Getting It System Toolkit (GIST): The GIST of Making Informed Decisions and Workflow of Buying, Borrowing, Downloading or Viewing

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GETTING IT SYSTEM TOOLKIT (GIST): THE GIST OF MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS AND WORKFLOW OF BUYING, BORROWING, DOWNLOADING OR VIEWING

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Abstract

Heard about Just-in-Time Acquisitions or Purchase on Demand? The Getting It System Toolkit (GIST) is an invention that makes the two workflows all the more interesting for users and libraries that want to: enhance their Interlibrary Loan; empower their purchase request system; or transform collection development and resource sharing. You decide. GIST was developed at the State University of New York College at Geneseo with an eye toward converging ILL and Acquisitions workflows and user interfaces, while leveraging the strengths of various workflow and systems. Beware: GIST was designed to transform the business of borrowing, buying, and accessing. How does it do this? GIST provides users and the library practical and thoughtful resolution of disparate information sources with key data, such as: uniqueness (for cooperative collection development strategies); free online sources (to reduce cost &/or catalog eBooks just-in-time); reviews and rankings (to add value to the request process); and purchasing options and prices (to give users and libraries options and streamline library work). GIST is flexible, so you can pick or choose which features to use or adapt. GIST currently works with ILLiad and is available free to libraries at: <http://idsproject.org/Tools/GIST.aspx>. Currently, the GIST Team is developing GIST version 2 (GIST2) – scheduled for release in August 2010. GIST2 adds significant budget and ordering features that include cataloging and gift management services.

Introduction

The business of buying, borrowing and accessing library materials is rapidly changing. In order to keep up with user demand, libraries need to consider how to transform their traditional practices. Both acquisitions and interlibrary loan librarians understand the need for transforming the work of buying and borrowing, but also recognize the complexity of the processes involved:

“For reasonably priced materials, purchase in the out-of-print market may be a better alternative than interlibrary loan.” (Holley & Ankem, 2005)

“Purchasing items outside the traditional ILL workflow, especially from many one-time suppliers, can be very time-consuming (identifying the supplier; confirming costs; arranging pre-payments if necessary, etc.) and thus extremely cost-intensive. Each library has its own policies determining how far it will go to fill requests for materials unavailable through ILL; whether its patrons pay some or all of the costs associated with obtaining these materials; and determining whether some or all of the material thus acquired will be added to the library collection or given to the patron to keep.” (Ward, et. al., 2003)

This may sound extremely familiar to acquisitions librarians – so why aren't acquisitions and interlibrary loan working together to fulfill just-in-time and on-demand patron requests? The concepts of Just-in-Time Acquisitions or Purchase on Demand have been discussed in resource

sharing and collection development worlds for several years, each with their own emphasis on departmental functions within the larger library (Ward, et. al).

Collection development and access services librarians recognize the power of the 80/20 rule. Though the exact numbers may vary widely between institutions, the rule states that only 20 percent of our library collections are being used 80 percent of the time (Trueswell, 1969). In an age of decreasing budgets and purchasing power, many libraries are still selecting materials they *think* users might want in the future. How do we justify building library collections based on the selection of materials we *think* users might want in the future when our interlibrary loan departments are actively borrowing materials our users *do* want when they want them?

Just-In-Time acquisitions and purchase-on-demand practices have been gathering steam as budgets decrease, de-duplication across systems gains in popularity, and ILL systems mature. More and more libraries are looking to integrate their ILL and acquisition departments or at the least, increase communication and streamline similar workflows. The Getting It System Toolkit (GIST) is a tool for libraries that can enhance their Interlibrary Loan service; empower their purchase request system; or transform collection development and resource sharing by integrating the two separate systems into one.

What is GIST?

