Interlibrary Loan in the North Carolina Information Network: the Impact of "Selective Users" on a Net-Lender University Library

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Author's Note: *This study reflects one academic library's analysis of the possible impact of its interlibrary loan service by the North Carolina Information Network's dial access selective users. This study does not intend to state that similar experiences will occur in other libraries in North Carolina. The author will, however, continue to monitor interlibrary loan activity and, if possible, consider data on interlibrary activity provided by other academic libraries in North Carolina. This study is presented here because of the scarcity of data on this topic and the growing importance of interlibrary loan in North Carolina.*

In the January 1986 report of the Secretary of Cultural Resources' approval to further develop and implement the North Carolina Information Network, the North Carolina Bibliographic Database was listed as one of three macronetworking programs targeted for initial development effort.[1] King Research Associates, in its 1982 report on the feasibility of library networking in North Carolina, stated, "We feel very strongly that OCLC has and will continue to provide the foundations on which library networking in North Carolina can be built."[2] To this effort, the State Library of North Carolina, in February 1986, requested from Joyner Library at East Carolina University and from other libraries within the state permission to use each library's current and future records in OCLC as part of the North Carolina Bibliographic Database maintained at OCLC, Inc.

An earlier survey of library cooperation done by the State Library indicated that "the primary factors which influence interlibrary cooperation are access and a cooperative philosophy in library administration."[3] Alberta Smith stressed the importance of educational and attitudinal steps in developing a state network. "Only if librarians

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from all types of libraries agree that mutual responsibility for sharing is beneficial and non-threatening can they demonstrate ... the benefits which accrue from mutual commitment to reducing duplication of effort and expanding access."[4] Dorothy Russell in her article on interlibrary loan in the PALINET environment stated that once the technology is here, "it will be the people who make it work."[5]

At the May and early June 1986 regional meetings held by the State Library on the North Carolina Information Network, one agenda item given special emphasis was the new opportunity available to a library as a "Selective User." Libraries who chose to become "Selective Users" would not only be able to access the North Carolina Online Union Catalog (NCOUG), but they would also be able to request the items those bibliographic records represented through the OCLC ILL Subsystem. The OCLC Interlibrary Loan Subsystem had been implemented in 1979. Interlibrary loan request placement was one of six library operational functions defined as having potential for networking in North Carolina in the 1982 King report and was one of the two primary OCLC services recommended to be used (cataloging, of course, being the other.)[6]

Since the North Carolina Online Union Catalog became operational in late May 1986, the State Library has been encouraging libraries to become "Selective Users": an economically feasible dial access basis affording usage of NCOUG and the OCLC ILL Subsystem. In the fall of 1986, Howard McGinn reported the possibility of over five hundred libraries using the North Carolina Online Union Catalog by the end of 1987.[7] There are 244 institutions in North Carolina having "Selective" status in the current directory listing, *OCLC Participating Institutions Arranged by OCLC Symbol* and its *Supplement*, which covers through

June 1987. Seventy-one of these libraries are active selection users as of this date. Waldhart in his 1985 report on the growth rate of interlibrary loan mentioned that it was "too early to know the exact impact such systems [dial access ability to some form of interlibrary loan] will have on interlibrary loan activities in the U.S. over the next decade, although it is clear that the impact will be substantial."[8]

This network development and increased accessibility for North Carolina libraries within the past year raises the question of impact, especially for library management, regarding the interlibrary lending activity of one's library. Richard Dougherty addressed a number of concerns for management regarding networks in the late 1970's, interlibrary loan being one of the areas.[9] The *Interlibrary Loan Practices Handbook* itself warns about the need to be aware of network or library changes that can affect ILL operations, as "outside decisions can push interlibrary loan into a new environment."[10]

ask what impact, if any, has the "Selective User" capability had on the library's interlibrary lending activity?

Joyner Library continues to be a net-lender. While the number of requests received is currently over two and one half times the number of requests initiated, the spread did lessen somewhat this past year as seen in Table 1.

As a net-lender, the total number of overall requests filled by Joyner Library in 1986/87 via the OCLC ILL Subsystem increased by 22%, while the total number of requests filled within North Carolina increased by 29% (Table 2). Previous to this, the increase did not vary. The number of requests filled within the state as a percentage of the total requests filled has increased by 3% this past year and now represents 55% of the library's lending activity.

