional funding to provide improved access to Kinetica (now Libraries Australia) for all Australian libraries and end users.*
- *that the National Library of Australia identify a number of key databases for which national site licensing might be desirable; and*
- *that additional government funding be extended to the National Library of Australia for this purpose.*

The National Library undertook to develop services to meet these recommendations. The Information Australia pilot provided valuable input to the development of the Libraries Australia search interface and the new free service was launched in February 2006. Libraries Australia has significantly enhanced the ability of end users to find the resources they need for their research or personal pursuits. However, while the options presented to end users for obtaining a copy of the resources they have found have improved through LA, further improvement, in particular on the ILL/DD side, is required.

The Libraries Australia search service (for subscribers) incorporates an enhanced requesting feature. This feature is designed to allow libraries to enable their patrons to search the different databases including the Australian National Bibliographic Network (ANBD) on Libraries Australia; to locate the material they want; and create a request that is automatically forwarded to their Libraries Australia document delivery account. All Libraries Australia users are also able to request the material held by the National Library through Copies Direct, or to place an order directly with an online bookseller if they prefer. The National Library is also working with Google to add ANBD records to Google Scholar with links back to the free Libraries Australia service.

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[16] Report on the project can be found at http://www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/2005/missingham1.html
[17] ibid
[18] http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_communications/completed_inquiries/2002-04/online_libraries/report/index.htm

Automation

The second recommendation was to implement an automation package as it was found that automating any part of the ILL/DD process reduced both turnaround time and unit costs.

In order to advance this recommendation at the national level the Library undertook to host a number of activities aimed at increasing awareness of automated solutions. In November 2002, the NRSWG and the National Library of Australia organised the "National Resource Sharing Forum and Field Day". This two day event facilitated discussion of new models for resource sharing and exploration of ideas for improving library services and processes. A number of vendors were invited to talk about the different automated software solutions available to users. This Forum was followed by the 8th Interlending and Document Supply (ILDS) Conference held at the National Library in October 2003. The Conference theme centred on the removal of barriers to access for end users through the provision of easy to use, direct online ILL/DD services. The success of these activities is clear, the *Evaluation of the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study (2006)* report shows 43% of the 161 participants in the survey had implemented automated systems and a further 22% plan to implement an automated system in the new future.

On the home front, the National Library of Australia is interested in finding an automated solution to improve the management of internal ILL/DD processes for some items. Any automated solution needs to be able to interoperate with the Libraries Australia document delivery service.

The National Library receives requests from many sources; Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC), ILL Manager (the library is a Research Libraries Group (RLG) Shares member), Libraries Australia document delivery, email, fax, Copies Direct requests and the occasional phone call. By their very nature, the multiple requesting paths have created complex work practices. In January 2005, the Library issued a request for quotation (RFQ) to automate both the ILL/DD services to libraries and the Copies Direct service. Following an evaluation process the Relais Enterprise product was purchased. This software allows the Library to automate all of the requesting options into a single system. The Copies Direct service as already mentioned allows users to order copies of any collection items online and to provide payment details. The advantage of the Relais system is that it allows the Library to securely receive credit card information. The system encrypts credit card details sent with the request.

So how does it work? The system receives requests via email, through the web form, or via the ISO ILL protocol. It automatically checks against the Library's catalogue to identify the appropriate location within the Library. The National Library has a complex stack arrangement with material located over four floors, and two warehouses located 15 kilometres away. Requests are then directed to printer queues. These sort the requests by stack location and classification number, manage the printing frequency and ensure they are printed in the appropriate stack or at the warehouse. Staff follows the usual processes to supply the material

The system integrates scanning capacity with document delivery and uses ftp, email or posting to the web to deliver the material electronically. The system also enables