The Getting it System Toolkit (GIST) was developed at the State University of New York College at Geneseo with an eye toward converging interlibrary loan and acquisitions workflows and user interfaces, while leveraging the strengths of various workflows and systems. Primarily, it is a model for merging these two request workflows using one interface, allowing for user-initiated requests, as well as coordinated collection development and acquisitions. Using ILLiad as a common request management tool, GIST is designed to integrate several disparate information streams: pricing and vendor information, holdings, reviews and rankings, full-text availability and format options. Most importantly, GIST is an all-in-one request interface that allows the user to make many of the decisions that have traditionally been handled behind the scenes (see Figure 1 below). It also allows for the user to make decisions about delivery and gives them the option to go straight to the vendor and purchase the item themselves. GIST ultimately gives them all the options in one place.

Worldcat API – Library Availability
User sees if owned locally, easy click to catalog, and sees estimated turnaround time.
ILL & Acquisitions staff see if held locally, and # holdings in 2 configurable groups (consortia, state, etc.)

Purchasing Options
User sees price to purchase from Amazon API with New & Lowest Price listed (used) – user may want to purchase from this link. If they do, Amazon provides our AWS account a credit for referring someone to purchase.
ILL & Acquisition Staff see the New & Lowest Price in the ILLiad requests. Better World Books, Google APIs are also currently used for pricing, we have asked other vendors for APIs.

Google Books
User sees Table of Contents, No-Partial, & Full Text Views.
Staff see if full text in Google (GOOGL)

IndexData
User sees if full text or audio version in OCA, Internet Archive, etc.
Staff see if full text OCA (INARC)

Amazon API
Enhances users request evaluation with Reviews, Ranking, Cover, and quick link to Amazon. Price was moved into Purchasing Options window.

Item Information
Name an ISBN? Enter it below and click the Search ISBN button to auto-fill this form, view book reviews, and more!
* Title:
Author:
Publisher:
Pub. Date:
Edition:
* Format: ISBN: OCLC Number:
Search ISBN

Feedback
Would you recommend Milne Library purchase this item?
How essential is this to your research/teaching?
How would you like us to deliver this to you?
Hold for pick-up at circulation
Notes

Library Availability (WorldCat)
The item is:
Locally held. Please check your catalog.
Held by 30 ILL Project Libraries. Estimated delivery by Aug 01, 2009.
Table of Contents
Partial Text Available

Google Preview
Full Text or Audio for Free
Moby Dick
Moby Dick, or, the whale
Moby Dick; or, the White Whale
Moby Dick
Moby Dick

Amazon.com Details
Average Customer Review: stars
Go to Amazon
Description:
In this adaptation of Melville's masterpiece, McCaughey recounts the tale of the obsessed Captain Ahab, as he pursues the great white whale—a creature as vast and dangerous as the sea itself. 55 illustrations. (see more)

Purchasing Options
Amazon: \$4.95 (Lowest Vendor: \$0.94)
Better World Books: \$5.95 (shipping included)
Buy this: \$4.95
Options
* By when do you need this? (mm/dd/yyyy)
08/01/2009
Will you accept this in a language other than English?
No
Will you accept an alternate edition of this item?
Yes
Will you accept an alternate format of this item?
Yes

Figure 1:
GIST interface

Why design it?
GIST was designed to transform the

business of borrowing, buying, and accessing library materials. Most, if not all, the problems which we face in collection development, acquisitions and interlibrary loan operations are familiar to many libraries. First of all, our users encounter too many request interfaces that are out of context to their immediate needs. We continue to fragment our library websites and organize them around departments and functions which users don't understand and don't care about. In an article on the future of interlibrary loan, Mary Jackson notes that one of the key trends in ILL is the idea of "user-initiated" services. If we offer that for ILL, why not offer it for collection development and acquisitions as well (Jackson, 2004)?

Secondly, speculative selection is a lot of unnecessary manual work if most of the library collection is never being used (Anderson, 2009). We must make a shift in emphasis from spending acquisitions budgets on the basis of speculation (Just-in-Case) to spending on the basis of demand (Just-in-Time)" (Osburn, 1992). Another recent observation from Rick Anderson at the University of Utah on using scarce dollars to try and build inclusive, speculative collections is apt and telling:

"The risk inherent in buying the wrong book has increased (because each budget dollar is now scarcer than it once was), while the risk inherent in failing to buy the right book has decreased (because it's increasingly possible to buy only what is needed when it's needed, and it's much easier to quickly and cheaply correct any failure to buy the right book). Both of these developments support the same conclusion: that most research libraries should seriously reconsider their traditional strategy of meeting patrons' needs by building large, inclusive, speculative collections that attempt to anticipate them." (Anderson, 2009).