Since a logical interpretation of this data infers that Joyner Library's interlibrary lending activity may well have been affected by the increased availability of ILL within the state,

Table 1.
Joyner Library Net Lender Status

	1984/85	% Difference	1985/86	% Difference	1986/87
Requests Received	4,040	+31%	5,312	+16%	6,166
Requests Initiated	1,329	+29%	1,714	+37%	2,343
Total OCLC ILL Activity	5,369	+31%	7,026	+21%	8,509

The availability of the OCLC Interlibrary Loan Subsystem Monthly Activity Report allows one to track not only overall lending and borrowing activity on the Subsystem, but also lending and borrowing activity within and outside one's own state. Joyner Library has been subscribing to this report since it became available in the spring of 1984. Monthly and year-to-date data appear each month, the year-to-date data cumulating from July through June each year. Statistical data has been analyzed for the last three years, i.e., academic years 1984/85, 1985/86, and 1986/87.

With the knowledge that college and university libraries have greater total resources than any other type of library in North Carolina, and the knowledge that Joyner Library is the major resource in eastern North Carolina (East Carolina University continues to be the third largest university in the UNC System), it is reasonable to

further analysis of data available in the June cumulations of the Monthly Activity Report was undertaken. A spreadsheet was set up to include the three-letter OCLC symbol, name of the library (obtained from the current *OCLC Participating Institutions Arranged by OCLC Symbol*), "Selective" status (if so listed in this OCLC directory), category of the library,[11] and the year-to-date total for lending and borrowing. Analysis of borrowing by Joyner Library is not within the scope of this study and is therefore not included in this report.

This data did indeed confirm that network implementation and increased accessibility for North Carolina libraries, and particularly those with "Selective User" status, had affected the library's interlibrary lending activity. The data also brought forth other interesting facts addressed in library literature, agreeing with some

Table 2.
Joyner Library Lending Activity via ILL Subsystem (OCLC)

	1984/85	% Difference	1985/86	% Difference	1986/87
Total Requests Filled	2,136	+38%	2,950	+22%	3,592
Requests Filled in N.C.	1,112	+38%	1,531	+29%	1,980

Table 3.
In-State Institutions Having Requests Filled

	1984/85	% Distribution	1985/86	% Distribution	1986/87	% Distribution
Total number lent to	31		40		77	
—Academic institutions	23	74%	29	73%	42	54%
—Public library institutions	2	6%	2	5%	16	21%
—Special institutions	3	10%	4	10%	12	16%
—Governmental institutions	3	10%	5	12%	7	9%

statements and at variance with others.

A 93% increase—to seventy-seven institutions—in the number of institutions for which requests were filled occurred in 1986/87 (Table 3). Clearly evident is the change in the make-up of type of these institutions. While public libraries previously accounted for 5-6% of the institutions Joyner Library served, during this past year public libraries accounted for 21%. Special libraries (i.e., primarily private business libraries) also increased in the percentage distribution of types of libraries requesting material—from 10% to 16%.

Dougherty had forecasted that "quicker access to bibliographic data through networks will produce a gradual shift in the traditional interlibrary lending patterns among institutions."[12] The traditional interlibrary lending pattern is summarized by Waldhart: "Except for special libraries, most interlibrary loan transactions occur between libraries of the same type."[13] "While the numbers vary [in studies Waldhart cites], it appears clear that academic and public libraries primarily engage in interlibrary loan activities with libraries of the same type. In contrast, special libraries rely heavily on academic libraries as a primary means for satisfying their interlibrary loan requests."[14]

This past year Joyner Library, as an academic library, has seen rapid initial change in this traditional pattern rather than a gradual shift. The number of public libraries making loan requests is probably even higher given the fact that a number of the regional and county libraries centralize the processing of individual library requests in that region or county.[15] It will be particularly interesting to see what occurs during the current year. Will this dramatic shift towards public libraries continue, and to what extent? Will the proportion of special libraries continue to increase?

The impact of "Selective User" ILL lending is particularly evident when looking at the thirty-seven new institutions in the state having materials lent to them during 1986/87 (Table 4). New institutions are those having no prior interlibrary

Table Talks were successfully implemented for the first time at the 1987 NCLA Conference.

	1985/86		1986/87	
	New	Selective	New	Selective
Total number lent to	11	-	37	31
—Academic	7	-	14	12
—Public	-	-	14	12
—Special	2	-	7	6
—Governmental	2	-	2	1

loan involvement with Joyner Library via the OCLC ILL Subsystem. Thirty-one, or 84%, of those new institutions have "Selective" status in the OCLC ILL Subsystem. This also represents 44% of the total number of North Carolina institutions having active "Selective" status in the OCLC ILL Subsystem. It is interesting to note here that there were the same number of new academic and public libraries requesting materials from Joyner, and that for both of these types the same number have "Selective" status. Here again the numbers for new and "Selective" status public libraries are probably higher since ten of the twelve "Selective" status public libraries are county and regional libraries.

