



RLG Programs

The New Workflow Economy: a quick and dirty SHARES survey

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Offering Library Services: More is More

- October 2007 SHARES survey asked four questions:
 - Name 3 tasks your ILL staff performs now that you didn't perform 2 years ago.
 - Name 3 tasks your ILL staff performs 2 years ago that you have stopped doing.
 - Name 3 tasks that you hope to stop doing but haven't figured out how to do without.
 - Add any comments about pressures to increase efficiency so you can deliver more service with the same amount of staff.

19 Responses

- 7 art museums
 - 6 academics
 - 3 law
 - 2 medical
 - 1 national
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- 58 new tasks
 - 38 tasks stopped
 - 32 tasks would like to stop
 - 24 comments

Most often mentioned “new” tasks

- Purchase instead of ILL (7)
- Fill requests by sending pdf's (5)
- E-delivery to own patrons (4)
- Document delivery to own faculty (4)
- Reminders to patrons (3)

Most often mentioned “stopped” tasks

- Keeping paper files (3)
- Looking for free lenders (2)
- Monitoring/enforcing patron limits (2)
- Using ISO ILL (2)
- Using ILL Manager (2)

Most often mentioned “want to stop but can’t do without” tasks

- Keeping paper files (4)
- Using Ariel (3)
- Packaging/shipping (2)
- Searching for requests that fall through the cracks (2)
- Faxing (2)

Can you guess what appeared on all three lists: new task, stopped task, and would-like-to-stop task?

■ Using Ariel

Lots of suggestions for improving functionality

- Make it easier to change a loan to a copy
- Print local call number on pick slip
- Would like to update request and charge out book in a single operation
- Want alert or easy way to retrieve active requests that have not been responded to in a timely manner
- Borrowing notes don't carry through to all lenders
- Wish proxy borrowers were easier to handle
- Too much mousing, want more macros

Licensed e-resources a common theme

- Patrons often don't realize the library holds an e-title
- ILL lenders either can't lend from them, or must print out and then rescan to lend
- Yet some report processing fewer copy requests because patrons are finding full-text articles online

Technology was mentioned much more as a possible solution than was organization.

- Only two respondents mentioned a change in organization as having an impact on performance:
 - One reported combining circulation, reserves and ILL and assigning ILL processing tasks across the departments throughout the day and night
 - One reported decentralizing processing so branch units could scan, send, and update themselves.

Other recurring issues and themes

- Decided trend toward removing barriers for patrons
- Decided trend toward offering more services for own patrons, and for free
- Museums alone reported being understaffed, often with a one-person ILL unit with additional duties besides interlending
- UK library alone mentioned “red tape” – with copyright law requiring actual signatures on paper, administrators requiring pre-payment from patrons with paper vouchers, and so many stops on the paper trail for getting invoices paid that staff lose much time following up, fielding inquiries, and repairing relationships with partners

Most melancholy response:

- One library has had to give up sending Christmas cards

Most ironic response:

- One library wished for an alternative to invoicing libraries who were deflected but persisted in sending a request via mail, phone or fax.

Good sense, great service

- One library Google's article titles their own patrons are ordering on ILL to see if they're available online for free.
- One library automatically turns a failed search request into an ILL request.
- One library reports daily to collection development staff what can't be borrowed on ILL.
- One institution allows patrons to return ILL's to any one of 19 libraries

Most amusing response:

- One person reported as her favorite “would like to stop but can’t do without it yet” choice:
- “Working outside the home.”