

The Contemporary Academic Library Resource Sharing Mission: Fragmentation or Evolution?

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The Message

As with all other aspects of academic library management, the resource sharing mission is undergoing substantive change. Changes in scholarly communication practice, the publishing world, and library collection development patterns are confronting academic interlibrary loan practitioners with requests for information that cannot be met using our traditional suite of skills and tools.

The Message, cont'd

The sum of these changes can be characterized as either the fragmentation of the resource sharing mission or its evolution into a new form of service that will routinely make use of new skills and diverse sources of disseminated information outside the scope of past practices.

Traditional Interlibrary Loan Service

Up to circa 1995

- Print-Based
- “Managable” pace of editing and publication process
- “Managable” number of bibliographic resources
- Relatively slow turnaround times
- Relatively high costs (1996 mediated borrowing \$18.35; 1996 mediated lending \$9.48; “Assessing ILL/DD Services Study: Initial Observations”, Mary Jackson, ARL 230/231 Oct-Dec 2003)

The Fragmentation of Traditional Interlibrary Loan Service

Developments (mix of causes and effects)

- Conceptual broadening of ILL into resource sharing
- Serials Crisis
- Changes in pace of scholarly communication
- legacy tools for communicating local shelf status and journal holdings (prime example: WorldCat)
- Changes in collection development practices (acquisition of fewer print books)
- New forms of scholarship (video articles; see Journal of Visualized Experiments)