The year before (1985/86) not only was the number of new institutions one-third less, but no libraries involved had "Selective" status for the OCLC ILL Subsystem and there were no new public libraries involved at all.

for the 31 "Selective User" institutions represented 89% of the new institutional lending activity, 16% of the total requests Joyner Library filled in-state, and almost 9% (8.8) of the overall interlibrary lending activity done via the OCLC ILL Subsystem.

In looking at the activity to "Selective Users" by type of library, lending by Joyner Library to public libraries accounted for 41% of this activity, which is 67% more than the number of loans to academic libraries. Thus, even though there were an equal number (12) of new "Selective User" academic and public libraries, the volume of requests filled was predominantly to public libraries. The six "Selective User" special institutions accounted for the second largest volume of requests filled.

When comparing the data on the level of lending activity by type of library for "Selective Users" with the data on the total lending activity by type of library over the past three years, the impact after this initial year of "Selective User" ILL usage is further evident (Table 6). While lending activity to academic libraries does remain, at this point, in predominance, it has the smallest percentage growth (69%) of the four types over the last three years. Without the "Selective Users," lending activity to public libraries would have realized a substantial decrease this past year. As it is, the network's ILL accessibility function

	Total	Academic	Public	Special	Governmental
New Institutions	356	80	161	105	10
Selective Users	316	78	130	102	6

Data from the June 1987 Monthly Activity Report cumulation also was utilized to determine the extent of lending activity involved with these new institutions, and in particular with the "Selective Users." Table 5 summarizes this. The lending activity involved did account for a sizeable proportion of Joyner's in-state and overall lending during 1986/87. The 316 requests filled

caused a considerable change, with the overall result being a 78% growth in lending activity to public libraries since 1984/85—the second largest among the four types. The advent of ILL accessibility and usage by "Selective Users" had its greatest impact, however, upon lending activity to special libraries (i.e., primarily private business libraries), with a 217% growth over the past three

	1984/85	% Difference	1985/86	% Difference	1986/87	(% Difference*)	(1986/87)*
Total In-State Requests Filled	1,112		1,531		1,980		(1,664)
—Academic	771	+33%	1,028	+27%	1,303	(+19%)	(1,225)
—Public	202	+52%	307	+17%	359	(-25%)	(229)
—Special	54	-	54	+217%	171	(+28%)	(69)
—Governmental	85	+67%	142	+4%	147	(-1%)	(141)

*Excluding requests filled for the 31 Selective User Institutions

Table 7.
Requests Filled: Originals and Copies

	1984/85	% Difference	1985/86	% Difference	1986/87	(% Difference*)	(1986/87)*
Originals							
Total	1,701	+35%	2,293	+11%	2,556	(+1%)	(2,322)
In-State	845	+40%	1,179	+17%	1,376	(-3%)	(1,142)
Copies							
Total	435	+51%	657	+58%	1,036	(+45%)	(954)
In-State	267	+32%	352	+72%	604	(+48%)	(522)

*Excluding requests filled for the 31 Selective User Institutions

years. It would seem therefore that network access to bibliographic information is supporting more strongly the traditional ILL pattern of special libraries relying heavily on academic libraries, while at the same time producing a rapid shift to the nontraditional pattern of public libraries borrowing from other than public libraries, i.e., from academic libraries. It will be particularly interesting to see what occurs in this and subsequent years regarding the level of lending activity by type of institution. Will this situation after this initial year continue to develop into perhaps a traditional multitype network interlibrary lending pattern? Is this observation at Joyner Library similar to that seen at other academic libraries within the state?

Waldhart observed in his review of interlibrary loan studies that there was evidence supporting a "relationship between the form of material requested and the type of library initiating the request."[16] Since the OCLC Interlibrary Loan Subsystem Monthly Activity Reports do provide a statistical breakdown for requests filled by originals and by copies, this data was compiled for the total number of requests filled within the state by Joyner Library in each of the last three years (Table 7). For this last year, 1986/87, data was further compiled for all the new institutions and for all the "Selective User" institutions by type of library initiating the requests (Table 8).