Another problem is the challenge to effectively reduce duplication across library networks and systems. Duplication in collections means less diversity within a network, resulting in increased costs to borrow materials outside your network. These increased interlibrary loan borrowing expenses correspond to decreased monograph purchasing within the library organization.

Shrinking budgets, rising material costs and increasing user needs contribute to a need for transformative change in how we acquire and deliver materials to our users. Currently, most acquisition and ILL requests are done through function-based departments, each with their own workflow and multiple methods of input from librarians, faculty, students and other users. GIST allows a library to customize and configure the request management process to include:

- Automated holdings information checking (local, state, regional, consortia, etc.)
- Purchase price look-up service
- The collection of user feedback (should library purchase this item? Is it essential, non-essential, etc.)
- Customizable emails and workflow enhancement
- Reviews and ratings via Amazon and Google APIs
- Full-text, online availability

What was involved?

The GIST project team met in January of 2009 to begin planning. The project was funded initially with a grant from the Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC), and work began on version 1.0, which was projected to be the development of an interface and workflow design.

The phases of development included:

- Design requirements: site visits, faculty discussions, literature review
- ILLiad Interface Development

- Text Interface
 - Data Services (iFrame/Java)
- ILLiad Workflow Development
- Data Service Development
 - Work on a development server
 - Amazon web services
 - Worldcat API
 - Other Data
- Testing
- Assessment

After the initial development phase, GIST was tested with academic faculty representatives to the library and a select few faculty members. It was then rolled out to the entire SUNY Geneseo faculty in mid-August 2009 and finally to students in the first week of October 2009.

How we did it

GIST provides users and the library practical and thoughtful resolution of disparate information sources with key data, such as: uniqueness (for cooperative collection development strategies); free online sources (to reduce cost &/or catalog eBooks just-in-time); reviews and rankings (to add value to the request process); and purchasing options and prices (to give users and libraries options and streamline library work). GIST is flexible, so you can pick or choose which features to use or adapt. Uses ILLiad software and OpenURL resolver; data services include the Amazon Web Services (price, reviews, ratings), WorldCat API (holdings information), and user input and feedback. GIST currently works with ILLiad, runs on ILLiad's web server, and is available free to libraries at: <http://idsproject.org/Tools/GIST.aspx>.

What happened?

Users quickly adopted the use of the new GIST system because it was integrated into the existing ILL request system they were already using. Acquisitions staff members were trained to use the ILLiad software in the last week of August, as the rollout began for all faculty. Workflow (Figure 2, below) and best practices continue to develop in both departments as acquisitions and interlibrary loan work closely together to implement the new purchase request

Figure 2: GIST Workflow map

system. Input from faculty, librarians, staff and students are actively encouraged and several changes to workflow have resulted from feedback given to acquisitions staff.

What was most surprising to staff was the faculty and student willingness to provide feedback on purchase and ILL requests. Table 1 (below) illustrates a very similar feedback response rate between faculty and students, although the sizes and time periods of the samples differ due to the delay of implementing GIST for students until October of 2009. Faculty responded about 38% of the time, while students hovered at around a 30% response rate:

Date Range:	9/1/09-10/20/09	10/1/09-10/20/09
Total Faculty Purchase Requests (ACQ)	81	
Total Faculty Loan Requests (ILL)	366	
% Recommended for Purchase	22.13%	
Total Student Purchase Requests (ACQ)		40
Total Student Loan Requests (ILL)		1,006
% Recommended for Purchase		3.98%
Faculty - No Response	226	
Faculty - Essential for classroom use	43	
Faculty - Essential for research	46	
Faculty - Good for collection	24	
Faculty - Nice to have	18	
Faculty - Unessential	5	
Faculty - Unsure	4	
Faculty Response Rate (Loans)	38.25%	
Student - No Response		703
Student - Essential for class/research		270
Student - Required Textbook		7
Student - Unessential		18
Student - Unsure		8
Student Response Rate (Loans)		30.12%

Table 1: Faculty and Student feedback during the sample period, September 1-October 20, 2009 (Faculty) and October 1-October 20, 2009 (Students)

Other Data

The statistical data collected by the ILLiad software allowed us to compare the numbers of student and faculty requests. Because students were unable to use the purchase request feature of GIST in the first month we collected data, the requests in September were overwhelmingly by faculty users (Table 2 below). However, once students were allowed to use the purchase request system in October, the percentage of requests by student users jumped to nearly 60% of the total.

