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Consortial Circulation via Patron Placed Holds in the USMAI's Shared Catalog and its Impact on Collection Development and ILL

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BORN & LIVED: Fitchburg, MA; Amherst, MA (twice); Baton Rouge, LA; Maryland (twice).

EARLY LIFE: Eh, what? I'm not done yet.

FAMILY: Soon-ish, starter project on fiancé: Charlie and cat: Ki-Ki.

EDUCATION: B.A. in English UMass-Amherst; M.L.I.S. LSU.

FIRST JOB: Approx. age: 10 Job: Cat sitting business (also did "baby" sitting, but preferred cats - they're a lot easier and more predictable)

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Access Librarian, Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, MD. Librarian for Digital Initiatives & Research and Instructional Services Planning, UMass-Amherst.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Pretend I'm the active and outdoorsy type (biking, hiking, walking, exploring). But really I watch a lot of PBS and more of my radio's buttons are being replaced by NPR stations.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I used to read (non-work related) books... Now I'm lucky if I have time to get through an issue of *Utne*.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: George Bush (sorry, that's the first serious thing that came to mind)

PHILOSOPHY: Work as hard and as well as you can, so that you can enjoy your free time to relax and ponder other interests.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Everything, I'm really impressed I've done it and it's working out so well!

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Associate Director (or financial independence, which isn't likely since I don't play the lottery)

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Hopefully recovering from all the financial difficulty of the early part of the century, and rebuilding staffing and budgets to focus on the necessity to educate and inform. 

Consortial Circulation via Patron Placed Holds in the USMAI's Shared Catalog and its Impact on Collection Development and ILL

by **Jessame Ferguson** (Head of Circulation and Media, University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland) <jessame@umbc.edu>

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The **University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions (USMAI)** is made up of the fourteen campuses of the **University of Maryland**, as well as two independent state institutions, **St. Mary's College** and **Morgan State University**, and shares one online Aleph catalog, **catalogusmai**. Among the USMAI schools are two law libraries, a medical library and the flagship **University of Maryland Library at College Park**. **catalogusmai** was brought up live in January 2003.

The previous **CARL** catalog had been shared by **Morgan State University** and all the **USM (University System of Maryland)** institutions with the exception of the **Health Sciences and Human Services Library (HSHSL)** at the **University of Maryland at Baltimore**. **Patron Placed Holds (PPH)** were easily done between campuses, with the exception of requests for or from the **HSHSL**, which all went through **ILL**.

Patrons are now able to search the combined **catalogusmai** and request books online from any institution in the consortium. One of the unique features of the **USMAI** holds process in **Aleph** is that patrons are able to place title level holds in the **OPAC** rather than item specific holds. When a patron finds a title that they need, they are able to place a request without having to determine which individual copy is available to

fill their request. The system evaluates the hold group and places their hold on the best available copy, or recalls an item if no available copy can be found. Each library receives an "outstanding holds" (pull) list daily of materials requested for pick-up at other libraries. The books are located, discharged and marked by the system as "in transit" to the location where it was requested for pickup. Materials are mailed or transported to the appropriate institution, on various schedules. Depending upon mailing method used, some campuses may have to wait a week to receive their materials, while most campuses receive their materials within a few days.

Impact on Interlibrary Loan

While **USMAI** patrons may place holds on books through **catalogusmai**, articles are still requested through Interlibrary Loan. The advantage of this arrangement is that the **ILL** staff at **UMBC** (the **University of Maryland Baltimore County**) can spend time on these article requests and requests from other institutions, rather than dealing with the 13,000 hold requests filled by **UMBC** for other **USMAI** campuses, and the 7,000 **USMAI** requests filled for **UMBC** patrons. While these requests would certainly boost **ILL**'s statistics, the **ILL** staff would be overwhelmed by more than double the number of filled requests processed for both lending and borrowing. These statistics, of course, don't take into account the amount of time processing the titles that weren't sent but were searched in the stacks.


In addition to sharing an online catalog, the **USMAI** has many consortially purchased online databases, which serve the research needs of many **USMAI** patrons. Other more specialized databases are not necessary to some of the **USMAI** campuses, and so are consortially purchased only by campuses with those programs to support.