Of the 316 total requests filled in 1986/87 for "Selective User" institutions, 74% were for original

format materials. Public libraries accounted for 54% of these 234 originals, followed by 29% for academic, 14% for special, and 3% for governmental libraries. Of the 82 copies, 84% were special (i.e., primarily private business) library requests, 12% were academic library requests, and 4% were public library requests. This follows the norm of public library requests being primarily for original book format and special library requests being predominantly for copies, i.e., serials format.

In viewing the breakdown between original format materials and copies for total requests filled and requests filled within the state since 1984/85 (Table 7), the largest percentage growth is in copies—138% for total requests filled and 126% for in-state requests filled. The percentage growth over the past three years for requests filled in original format is not only substantially less than copies, but is also greater for in-state requests filled than for total requests filled, i.e., 63% versus 50%. Thus, while originals still account for approximately 70% of requests filled, whether viewing total or in-state activity, copies as form of material requested are growing significantly faster. Will this situation continue to develop until the spread between copies and originals equals out, since lending activity to special libraries has shown the most significant percentage growth over the past three years? Is the proportion of loans for originals and copies at other academic libraries within the state indicating similar happenings? Tangential to this observation is the

Table 8.
New and Selective Requests Filled:
Originals and Copies (1986/87)

	Total	Academic	Public	Special	Governmental
Originals					
New Institutions	273	70	158	35	10
Selective Users	234	68	127	33	6
Copies					
New Institutions	83	10	3	70	—
Selective Users	82	10	3	69	—

awareness that library management must have of the potential role of telefacsimile in interlibrary loan for copy requests.

Patricia Schuman in her recent article on the myths of networks stated that "fragmentation between types of libraries—academic, school, public, and private—... is still the norm." She acknowledged that the ownership concept is changing for librarians, but stated that "interlibrary loan still accounts for less than two percent of all library circulation."[17]

For Joyner Library, filled interlibrary loan requests (lending and borrowing via the OCLC ILL Subsystem and via the manual mail system) accounted for 3.6% and 3.5% respectively of total circulation activity (excluding reserves) in the last two years. "Commitment, participation, and a willingness to share" are necessary if networks are to become effective mechanisms for moving from an access philosophy to a dissemination philosophy.[18]

Kittle reported on a 1985 California Conference on Networking at which the phrase "resource rape" was taken up as a banner and expounded by net-lender institution conference attendees.[19] The library literature reporting on growth data seems to be in agreement in forecasting that small and medium-sized academic libraries will see their ILL lending activity increase while research libraries will see their lending activity diminish. The concern about net lending activity resulting in one's library not being able to serve its own users, while a possibility, should not be used as an excuse for not disseminating materials to meet immediate information needs elsewhere.

... the ownership concept is changing for librarians ...

If what Joyner Library has experienced within the past year is any indication, the "state of the state" in North Carolina seems to be ripe for utilizing network opportunities coming into existence. The degree and extent of interlibrary lending activity experienced by Joyner Library would seem to indicate that fragmentation is on its way to becoming the exception rather than the norm in the North Carolina Information Network. The ILL staff in Joyner Library, and it would appear in other libraries in North Carolina as well, are aware of the need for and are making interlibrary loan an effective system. "Resource sharing that shows results will bring more dollars, resources, and community recognition but will also bring

more work."[20] Library administrators need to be aware of the enormous impact most likely being felt already in the area of interlibrary loan in their institutions and to plan for resources necessary to support an on-going interlibrary cooperative philosophy.

References

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5. Dorothy W. Russell, "Interlibrary Loan in a Network Environment," *Special Libraries* 73 (January 1982):26.

6. King Research, 132.

7. Howard F. McGinn, "The North Carolina Information Network—A Vital Cog in Economic Development," *North Carolina Libraries* 44 (Fall 1986):177.

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9. Richard M. Dougherty, "The Impact of Networking on Library Management," *College & Research Libraries* 39 (January 1978):16, 18.

10. Virginia Boucher, *Interlibrary Loan Practices Handbook.* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1984), 114.

11. Four categories were used: academic, public, special, governmental. Academic business, medical and law libraries were considered academic; government medical libraries were considered governmental.

12. Dougherty, 16.

13. Waldhart, 227.

14. Ibid., 221.

15. Acknowledgement goes to Pat Guyette, ILL Librarian at Joyner Library, for supplying me with background operational ILL information.

16. Waldhart, 222-223.

17. Patricia Glass Schuman, "Library Networks: a Means, Not an End," *Library Journal* (February 1, 1987):36.

18. Ibid., 37.

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20. McGinn, 178.