the streamlining of some of the administrative tasks, for example invoices are now generated from data extracted from the system rather than input manually into the finance system. Diagram 1 illustrates the complexity of the system.
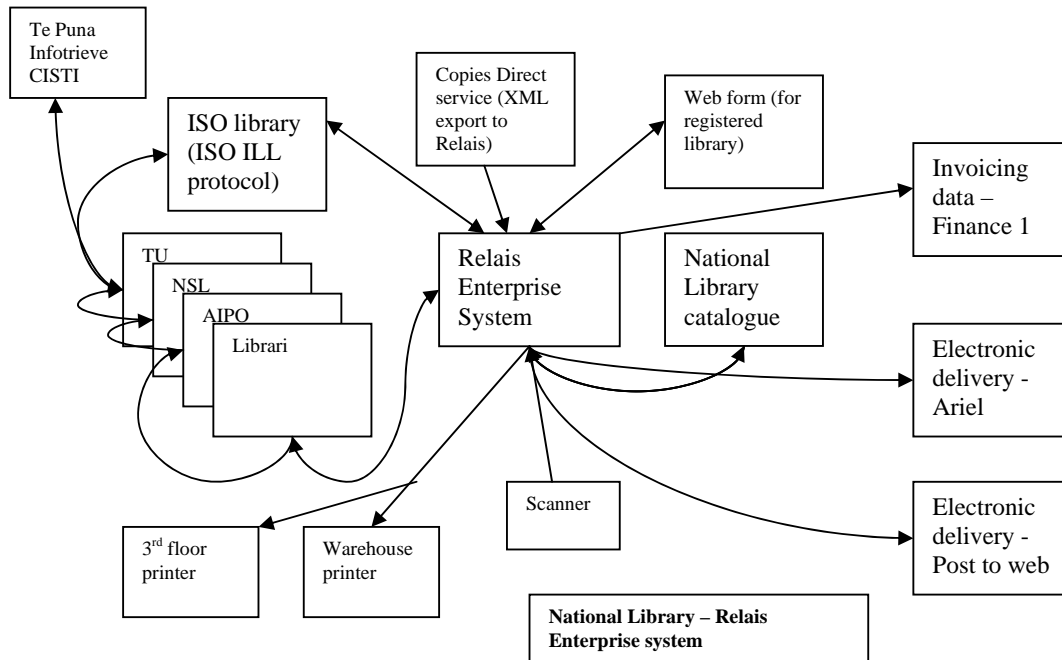
Diagram 1. Relais system at the National Library of Australia.

As mentioned earlier, the Relais system is ISO ILL compliant and one of the main requirements is that it interoperates with Libraries Australia document delivery based on the Virtual eXchange software (VDX). This system is standards based and operates using the ISO ILL protocol, i.e. ISO 10160. The Libraries Australian document delivery service supports both, centralised, through the Libraries Australia interface, and decentralised requesting with libraries using their own ISO ILL compliant systems. The Libraries Australia document delivery service now interoperates with VDX, Voyager ILL, ILL Manager, Relais, and testing is well underway with Aleph.

Libraries Australia document delivery maintains a gateway service enabling all users of these systems to exchange requests and take advantage of the Libraries Australia payment scheme. Requests can be routed through the gateway and invoicing is undertaken on the central system. This has enabled some of the major libraries in Australia to implement ILL management systems to more efficiently support their ILL/DD units and offer more integrated services to their patrons. This gateway service also enables Libraries Australia to offer members access to several commercial suppliers. Libraries are able to route their requests to Infotrieve and CISTI, the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information.

In March 2006, Libraries Australia Document Delivery and Te Puna Interloan, the New Zealand equivalent, began to interoperate network-to-network. This allows

members of both networks to seamlessly exchange requests with each other. This development adds an extra 300 libraries to Libraries Australia Document Delivery, and brings the total number of libraries involved in ILL between the two countries to 900. Payments for requests made to and from Te Puna Interloan members by Libraries Australia Document Delivery members are managed by the Libraries Australia Payments Service.
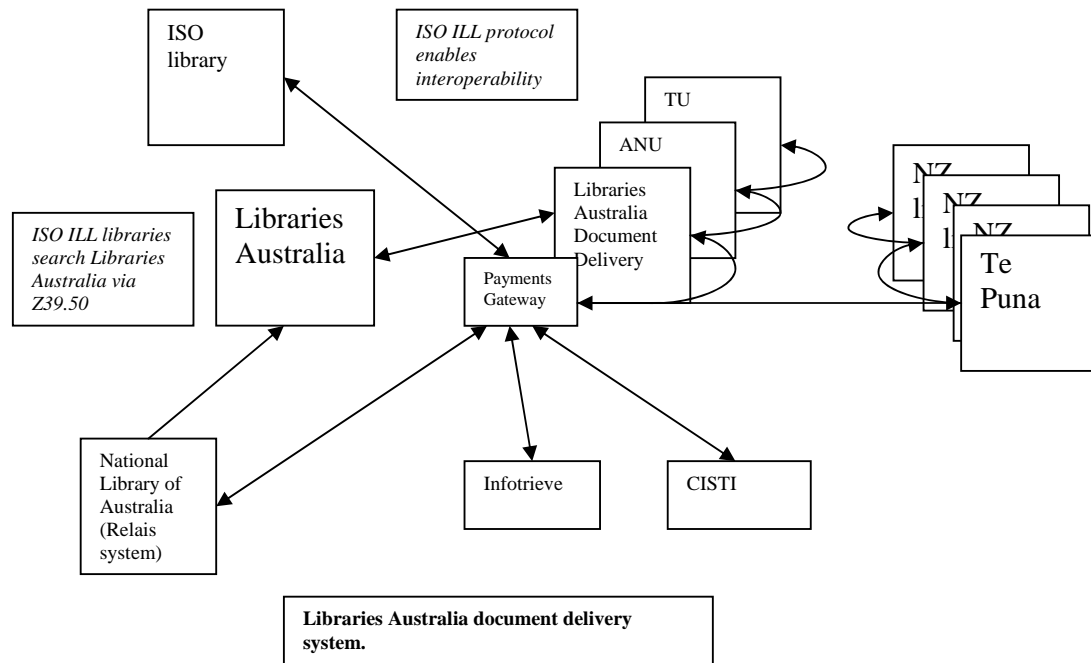
Diagram 2. Libraries Australia Document Delivery system showing the connection to the Te Puna Interloan system.