Numbers of Purchase Requests by User status for September through December 2009				
<i>Month</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>% Students</i>	<i>Faculty</i>	<i>% Faculty</i>
Sep	1	1.96%	50	98.04%
Oct	81	59.56%	55	40.44%
Nov	73	35.44%	131	63.59%
Dec	28	23.93%	89	76.07%

Table 2: Total numbers and percentages of purchase requests by type of user

What we also discovered was a slight increase in the number of purchase requests out of the total number of GIST requests (see Table 3 below) as the semester progressed. In September, with only faculty being able to use GIST to make purchase requests, only 2.8% of the total GIST requests were for purchases. By December, that percentage had increased to 15.6%.

Numbers of Requests through GIST (both ACQ & ILL) for September through December 2009					
<i>Month</i>	<i>Purchase Requests (ACQ)</i>	<i>Loan Requests (ILL)</i>	<i>% Purchase Requests (out of total GIST requests)</i>	<i>Total Purchased (out of total purchase requests)</i>	<i>% Purchased (out of total purchase requests)</i>
Sep	51	1795	2.84%	46	90.20%
Oct	136	2051	6.63%	90	66.18%
Nov	206	2524	8.16%	152	73.79%
Dec	117	750	15.60%	74	63.25%

Table 3: Total numbers of requests through GIST

Turnaround time was also improving. In September, the average number of days it took for a request to be submitted, ordered, received, processed, placed on shelf, and request finished was 14.59 days. By December, that turnaround time had dropped to 7.34 days – nearly half.

Another feature important to the new integrated workflow between acquisitions and interlibrary loan was the ability to route requests between departments (see Table 4 below):

Numbers of Requests routed between ILL and ACQ for September through December 2009				
<i>Month</i>	<i>Routed to ILL</i>	<i>% Routed to ILL</i>	<i>Routed from ILL</i>	<i>% Routed from ILL</i>
Sep	1	1.96%	4	7.84%
Oct	16	11.76%	5	3.68%
Nov	15	7.28%	11	5.34%
Dec	10	8.55%	0	0.00%

Table 4: Total numbers of routed requests

Future of GIST

The GIST Team is working on developing more functionality for GIST version 2, scheduled for release in August 2010. GIST2 will add significant budget and ordering features, including cataloging, gift and collection management services. It will also include a statistics module. The Gift Manager workflow is currently first in the development cycle, with the budget management and cataloging services next in the production cycle. Because development is underway, we seek your input and feedback on making this a more useful tool, as well as, seeking APIs from various book jobbers and other vendors to make GIST more applicable to your settings.

Who was involved

GIST was created by a team of librarians and programmers at the SUNY College at Geneseo, with some Worldcat API programming support from Kyle Banerjee and Terry Reese. The work was funded by a RBDB grant through the generosity of the Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC) in Rochester, NY.

Conclusions

Empowering the user and library with converging data about access and delivery options enhances everyone's ability to streamline informed decision making. Our primary goal was to create a model for merging acquisitions and interlibrary loan request workflows using one interface, allowing for user-initiated requests, as well as coordinated collection development and acquisitions. Using ILLiad as a common request management tool, GIST is designed to integrate several disparate information streams into one integrated interface.

GIST is constantly undergoing testing, revision, debugging and upgrades. A complete set of documentation for GIST is found on the IDS Workflow Toolkit wiki at:

<http://toolkit.idsproject.org/doku.php?id=wiki:gist>.

GIST version 2 is scheduled for release in summer 2010.

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