1995

Doc Aquis: Loansome Doc Document Ordering System

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Recommended Citation  
DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1596](http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1596)

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For the health professional, access to the medical literature became much easier when the National Library of Medicine (NLM) introduced the software package, Grateful Med, in 1986. By using the Grateful Med software, any health professional could have access via a personal computer to search NLM's MEDLARS databases, which includes MEDLINE. This ease of access was greatly enhanced in 1991 by the introduction of the electronic document ordering feature of Grateful Med called Loansome Doc. By using this feature, an individual could obtain full text articles for citations that were retrieved from Grateful Med searches. This important development gave health professionals the unique opportunity, regardless of where they were located themselves, be it at home or in their office in a geographically remote setting, to easily and quickly obtain documents from a library without having to physically visit the location.

To use the Loansome Doc document ordering system one must first purchase a copy of the Grateful Med software, since Loansome Doc is a feature of this software. The package is an inexpensive one — $29.95 — which can be purchased from the National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161, Telephone (800) 553-NTIS. Included in the package will be a user's guide, tutorial program, and program disks. Basic equipment needs include: a PC, either IBM or compatible, or a Macintosh; Grateful Med version 6.0 or higher or Macintosh version 2.0 or higher; modem; and a hard disk with 1.9 - 2.4 MB of free space. The user's guide provides clear instructions on loading the software and, once it's loaded, the user is then ready to begin the process of setting up the Loansome Doc service.

The first step in this setup process is to determine which library you would like to serve as your "Ordering Library," that library to which all of your document orders will be referred. You may select a library that you already use regularly and that is participating in DECLINE, NLM's automated interlibrary loan request and referral system. Or, if you aren't sure, you may contact the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Regional Library in your region to get the names of participating institutions (telephone 800-338-7657). After contacting the library of your choice, you will need to complete whatever registration process has been established by that library in order for them to become your "Ordering Library." Participating libraries determine what elements will be included in their particular agreements. Normally, this registration process involves an agreement on both parts to abide by the terms of your arrangement, such as the cost of any documents, payment information, copyright compliance, and so forth. After completing the registration process, the library will provide you with an "Ordering Library ID" which you will enter into your Grateful Med software when configuring your Loansome Doc setup.

Configuring the Loansome Doc setup is an extremely easy process. You will be asked to enter your Name, Address, and the Ordering Library ID. You will also have to determine your preferred Method of Delivery: mail, fax, or pickup. As an added bonus, if the Ordering Library cannot fill your order, you can give instructions to fill the order using additional libraries. If you select this option, you will be able to benefit from the use of DECLINE, which serves as a link to the holdings of thousands of medical libraries as your order is transferred to this interlibrary loan request and referral system for filling.

After completing the setup information, you are ready to order your documents! This involves the very straightforward process of: (1) Conducting your search, (2) Marking which items you are interested in receiving, (3) Printing your orders so that you will have a copy for your files, (4) Selecting the Order option, (5) Ordering. It's that simple!

The Grateful Med software sends your requests to the NLM computer, which in turn forwards them to the Ordering Library that has been identified in the setup. The Ordering Library then either fills the order, returns the order as unfilled, or refers the order to additional libraries for filling if so instructed. Twenty-four hours after sending an order, or at any time after that, a status check can be performed to determine the status of an order. These status files are updated daily, Monday through Friday.

Grateful Med and its ordering feature, Loansome Doc, offer the user the ultimate convenience in obtaining medical information. The Grateful Med software is an extremely user-friendly product and comes with an exceptionally well-written user's guide. Most questions that an individual might have can be answered by reviewing the guide. Also, an entire chapter of the guide is devoted to the Loansome Doc feature. However, in the event that you might need assistance beyond the guide, help is just a phone call away. You can always call your Ordering Library with your questions, or, you can give NLM's MEDLARS Service Desk a call, (telephone 800-638-8480).

One Library’s Response — LOANSOME DOC Used at the UK Medical Center Library
by Edwina "Winn" Theirl, Head of Interlibrary Loan, University of Kentucky Medical Center Library, Lexington, KY

The University of Kentucky Medical Center Library has served as an Ordering Library for Loansome Doc services since the feature was introduced in 1991. It has proven to be a very popular service, with health care professionals from across the state of Kentucky becoming registered users. Interest in the service has not been lim...
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Ited to any one area of specialty — among our many users have been physicians, nurses, dentists, physical therapists and pharmacists. We have had individuals use the service from home, from departmental offices, and even from hospital settings.

We offer the service to support our library’s mission of “…promoting and facilitating access to health sciences information.” We are listed as a participating library with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Regional Library and the service is heavily promoted through our outreach programs. Individuals can call our library for information about the service and fact sheets have been developed and are sent to anyone requesting them.

We categorize our registered users into two groups — affiliated, those that have a connection to the University of Kentucky such as Community-Based Faculty; and non-affiliated, those that have no direct connection. Each registered user must go through the registration process that was described in the product description: (1) Contact us, (2) Complete a registration process, (3) Receive the Ordering Library ID, (4) Begin using the service. It’s an extremely simple process; so simple, in fact, that we often have individuals say to us, “Is that all there is to it?”

From a librarian’s viewpoint, our experience with the Loansome Doc service has overall been a very positive one. It is based in our Interlibrary Loan department, where orders are electronically received daily. We use the same equipment to receive and update these orders that we use for our OCLC and DECLINE interlibrary loan requests. We process the orders just as we do any ILL request, filling those that we can from our collection and following the instructions that are on the request for any unfilled orders. Referring unfilled orders into the DECLINE system could not be any easier for library staff. All orders will have correct citation information because they came from Grateful Med searches of NLM databases, so staff do not need to be concerned about verifying the item before referring it. Also, each order will appear in an identical format, including full name and address of the person placing the order. But, the greatest advantage is that citation information never needs to be retyped into the DECLINE system. All that needs to be done is to input the request number and the correct information will be displayed. Loansome Doc may have been designed with ease of the health professional in mind, but for the librarian, it doesn’t come much easier than this, either!

Have You Heard…

News from the UnCover Company includes the release of their new Personal UnCover Navigator (PUN), a Windows or Macintosh-based graphical user interface that allows users easier and efficient searching of the UnCover database. New capabilities of PUN allow for the use of Windows elements such as the mouse, icons and template to activate UnCover functions such as searching, marking, and ordering.

New features include the capability to print a citation to a local printer, support for the creation of personal lists of article citations, easier profiling and ordering using online templates and multiple listings display via Windows format. Hardware for the PC version of PUN includes a 386DX or 486DX-based DOS compatible computer with

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