Trained staff

The third recommendation was to ensure ILL/DD staff were well trained in resources and systems. The study showed that staffing is the major contributor to costs; therefore the better trained the greater the efficiencies.

To promote the findings of the ILL Benchmarking Study, an ILL Best Practise Workshop was developed in 2002. This workshop was aimed at both practioners and managers and was designed to generate discussion and encourage libraries to review their workflows. The study had found that no library topped all measures and therefore there was room for improvements in all sectors. The workshops were very successful. As mentioned earlier, the Library recently undertook an evaluation of the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study. This evaluation demonstrated that the group that participated in the training had the highest level of automation (66%), compared with only 28% from the group that did not undertake training.

The training program was so successful that the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ) and New Zealand's Joint Standing Committee on Interloan (JSCI) developed

a one day workshop (and workbook[19]) for New Zealand (NZ) based on the Australian workshop.

Libraries Australia has offered training in using the document delivery service through training agents for many years. This training is designed to allow libraries to efficiently use the system. The library maintains a training database to assist, and has a self-paced training manual developed for those libraries unable to access the workshops.

Contribute to union catalogues

The fourth recommendation, add and maintain holdings on union catalogues seems obvious. Libraries are more efficient suppliers if they minimise requests for material not held and are more effective requesters if they have access to up-to-date information about other libraries' collections.

The Library undertook to promote the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study and as already mentioned organised with the NRSWG, workshops, forums and conferences. The report on the Evaluation of the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study showed that 81% of 161 participants in the survey indicated their organisation adds and maintains holdings on the ANBD.

With increased numbers of libraries acquiring electronic collections, the NRSWG recommended that libraries negotiate ILL/DD access into their agreements. While the *Australian Copyright Amendment (Digital agenda) Act (2000)*[20] allows document delivery from digital materials, most electronic resources are acquired through contract and unless specifically included in the negotiations, libraries are not providing ILL copies from these collections. In fact, in the 2003 Electronic Resources Expert Advisory Group survey, 44% of respondents reported they did not provide document supply from any electronic collection and only 37% provided document supply contingent on the specific licence agreements for each collection. Anecdotal evidence suggests that libraries are not requesting from these resources unless the holding statements clearly indicate support of ILL/DD and libraries are not supplying unless the terms and conditions explicitly permit document delivery. This is an area in which further progress needs to be made.

Libraries Australia has always promoted the benefits of adding and maintaining holdings information on the Australian National Bibliographic Database (ANBD). In fact the E-Resources Expert Advisory Group went as far as to recommend that "The National Library should promote the advantages of reporting holdings to the ANBD, even when access restrictions apply to the material."[21] The report also recommended the Library acquire data sets for e-collections to allow libraries to more easily add holdings and to develop guidelines for describing these resources. Libraries Australia has implemented a number of these recommendations already, seeking sources for bibliographic records and negotiating agreements for datasets; for example with Serial Solutions to acquire records for a number of e-resources.

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[19] http://www.lianza.org.nz/library/files/store_008/Interloans_best_practice_handbook.PDF
[20] http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/caaa2000294/
[21] http://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/eag_aer_survey_finalreport.html

Cooperative agreements

The fifth recommendation was to investigate cooperative agreements with key libraries since these offer benefits such as reductions in administrative costs and greater availability of material. Collaborative agreements sometimes include a more liberal lending policy for members than can be obtained through the national system.

While the Library is keen to pursue this recommendation and support others who wish to develop cooperatives agreements, as a net lender there is little scope for entering into reciprocal arrangements.

On the other hand in 2005 Libraries Australia implemented a facility enabling members with reciprocal agreements to use the national system without the need to charge. Libraries with this type of agreement are able to list their partners and therefore when they supply material the system allocates the appropriate charges for their group and in many cases '0' for those that do not charge each other.

In the area of electronic resources the Library has participated in a number of consortia arrangements. The Council of Australia State Libraries (CASL) Consortia for the acquisition of electronic resources has enabled the Library to negotiate good deals for e-resources. State Library members have been able to take advantage of these deals, and in some cases extend the offer to their public library networks

Future

The Library strongly advocates free searching to enable users to find the material they need. Free access to metadata is becoming more accepted and some of the large electronic database vendors are beginning to enter into this new paradigm. The Library acknowledges that while searching will generally be 'free', accessing the item, whether online through full text databases or through interlibrary loan, may cost the user a nominal fee.

