

## RESOURCE SHARING MECHANISMS FOR IAMSLIC

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**ABSTRACT:** Eighteen months of postings to the IAMSLIC listserv were examined to document trends in use of the listserv as a vehicle for interlibrary loan requests. Requests were tabulated by geographic origin and type of document required. Many requested titles appeared in catalogs of large libraries, union lists or bibliographic utilities.

### The History of Resource Sharing in IAMSLIC:

Specialized research, limited budgets and remote marine laboratory locations have taught IAMSLIC members the importance of resource sharing. As an aid to resource sharing, IAMSLIC members produced a union list of periodicals from marine science libraries called *MUSSEL* and two years later updated the *International Directory of Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers*. *MUSSEL* contains approximately 10,000 titles from 55 marine libraries and the directory includes contact names, user policies, services, and descriptions of collection scope and size. Another update to the directory, which includes entries for aquatic libraries, is presently being compiled. The most recent resource sharing endeavor of IAMSLIC is the "CYAMUS Union List" created by Steve Watkins and Joe Wible. The union list comprises serial holdings from 22 geographically diverse libraries, encompassing over 32,000 records.

### The Increasing Use of Internet for Interlibrary Loan:

In 1991, Peter Brueggman established the IAMSLIC electronic discussion listserv and since that time traffic on the list has steadily increased. In the 18 months between February 1995 and July 1996 the IAMSLIC listserv received a total of 1745 messages, 370<sup>1</sup> of which were requests for interlibrary loan materials. Figure 1 shows total postings as well as interlibrary loan requests posted to the list. The percentage of postings due to interlibrary loan requests increased as well (Figure 2), suggesting our use of the IAMSLIC listserv has changed.

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<sup>1</sup> A request was considered an interlibrary loan if it was for a patron. Requests for replacement pages or citation verification were not considered to be interlibrary loan requests.

### Who Uses the Listserv and What Are We Asking For:

Most of the interlibrary loan requests posted to the IAMSLIC listserv originated in North America. The following is a geographic breakdown of requests:

- 53% North America
- 18% Europe
- 17% Australia/New Zealand
- 8% Africa
- 4% All Other

Requests for resource sharing indicate equal need for monographic materials (including gray literature and government reports) and journal articles. Requests by type of material are as follows:

- 54% Journal Articles
- 42% Monographs
- 4% Theses

### Who owns the material we need:

I searched several catalogs and union lists for a subset of total interlibrary loan requests (100 of 370) posted during the period of study. I searched one of the bibliographic utilities (OCLC), a large marine science library catalog (Scripps Institution of Oceanography), the MUSSEL union list and CYAMUS union list. The 100 titles occurred in each database in the following percentages:<sup>2</sup>

#### TOTAL REQUESTS

- OCLC 69%
- Scripps 35%

#### PERIODICAL TITLES

- OCLC 89%
- Scripps 56%
- CYAMUS 59%
- MUSSEL 41%<sup>3</sup>

A study of interlibrary loan at ARL libraries showed 80-95% of document requests were filled by one of the bibliographic utilities (Baker & Jackson 1993) and it seems IAMSLIC requests would be no exception. The subject specific union lists at our disposal are also useful for tracking lenders and it appears that a large library such as Scripps could fulfill a large number of needed requests.

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<sup>2</sup>This would not necessarily mean the request could be filled or the desired volume was owned, only that the desired title was represented in the catalog or union list.

<sup>3</sup>Theoretically, *MUSSEL* would contain a higher percentage of titles studied, but recent retrospective conversion and better tracking of title changes may account for the higher percentage of hits at Scripps.

### How Do We Measure Success:

Based on follow-up messages to the IAMSLIC list, twenty-two percent of requests are filled. The success rate is probably much higher, as recipients may not always notify the list when they obtain their request. Still, 22% success is a low figure given that a recent study shows commercial document delivery services could supply approximately 77% of college library ILL requests at an average cost under \$20.

When we consider success, we also need to include some measure of efficiency. Requests to the IAMSLIC list are often filled simultaneously by several libraries. This duplication of effort is expensive given that interlibrary loan requests are estimated to cost \$36 per transaction (White 1995). One of the biggest problems with some interlibrary loan models is the inability to predict turn-around time (Baker & Jackson 1993). IAMSLIC experiences this problem. Our system of broadcasted requests frequently results in re-posting messages because no response was received. Our list has also been used for interlibrary loan requests by non-IAMSLIC members, but there was no way to tell if their requests were answered.

### What Are the Possible Alternatives:

The IAMSLIC listserv is presently reserved for interlibrary loan requests of last resort. This may be one reason for a fill rate of only 22%, because only problematic requests are posted to the list. Given that many of the needed titles are listed in a bibliographic utility or at a large marine science library, it may be time for IAMSLIC to enter into formal resource sharing agreements and expand our resource sharing program to include routine requests.

#### Some alternatives:

- A voucher system such as that used by IFLA (Cornish 1994)
- OCLC group access
- Subsidize a large marine science library as a net lender for IAMSLIC
- Partnering- pair a library with a strong collection with a library in need of that collection
- Union list enhancement- add more libraries to the CYAMUS Union list and keep it up to date
- Education- train members to search a variety of marine library catalogs and bibliographic utilities
- Increase use of commercial document suppliers
- Create more specialized mailing lists for distribution of ILL requests:
  - \*Geographic groups
  - \*Subject specific groups
    - Fisheries
    - Oceanography
    - Ecology
    - Aquatic sciences
    - Aquaculture
    - Botany
    - Zoology

**Conclusions:**

Given the increasing use of the IAMSLIC listserv as a vehicle for interlibrary loan requests, it may be appropriate for our group to consider establishing formal resource sharing programs. The alternatives mentioned above are meant as topics for discussion for it is beyond the scope of this paper to construct a resource sharing program appropriate for all IAMSLIC libraries. That task would ideally be accomplished by a committee of members from a variety of marine and aquatic libraries.

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FIGURE 1: TOTAL AND ILL POSTINGS

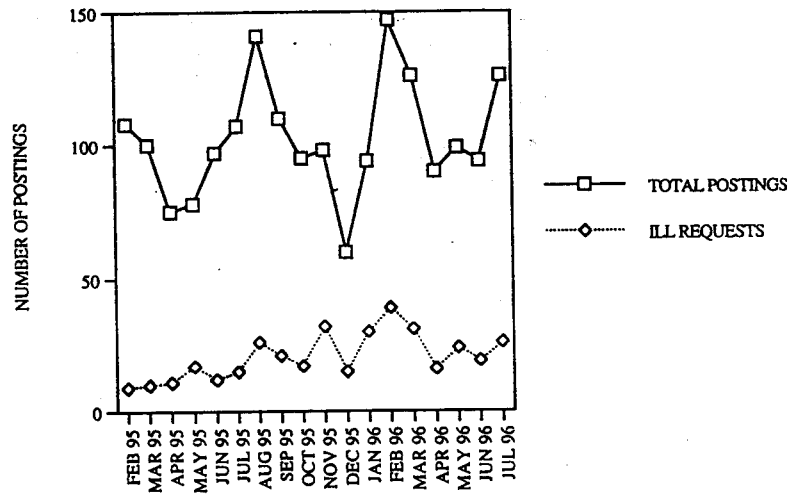


FIGURE 2: PERCENT TOTAL POSTINGS DUE TO ILLS