At **UMBC**, even with the many shared fulltext databases and over 4,000 total paper and e-journal subscriptions, we find that our

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The results of this survey have confirmed my suspicions that, at least some of the time, patrons are bypassing our library for interlibrary loan. Their reasons for doing so are unclear, although they may believe it is timesaving to search more libraries at once. It seems that in an effort to make our users more self-sufficient we have lost a valuable communication opportunity. That is, we no longer perform an interlibrary loan interview as recommended by **Lois Gilmer** who states that patrons "may have very specific ideas on the subjects for which they need additional material. To ob-

tain as much information as possible to help in filling the request, the **ILL** librarian must exercise the same kinds of interview skills as the reference librarian does in the traditional reference interview." (Gilmer 122) We need to communicate to our patrons the need to thoroughly search our collection before incurring the time and costs associated with interlibrary loan. I plan to add this point to my library instruction sessions. I also believe we need to develop a strategy for receiving feedback from patrons on which subjects lack coverage in our collection. 

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BORN & LIVED: I was born and raised in northwest Indiana (about 20 miles from downtown Chicago). I lived in Bloomington, Indiana, for a few years, while in and out of college. Later I lived for awhile in Williamsburg, Virginia, then Ann Arbor, Michigan, before settling in Baltimore, Maryland.

EARLY LIFE: I was a brat, hopelessly spoiled by parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. During my Pre-K years, I endlessly asked "Why," and became infamous in my neighborhood for my absolutely incessant question-asking, along with the numerous pretty little dresses I ruined making "mud-pies" with a little boy down the block. Later I read voraciously, played softball, hung out at the beach or the pool, and at the library, where the librarians knew me by name. I was "book-smart," had grandiose dreams, and incredible wanderlust, while lacking in all common sense. I did not want to grow up and be a librarian, because my mother told me that's what I should grow up and be.

FAMILY: I have a four-year-old son, and a husband who lives with his girlfriend. I have a large, close-knit extended family in the Chicago area that I don't get to see nearly enough.

EDUCATION: B.A., Indiana University, 1994, majors in Germanic Language and Literature and Russian Language and Literature. M.L.S., Indiana University, 1996.

FIRST JOB: During my high school years, I did semi-volunteer work in a convalescent home feeding elderly people who couldn't feed themselves. So I stopped wanting to be a doctor and started not knowing what I wanted to be. Sometime after that, the need for money led me to become a full-time fast-food worker. Finally I listened to my mother and decided to become a librarian.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: My first library position was as a graduate assistant working with Slavic language approval plans at Indiana University. My first Librarian position was working on a grant at the Center for Research Libraries cataloging foreign language newspapers. Later I cataloged historical newspapers on grant at the College of William and Mary, and was a Serials Cataloger at the University of Michigan. While working with serials, I was active in NASIG and served four years on its Electronic Communication Committee. Currently I'm the Acquisitions Librarian at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. I edit the "Biz of Acq" column in *Against the Grain*, and serve on the University of Maryland and Affiliated Institution's Serials/Acquisitions Small Working Group for the consortial implementation of the Ex Libris integrated library system.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Most of my time is used up with work, raising my son, and improving my 100-year old house by painting, dry walling, refinishing floors, etc. I dream a lot of what I will do when I have spare time again. I would like to spend more time with nature, more time listening to music, more time gardening, and maybe even someday doing volunteer work with children or the elderly. I also occasionally dream

of finding and buying antique furniture in poor condition and refinishing it. I do occasionally find time to read and float in my pool. Playing with my 4 year old son is a lot of fun.

FAVORITE BOOKS: It's Robert Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love*, although I'm a bit reluctant to admit it publicly, given the amount of incest in it. It's composed of a series of stories, and as a whole, the book is about things like the will to live, happiness, love, and social mores. While Science Fiction isn't my favorite genre, in this case Heinlein uses science fiction to challenge how we think about ourselves, and in my mind, to question the interrelationship between logic and emotions and how society values them.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Closed-mindedness. When people can only see one side of an issue. When people see everything as either black or white. When people can't get out of the little programs running in their heads to see or understand something different or new. And the worst: When I do those things myself!