So where do we go from here? How do libraries continue to improve ILL/DD services particularly in light of the increase in the volume of digitised resources or resources available in electronic format?

Eliminating steps

The National Library of Australia has a strong end user focus and encourages other libraries to adopt this approach. Libraries need to move into their patrons' space and not necessarily expect them to find our collections through library catalogues or other library services. To this end Libraries Australia has supplied metadata to Google to ensure material in Australian libraries is easier to locate. Once the user locates the item, there is a link to Libraries Australia, where the holding library can be identified. Although this is a major step for resource discovery, there is still much work needed to enable the seamless delivery of resources to users.

At the recent Resource Sharing Consultation Forum held at the National Library of Australia in May 2006, a number of initiatives were agreed to in order to further enhance end user access to ILL/DD services. A group has been set up to explore the

possibility of offering a national "Copies Direct" type service, directly aimed at end users through a coordinated approach incorporating a number of different organisations. While this initiative will not suit all libraries, those with a mandate to serve the public will likely benefit and participate. The group will also look at extending these services to interlibrary loans and will explore possible models to enable individuals to borrow from participating libraries. The model will also look at the feasibility of delivering resources directly to users at home: this is particularly important in a country the size of Australia. This type of project is complex and solutions will need to be flexible.

Automation

Libraries Australia continues to improve its services to users. There are plans underway to enable electronic document delivery through a centralised system. This will allow libraries to scan documents and deliver them through the Libraries Australia document store, further reducing delivery times and therefore offering a better service to their users. There are also plans to deliver invoices electronically thereby streamlining the administrative processes, and ISO ILL interoperability testing will continue to allow other ILL management systems to join the network.

The Library continues to search for new suppliers to add to the Libraries Australia document delivery service and discussions have started with the British Library.

As mentioned in the previous section the resource delivery services in the free Libraries Australia need further refinement to enable end users easier and immediate access to material in libraries. The current service identifies the library that holds the material but does not allow the user to request it online, except for material held by the Library where the user is able to request it through Copies Direct.

Trained staff

Regional groups have been keen to find opportunities to discuss and exchange information on resource sharing. In Victoria two regionally organised forums were held, the first in 2002 and the second in 2004. In 2005, building on the success of the Victorian group, the ACT Libraries Australia Document Delivery User Group held a workshop[22] at the National Library of Australia. The "Evaluation of the ILL/DD Benchmarking Study" shows that 59% of organisation provided training for their ILL/DD staff. This suggests there is still room for improvement.

At the last forum of the NRSWG, the need to develop an ILL manual was acknowledged. The latest guide to interlibrary loan *Ausloan 2: Australian inter-library loan manual* was published in 1986 and is out of date. The library community recognises the need for an updated version, however in today's rapidly changing environment a publication of this type is expensive to produce and keep up to date.

There is a plan to develop an online resource based on the Wiki software. This project will begin in the second half of 2006 under the leadership of the Australian Library and Information Association Interlibrary Loan Expert Advisory Group with National

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[22] http://www.nla.gov.au/initiatives/meetings/ilddw/index.html

Library of Australia participation. The aim of this project is to develop a collaborative model for updating and maintaining information on resource sharing, allowing broad discussion of issues and the development of best practise.

Contribute to union catalogues:

At the recent Resource Sharing Consultation Forum the topic of contributing to Libraries Australia was discussed, particularly in relation to electronic resources. The Library continues to explore sources of bibliographic data for this material, and encourages libraries to negotiate to supply document delivery and to clearly describe their holdings on the union catalogue.

Cooperative agreements

At the May 2006 Resource Sharing Consultation Forum the current charging model was discussed, as was the possibility of making ILL/DD free. This would be a significant change and requires careful thought: it will be interesting to participate in this discussion.

Despite individual libraries and Australian library consortia subscribing to a variety of electronic resources there are still some Australians who do not have access to resources they would like to use, simply because they are not affiliated with a library which subscribes to the resources they are interested in. Several Forums were held to discuss this issue. The development of a national site licence was given wide support by the library community and a reference group[23] was set up to develop a list of products, a costing and governance model, and communication strategy. A request for proposal is expected to be finalised in mid 2006.

Conclusions

Over the last five years the National Library of Australia has made significant improvements to its ILL/DD service and continues to work with the Australian library sector to improve the national infrastructure supporting ILL/DD and the standards that underpin this. Although the increasing availability of online resources is challenging the ILL/DD sector, it is fair to say that there is a strong commitment to improving access to ILL/DD to ensure that the wealth of resources held in library collections across Australia can be easily discovered and seamlessly delivered to end users.

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