

# Document Delivery in Digital Age

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## *Abstract*

*With the advent of the Internet and electronic publishing systems, new ways of delivering scholarly information have arisen which challenge some of the traditional systems made for document delivery. Document Delivery bridges the gap between the customers and the document. Libraries have to offer user friendly access to hybrid collections, and design and implement document delivery mechanisms from paper originals to provide a seamless integration between delivery from electronic and paper articles. This paper explores how that role is changing to embrace virtual holdings and electronic document delivery.*

**Keywords:** Document Delivery Services, Electronic Document Delivery

## **1. Introduction**

Union catalogues were conceived to promote resource sharing among libraries. Their primary role was and still is to realize a community collection that can be maximized by restricting as much as possible unnecessary duplication, thus releasing often limited funds to ensure maximum overall coverage. Inter library loan plays a fundamental part in making the community collection available and providing the evidence of its utility. Inter library lending has evolved so that it now embraces not only the lending of books, but also the provision of a physical copy, typically photocopy or access to an electronically readable copy. In fact, unmediated document delivery (DD) is now an expectation of end users who are accustomed to internet search engines like Google.

At the same time, the library collection is itself changing. Apart from physical books, electronic access, particularly for journal titles, is increasing. The library's focus is now more on selecting than on collecting, particularly in relation to free materials such as free electronic journals and freely available web sites and databases. The library collection is now a mixture of physical and virtual. The library's user are also transforming from physical to virtual. (Gatenby, 2003)

Document delivery can mean different things to different libraries across the country and worldwide. Some libraries view document delivery as providing an article or book chapter to a patron. Other libraries see it as a means of supplementing their collection and allow patrons to order documents directly from a commercial provider when the need arises. Still other libraries see document delivery as a service that allows patrons to request materials from their home library and have them delivered in a selected format. The real distinction comes into play when you consider where the document is originating from; whether it is located in the patron's home library or another library owns the document. This investigation will concentrate on the former view and look at document delivery as a service of providing articles or book chapters that the library already owns to its patrons.

## 2. A Customer Centric Service

Modern document supply is customer-centered, not service centered. The interesting questions here are, “Do we know the customers needs?” and, perhaps equally important, “Do we know our customers?” Our scholarly and industrial customers tend to become more and more mobile. Document delivery process has to be designed to reach the virtual officers. Customers are working in information environment. One can envision such an environment as a company or university intranet, virtual information centre or, more basic, access to (union) catalogues. These environments, comprising the above-mentioned “search and find” systems, generate our customers’ document delivery requests. This is where our business starts. These systems can be divided into two groups: those we can (and sometimes do) control, and those we cannot. Document delivery must fit seamlessly to the search and find process. The key issues are system integration and interfacing. Libraries can demonstrate to their customers their ability to design and implement systems that are highly interactive, intuitive, user-friendly, etc. Document delivery, again from our customers’ viewpoint, is just about speed of delivery, quality of the copy delivered, flexibility in delivery method, format and location and, of course, costs. To provide quality of service, we have to turn our view inside; analyzing the way document delivery is organized. (Waiijers and Dekker, 2001)

## 3. Examining the Process

Interlibrary loan (ILL) is a service that allows a library to borrow books, journals and other copyrighted material from other libraries. This type of service has been extended at most institutions to include the making and sending of copies even where no actual “loan” is involved. When a closer look is taken at the internals of document delivery, it becomes clear that the whole process could be divided into three parts:

1. Processing incoming requests;
2. Physical handling of the document (retrieving from the stacks, copying or scanning);
3. Sending the document to the customer.

## 4. Essentials for Document Delivery

Waiijers and Dekker (2001) have discussed as

1. Document delivery products should be made available to the customer, without specific requirements on their side.
2. Document delivery methods must accord with the increasing mobility of the customers.
3. Document delivery must fit to the “search and find” process.
4. Document delivery is about quality of service, not about systems
5. There is a need for rationalisation.

## 5. Timeliness

In the digital world customers want instant, access to the information they pay for. Short and guaranteed delays (24 or 48 hours) are acceptable if the price is low but longer delays are not or only if there are explicit reasons. At any moment, customers want feedback on the order processing. Document supply must be 100 per cent compliant with national and international laws, and customers must be sure that the information they paid for has been legally acquired.

## 6. Future Prospects

Despite the challenges facing the traditional forms of document delivery are there sufficient new options emerging? What is certain is that the old model of document delivery will not be so dominant in future years; however what are unclear is the actual size, structure and dimensions of new opportunities available to the traditional agencies serving this sector. (Brown, 2003)

More efficient than interlibrary loan, resource sharing also includes circulation-based systems. Circulation-based resource sharing, sometimes called remote circulation, allows the user to request materials through a union catalog and have the transaction handled completely as a circulation transaction. Instead of an ILL request the supplying library receives a pull slip ready to be taken to the stacks to retrieve the material. As libraries move away from paper to digital the ability to supply through interlibrary loan is increasingly governed by license terms. The necessity to check terms for electronic materials to determine if and how requests can be supplied has complicated the delivery process. (Mak, 2011).