PHILOSOPHY: Figure out what works and do it. Feelings come, feeling go.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: I've done all kinds of things I'm really proud of, but ultimately, I think it's the times when I've been really good at motivating people that have been most meaningful, whether it's "planting" an idea and just letting it grow, or recognizing a good quality, or really listening and building a consensus based on what I've heard, or even simply pushing for more or better work. Nothing meaningful I've done could have been done without the other people who worked on it or toward it.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I would like to be involved in creating a library portal that is as easy, as natural, as useful, and as popular as Amazon.com, and I would like to make it integrated with campus information and classroom software so that users could seamlessly and easily use everything we have available for them. This is probably not a realistic goal, and it's not really in my job description as an acquisitions librarian, but it's what I'd really like to do. However, there is some small hope, so wish me luck. I figure if I dream big, maybe I'll achieve big.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Likely someone will invent an eBook that people want to buy and read. Some library vendors might find a way to compete with online consumer vendors like Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.com in terms of stock and speed of delivery. Maybe a library vendor will partner with an online consumer book dealer, offering specialty library services using the online consumer book dealer's Website and stock of books, giving libraries the best of both worlds. Journals may start to be cut out of the information chain as they become increasingly irrelevant as the package which articles come in. Someone in the industry will likely suffer a catastrophic loss of data due to a hacker or a virus. Oh, and we'll all replace all of our CD's and DVD's with the next thing that comes along.

patrons are continuing to request a growing number of articles through ILL. Because of the consortial agreements no fees are charged for ILL service between the USMAI libraries, and we all search our consortial partners holdings first. By searching catalogusmai ILL staff can quickly discover the paper and online holdings of others in the system, including the specialized databases, and request materials accordingly. At UMBC alone, over the past eight fiscal years, an average of 41% of total article borrowing requests filled came from within the USM. And UMBC provided an average of 30% of total article requests filled to other USM libraries.

The University System of Maryland ILL Group (USMILL), with representatives from each of the campuses, works together to resolve problems as well as provide the best service to our patrons. The Group created a rush fax form that was used between the USM campuses when a rush was absolutely necessary, and before the OCLC request was even sent. They also lobbied the Council of Library Directors (CLD) to fund Ariel software and workstations for all the USM libraries so that everyone could provide the same level of service to our patrons and each other. Not all campuses were able to afford Ariel at the time, but most now have it. In addition, the USMILL group requested that CLD fund the purchase of CLIO software for all campuses so that our record keeping, and reporting of statistics to the Directors, would be compatible. By purchasing CLIO consortially the USM was given a discounted price which made it all the more affordable. On a yearly basis the USM ILL offices now share statistics which project a more complete and accurate picture of ILL borrowing and lending between the campuses.

Impact on Collection Development

Patron Placed Holds were originally implemented to increase resource sharing and make departmental book budgets go further. In theory, each library should be purchasing fewer items that duplicate other USMAI libraries collections. However, there is no consortial agreement regarding collection development, so various USMAI libraries have very different policies regarding the duplication of other libraries' collections. Some libraries do not consider other libraries' holdings at all when making purchasing decisions, while others might have policies against purchasing any title owned by another USMAI library, while yet other libraries might have a policy against purchasing any title owned by two or more other libraries in the consortium. At UMBC we have thought that selectors should be purchasing fewer items that duplicate other USMAI collections, and that the uniqueness of UMBC's collections should be increasing.

In practicality, selectors seem to request just as many items that are owned by other USMAI institutions, despite collection development policies geared toward assisting selectors in reducing that duplication. Both online and book order forms contain an area where selectors may indicate whether they still want an item to be purchased even if it's already owned by another USMAI library. Consistently, selectors indicate on orders that they want the item whether it's owned by another USMAI library or not, displaying little concern for cooperative collection development. In Fiscal Year 2002, for example, out of 9,778 books requested, only 314 orders, three percent, indicated

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Born & lived: Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Lived also in Washington, D.C., Florida, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland (twice!), California and Pennsylvania

EARLY LIFE: I'm pretty sure I had one. Fairly carefree, as far as I can recall. Lots of reading and hiking in the woods.

FAMILY: Husband Tom and son Chris. 2 cats, Basil and Zoe, 4 hermit crabs and a fish.

EDUCATION: BA in Anthropology, MLS - both from University of Kentucky

FIRST JOB: scary but true - Borrowing clerk in Interlibrary Loan at University of Kentucky. That's where I learned to verify requests, back before OCLC! We used a TWX machine to send requests, and hardly anyone charged for anything!

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Assistant Head of User Services, then Reference Librarian, both at Va Tech. At UMBC Reference Librarian, then Collection Management/ILL Librarian (twice!), Access Services Librarian at Gettysburg College. Active in Maryland Library Association, Maryland Interlibrary Loan Group (MAILL). Serve on the ALA RUSA MOUSS ILL Committee.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: read, kayak, cook, spend time with my family, travel

FAVORITE BOOKS: Mysteries, I love to try to figure out whodunit.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Rude people, litterbugs.

