



The Request service - aka "Patron Initiated Requesting" Library Staff Briefing Notes

BACKGROUND

As recommended by the University Librarians and the Library Planning and Action Initiative Task Force, the UC Libraries have implemented the "Request" service (also known as "Patron Initiated Requesting" - PIR) to facilitate rapid access to physical materials on all campuses and in the Regional Storage Facilities. Request is a major component of the concept of shared UC library collections. It enhances convenience for the patron and saves library staff time, on a per transaction basis, that is currently devoted to manual verification and transmission of requests. In its eventual form, it will work with "Consortial Borrowing System" software to route requests to ILL or circulation systems. It is being implemented in Phases, as described below. Implementation of Request may require changes in internal UC library workflows, and because of enhanced convenience and faster delivery, may increase the number of interlibrary requests received. Implementation of the service is a collaborative effort of all nine campus libraries and the California Digital Library. The CDL is providing funding and oversight for system implementation. The overall project Director is Karen Butter, Acting University Librarian UCSF (replacing Beverlee French, Associate Director for Shared Collections and Services at the CDL as of December 1999).

Phase I (January 1999 – December 1999): A single "Request" button on the CDL Web display screens that was active for the Melvyl CAT database. Users were limited to Faculty, Graduate Students, and Staff. Requests were limited to 10 per day. Materials held locally were blocked from Request unless a campus has a document delivery service and the Request user chooses to use it. All other Universitywide interlibrary loan policies, including standard loan periods, remained in place. Processing of the requests was done by new software written by CDL and the Request Project Team and is transparent to the user. Patron authorization checks were processed against a systemwide patron file, and requests were sent automatically to the "OCLC Direct to Profile" or "OCLC Review" files.

Phase II (January 2000 – December 2000): Extension to CDL-hosted, and mounted, databases (i.e. MEDLINE/HealthStar, Current Contents, ABI/Inform, BIOSIS Previews, INSPEC, MAGS, Computer Articles, PsycINFO) but not from Periodicals, NEWS, or the Z39.50 databases (those with "@" in their names). Extension to undergraduates (9/00). Processing and policies include:

Request Quick Facts

Consult this document for:

Background
Processing overview
Interface overview
Frequently Asked Questions

Liaisons

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Timing

1/99 - Phase I implementation
1/00 - Phase II - extension to articles
9/00 - Extended to Undergraduates
Ongoing - Enhancements, discussion of future priorities

More information:

<http://www.cdlib.org/libstaff/shar-edcoll/projects/pir/>

- Requests for titles held locally will be rejected unless they are missing, withdrawn or checked out (and the circulation status is linked to Melvyl, currently true for all campuses except UCSB). Patrons making such requests will be offered document delivery if applicable.
- Requests for circulating non-book materials will be processed directly through Request.
- Requests for non-circulating materials will continue to be bypassed; if all copies of a requested item are non-circulating, the request will be rejected.
- When possible the campus patron database is checked for authorization when the request is being placed
- Faculty, Graduate Students and Staff limited to 20 book requests per day
- Undergraduates are limited to 5 book requests per day.
- Faculty, Graduate Students and Staff are limited to 20 article requests per day (a total of 20 from any of the combined article databases).
- Undergraduates are limited to 5 article requests per day (a total of 5 from any of the combined article databases).
- Requests for articles with available, linked, online full-content versions will be blocked if the license is for systemwide access or if the Periodicals Database holdings shows electronic subscription coverage for the user's campus.
- Patrons requesting articles with potentially available ASCII versions or locally provided internet versions will be alerted to this possibility from all databases (e.g., from MEDLINE/HealthStar, the user will be able to discover that MAGS contains full-text *JAMA* articles) so as to reduce the need for requests from these journals.
- Requests for titles/volumes held locally will be blocked or the user will be offered document delivery if applicable.

Additions as of September 21, 2000

- Review page now presents all items as "checked" and the user is prompted to "uncheck" unwanted items.
- Users may email their confirmation page (previously it was recommended that users print the page)
- "need by date" - the user must select a date after which they will no longer need the item in the event of a delay in delivery
- Provides chapter requests from BIOSIS Previews and PsycINFO
- Real-time patron status checking (except at UCSB)

Phase III (January 2001 –): Among the processing and workflow enhancements that will be widely discussed as potential Phase III priorities are:

- Additional output stream of Requests for DocLine fulfillment
- Extension to non-locally mounted A&I databases, both in Z39.50 and vendor interfaces
- Integration with “Consortial Borrowing System” software to route requests directly to campus systems and allow online patron status checking.
- Use of Request in reciprocal ILL arrangements with non-UC libraries
- Integration with ”desktop delivery” of articles as scanned images via the web

PROCESSING OVERVIEW

Request software is written to examine each item being requested to determine the processing of the loan request. Request is available for faculty, students, and staff and that circulation status is checked when possible.

