

Beyond the Library Collections

Proceedings of the 2022 Erasmus Staff Training Week at ULiège Library

François Renaville and Fabienne Prosmans (Eds.)

ULIÈGE LIBRARY
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Contents

Preface	xi
<i>Tina Baich</i>	
Introduction	1
<i>François Renaville and Fabienne Prosmans</i>	
<u>Part I. Collaboration for shared collections and preservation</u>	
Collection management collaborations in Sweden	7
<i>Karin Byström</i>	
Access to academic heritage: ENC theses available online	19
<i>Camille Carette</i>	
When David and Goliath work together: The impact of a cooperation agreement on library strategy	27
<i>Susanne Kirchmair</i>	
How the interlibrary loan service can collaborate with other libraries and university services	39
<i>Isàvena Opisso</i>	
<u>Part II. DDA and EBA as opportunities</u>	
Purchase on demand via interlibrary loan: Analysis of the first four years at University of Antwerp Library	49
<i>Jennifer Van den Avijle and Luca Maggiore</i>	
Patron-Driven Acquisition et Evidence-Based Acquisition : Comment implémenter ces modèles afin d'étendre l'offre documentaire dans une bibliothèque ?	63
<i>Marion Favre and Manon Velasco</i>	

Part III. Interlibrary loan workflows and experiences

- How library systems influence the interlibrary loan workflow: A comparison between Alma and Koha 91
Martina Kassler and Veronica Fors
- International loans in the Main Library of AGH UST: The technical library as a witness of change 109
Karolina Forma
- The gentle art of giving and receiving: Resource sharing services in a museum library 119
Florian Preiß
- Four years of ILL service at the Faculty Library of Arts and Philosophy (Ghent University): Findings and challenges 129
Joris Baeyens
- Changing tools, changing habits, changing workflows: Recent evolutions of the interlibrary loan service at ULiège Library 139
Fabienne Prosmans and François Renaville

Part IV. Enhanced ILL services through collaborations and networks

- From fee to free: How to reduce expenses by eliminating revenue 163
Léa Bouillet
- HERMES, an international project on free digital resource sharing 173
Carmen Lomba; Stefania Marzocchi; and Debora Mazza
- The NILDE network and document delivery in Verona University Libraries 187
Elisabetta Guerra

Part V. Impact of Covid-19 on library accessibility and services

- COVID-19. New challenges and new solutions at the University of Warsaw Library 201
Franciszek Skalski

How COVID has changed our world. New opportunities for the future? A case study for UPM Libraries <i>Reyes Albo</i>	217
Book Contributors	227
Acknowledgements	235

Preface

Tina Baich

Resource sharing has long been a core library service, but throughout my relatively short seventeen years in the field, I've witnessed the rapid evolution of resource sharing to being truly essential. A single library collection cannot meet all the information needs of that library's constituents. In recognition of its centrality, resource sharing practitioners have simultaneously become even more user-centered and collaborative in developing and delivering services. Libraries are interdependent and must work together as a distributed network to support everyone's right to access and benefit from information.

In my mind, resource sharing has grown to encompass a number of library activities that make resources available across the international library network – from on demand acquisitions that meet immediate local needs, to shared print initiatives that ensure long-term access across cooperating libraries, to digital collections and repositories that make unique local content available to anyone with an internet connection. The papers in this collection represent this broad view of resource sharing. Several authors discuss the interlibrary loan management, workflows, and infrastructure that are foundational to resource sharing (Kassler & Fors; Forma; Lomba, Marzocchi, & Mazza; Guerra; Prosmans & Renaville), including purchase on demand programs (Van den Avijle & Maggiore; Favre & Velasco). Byström discusses shared print and digitization in Sweden, and several others highlight the importance of providing digital access, notably via ILL, to otherwise difficult to obtain materials through digital collections and institutional repositories (Preiß, Carette). While making digital surrogates available long-term is fundamentally resource sharing, this activity typically requires collaboration with other departments (Opisso).

Because of its user-centered focus, resource sharing is also necessarily adaptable and forward-looking. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many library services required adaptation, and two of the included papers discuss this necessity within resource sharing operations (Albo, Skalski). It is my belief that our commitment to our users and to equity led to changes that are, in some cases, for the long-term good of those we serve. For instance, Bouillet discusses the elimination of fees as both a practical business decision and a more equitable approach to library service, and Baeyens addresses two of the most pressing issues for resource sharing – e-book lending and controlled digital lending. Finally, Kirchmair describes an instance of adaptability and creativity in providing library resources in unforeseen circumstances.

As I consider this set of papers, my beliefs about resource sharing are reaffirmed. Sharing is universal. The techniques and services we use to share locally can be used globally. And, perhaps most importantly, through collaboration and knowledge sharing, we learn

so much from each other. In a global information age, it is not enough to share within your city, state, country, or even region. Collaboration and sharing are absolutely necessary to the fulfillment of the library's mission to provide access to information. The authors of these papers represent a global community of resource sharing practitioners seeking to serve a global community of learners, researchers, and teachers. I'm privileged and proud to count myself as a member of their community.

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