PHILOSOPHY: Live!

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Becoming a librarian. I've really enjoyed it, and not everyone can say that about their career.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Helping my son choose the right college for him!

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: The technology will be new and improved but the basic wants of the patron won't have changed that much. I want it now or yesterday!

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that the item should not be ordered if already owned by another USMAI library, and many of those 314 were immediately reported to Acquisitions as having been mistakes in filling out the form, so the items were ordered anyway. UMBC, with over 10,000 students including 2,000 graduate students, has a book budget of only \$400,000, despite being a research institution classified by the **Carnegie Foundation** as Doctoral/Research Universities-Extensive, and ranked number 153 by the **National Science Foundation** for federally funded research and science and engineering, and ranked 16th in NASA funding. With such a small book budget, many departments suffer a consistent lack of appropriate funds to purchase the items identified by faculty as necessary for the library collection, so we had anticipated better results.

UMBC has an approval plan and receives approval forms, but for many years, items selected on approval were added to the collection regardless of whether owned by other USMAI libraries or not, and selectors were not given an opportunity to state whether they would still want the items if owned by other USMAI libraries. This was primarily due to the fact that our previous catalog contained separate databases for each institution and a union catalog, requiring a separate search in the union catalog to determine if the item was already owned by another USM library. This process proved to be labor intensive and did not clearly determine if an item was a duplicate of UMBC holdings, because certain items were not included in the union catalog, such as those currently on order or in process.

With the implementation of the **Ex Libris Aleph** system the USMAI was able to migrate to one shared database, and the determination of whether an item was owned by UMBC or another USMAI library could be made with just one search. The Acquisitions Librarian surmised that perhaps selectors might be more willing to avoid purchasing approval items already owned by other USMAI libraries, since approval items might be of more marginal interest than those directly selected by faculty. Given the simplicity of checking all orders against the USMAI database to see if the item was already owned by another USMAI library, almost immediately upon implementation of the new system library, Acquisitions began implementing procedures to reduce duplication of other USMAI collections with approval orders. Acquisitions recorded on the form or-

ders if the items were already owned by other USMAI libraries, and returned the forms to the requesting department, with a letter attached asking the selector to determine if they still wanted the items despite already being available in another USMAI institution. This again proved to be a failure, with selectors simply returning nearly all of the orders to be purchased. Additionally, many selectors asked to not receive the information about items already owned by other USMAI institutions at all. For example, in July-September 2004, 61%, 2,154 out of 3,639, of approval form orders submitted by selectors were already owned by another USMAI library, and the return of those items to selectors resulted in most selectors either simply returning all of the forms to Acquisitions or contacting either the Acquisitions or Collection Management Librarian, to inform them that they didn't want this information.

So why didn't we have more success with these endeavors? Maybe because we have faculty selectors, who really want everything to be here in our library, and don't have the time to review selections based on information about other USMAI holdings. However, given the difficulties many departments have in stretching their budgets to get everything they want, we would have anticipated more success, even with faculty selectors. Perhaps the approval slips represent core items that must really be held by each library, and that is why the liaisons persist in ordering the items anyway, because not having them may impact on accreditation. Perhaps the departmental budgets are so small they only support core purchases, leaving little money left over for more unique items. In the end, our best estimate is that about 50% of our new book purchases duplicate other USMAI libraries' holdings, and our attempts at reducing that number through Acquisitions procedures have failed. And the faculty objected to, after carefully selecting the first time, having to go back and decide which titles, already owned within the USM, they really want on their own campus or could do without.

PPH has had little impact on collection development, because in the end, we purchase what the selectors want us to purchase. On the whole, however, PPH is an excellent service, exponentially increasing the number of items readily available to our patrons at little cost to the library. While we have provided information on consortial holdings to our selectors in order to allow them to make the best decisions possible, in the end, they want what they want regardless of whether other campuses own the title or not, and we try our best to give them what they want. In the end, a holds request service that is utilized approximately 7,000 times each year by our patrons can only be considered a success.

Note from the Editors: The following USMAI libraries contributed input to this article: St. Mary's College, Towson University, The University of Baltimore, and the Center for Environmental Sciences.