The central concept of modern document supply shifts from the catalogue to the web based single customer access point. This access point may be directly linked to or even integrated into the customer's portal or management system (intranet). The front-office is moving away from the document supplier's own information system. The customer should be able to search for all available information through this single access point. The system should allow automatic consulting of the customer organization's own print and electronic holdings, for instance by checking for ISSN, before searching in one or more suppliers' databases (with ordering functionalities), open archives, and publishers' or vendors' online collections (with pay-per-view facilities). Full-text linking can be provided through Open URL systems could also interface with online catalogues and interlibrary loan modules. While in the past special attention was paid to important collection databases and catalogues, modern document supply is built on powerful search engine technology. Federated search, clustering of results based on terminology resources, multilingual interfaces, customizable options and Web2.0 functionalities are on the agenda of the future development of a document supply system made for customers asking for more than simple document supply. The front-office technology should not require specific software on the customer's desktop. Internet connection, standard browser, email program and PDF viewer should be all a customer need to use the document supply service. Customers use Google, Yahoo, MSN (Live Search) or especially for STI, Google Scholar or Scirus. In order to keep pace with this search behavior, document suppliers have started to integrate their records into one or more of these search

engines. This strategy enhances the visibility of the suppliers services and enables the customers to keep their information discovery simple, to profit from very efficient technology, to obtain search results from an overwhelming number of global resources (including open archives and institutional repositories), and last but not least to choose the best way to get the material they want.

Document suppliers need to improve knowledge of their customers. In some cases, they simply need to define who are their customers and for whom they work, and why. They need to develop legal expertise to keep pace with fast changing laws, court decisions and licenses and to guarantee 100 per cent legal compliance of their products. . They need to invest in search technology with customizable link and order options and they need to put the “order button” where their customers usually work. (Scho’pfel and Gillet, 2011)

- ◆ They have to re-consider their service as e-commerce, not in order to compete with publishers, commercial suppliers and other vendors but because the future of public administration is digital.
- ◆ They also need to improve functionalities of reporting (statistics, information about order and account status) for the customer.
- ◆ Document suppliers need to initiate, strengthen and accelerate resource sharing and networking. If they possess their own holdings, they should consider them as a part of the network, not as part of the document supply service.
- ◆ They need to include more and more openly accessible material into their resource sharing and service offers not to make money but to help their customers find what they want.
- ◆ They need to consider seriously the issue of evaluation, e.g. the quality label of supplied material.
- ◆ Document suppliers need to invest in automation and if necessary, in re-engineering of workflow and organization and in staff training.
- ◆ They need to improve cost control and financial analysis if they want to maintain reasonable priced services for their communities.
- ◆ Last not least, they need to shift from static information (FAQ, press releases and so on) to Web2.0 technologies that enhance direct interaction with the customers and augment “collective wisdom” on resources, terms and conditions, laws and STI market.

URL or hot link can be clicked on and a resolver can populate an ILL form with the bibliographic data and another click will send it to the ILL department which with another click can authorize and send to a pre-selected queue of supplying libraries. With the agreement of, and payment to, a publisher the document can be sent direct to the end user or a link sent for sending to the user. Often this process can be completed within hours and with higher payment virtually instantaneously. Publishers themselves are experimenting with pay per view but are hobbled by the high prices of their subscriptions from offering a realistic price. ILL of copies is still hobbled with the nonsense of having to print, scan and transmit by Ariel or similar in order

to comply with publisher imposed constraints. Hobbled because of the publishers' fear that allowing full electronic transmission of text will subvert their subscription revenue stream. (Mike McGrath, 2011)

## 7. Copyright Issues

Libraries should pay increasing attention to the licenses for access to electronic resources (databases, e-journals and e books). Technology has made the ILL process even easier, while digital content licensing often attempts to reverse the speed of service and anachronistically increase costs of paper, toner, shipping and so on, if not to stifle it completely. The greater challenge of the restrictions imposed through electronic licenses could strongly limit the importance and institutional practice of ILL services. In fact, ILL uses for e journals are usually permitted under certain conditions which can refer, for example, to which type of requests may be processed, how they should be processed and how the requested copies may be delivered. (Bernardini and Mangiaracina, 2011)

With the use of digital technology, ILL is evolving and becoming almost indistinguishable from ordinary "document delivery". As a result, new guidelines may have to be developed for the digital environment. At the same time, libraries are increasingly transitioning their journal subscriptions from print to digital collections. These individual licenses vary widely by content, publisher, type of use and more. The collections are managed through license arrangements with the copyright holders or the license accepted by the library is a binding contract. If the library has agreed to the limitations on the use of materials in ILL, then the library is bound by its agreement. Most libraries set internal rules for the kinds of licenses that they will accept, and it is important for libraries to be familiar with the terms of their various licenses. Some licenses are restrictive in terms of access to, and use of, the content by library patrons. For example, content may be accessible to patrons of the library only through a range of IP addresses or on a single workstation within the library. Once the material is accessed, some licenses state that it may only be viewed and printed by the patron.

Some libraries have been successful in negotiating broader terms of use into their licenses terms that expand the institution's and patrons' rights to use their digital collections. For example, some licenses may allow links to the material for e-reserve purposes or from a course management system on campus. At the same time, these or other licenses may restrict other types of use, particularly interlibrary loan.

In yet other cases, the library may be allowed to use its digital collection to fulfill interlibrary loan requests, but only on a limited basis. For example, the library may be permitted to use content from an electronic journal to fulfill ILL requests, but only after the material is printed and scanned, or printed and then delivered to the patron via fax or mail. Publishers allowing delivery directly from the digital collection are rare and licenses may even restrict delivery to only faculty, staff and students on the campus.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the factors that affect the document delivery in the digital age. These factors are technical, societal, economic, political, and political. Single future model of document delivery will be difficult.

Document suppliers need to improve knowledge of their customers means who are their customers and for whom they work. There should be legal expertise to keep pace with fast changing laws, court decisions and licenses and to guarantee 100 per cent legal compliance of the products. Search technology with customizable link and other options should be available for the customers. Document suppliers need to invest in automation and if necessary, in re-engineering of workflow and organization and in staff training. More and more openly accessible materials should be available for resource sharing.

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