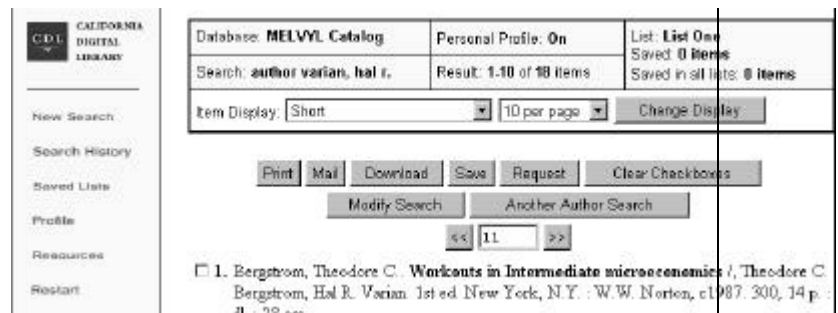
There are five types of system actions that can be taken:

1. Error Message: e.g. that the service is not available to the patron (unrecognized patron ID).
2. Item messages blocking request: because an item is held locally and is available (not circulating or listed as missing, etc), or is available via a licensed full-content link,
3. Alerting that the item may be available as ASCII text in a CDL-hosted database.
4. E-mail messages to ILL unit to start loan process for an item
5. Item record sent automatically to loaning library (via OCLC)

INTERFACE OVERVIEW

The Request feature is initiated within the CDL Web with a "Request" button when displaying search results, displaying a saved list, and when displaying an update list. A cross-campus design team has defined interface components, and updated them for phase II, including:

- A form for patron identification, selection of pickup locations, etc.
- System and campus-specific messages during the request process
- Confirmation of the request



In phase II a patron's interactions while using Request include:

1. Checking desired items from a display of results
2. Filling out and submitting a system-provided Request form
3. Viewing a system-provided review (and an opportunity to eliminate via checkboxes) the items being requested and display of a copyright notice
4. Viewing a system-provided cancellation notice if the patron is unrecognized, or the database is ineligible for Requests (i.e. is a Z39.50 "@" database), or the patron has already placed 20 items (Faculty, Graduate Students and Staff) or 5 items (undergraduates). Limits are applied separately to a) combined requests from journal databases or b) within Melvyl). In the case of an unrecognized patron, the Request form is presented for correction and resubmission.
5. Viewing system-provided item messages in those cases where an item is not processed because the system recognizes the availability of licensed electronic full-content (with options to link to the content immediately), the item is held locally, or ASCII text is available.
6. Viewing and emailing a confirmation that requests for eligible items have been initiated (regardless of whether the process is done by email or OCLC), and lists what has been skipped or what wasn't processed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What User issues have been anticipated? What can we use to explain Request to users?

a. Tracking requests: patrons may not understand how to track their requests. There will be a sense of dropping the request into a black hole.

To date patrons have been directed through the Request interface to ILL staff for questions about the status of their requests. ILL staff can check OCLC files via patron name for status. In later phases there is the hope to implement a tracking mechanism. (There is currently no way to track telnet MELVYL® Catalog Requests and there have been few complaints.)

b. Patrons and staff will be burdened by a large number of requests for items actually held locally as a result of vagaries in cataloging practices.

We expect a small percentage of requests, for which staff intervention could have identified local holdings, to go automatically to a lending library. Evaluation in Phase I determined that this was not a large proportion of requests. Tolerating a small percentage through intercampus lending should be more efficient, and may even be faster, than manual verification.

c. Each campus's interlibrary loan and document delivery practices and present use of Request in the telnet version of the catalog are so different that confusion will reign regarding Request and local services.

- According to user satisfaction surveys held during Phase I and II, patrons are finding the Request mechanism convenient and relatively transparent. Existing document delivery services are included in Request. The Project Team continues to work with campuses that have special local document delivery situations to mitigate against confusion.
- Library staff are already used to handling multiple request streams—Web forms, e-mail, Innopac, Docline, paper, phone, fax. The new OCLC “Request to Profile” stream is the least staff-intensive.

e. How can patrons get more information?

A user's guide - *Using Request* - is available on the CDL Web site. Help screens are available while using the service. For further questions patrons will be encouraged to consult with a library staff member or directly with their local ILL office.

2. *Will ILL staff be so overwhelmed with increased numbers of requests that resulting slowness in filling them will cancel benefits of direct requests?*

- Phase I experience with returnables and availability only through CAT databases provided experience in the potential volume increase. The increases to date are not large (consult with the PIR Liaison on your campus for more statistical information).
- The volume limits (20 for Faculty, Graduate Students and Staff; 5 for Undergraduates) per borrower per day and patron type appear to regulate the volume sufficiently. As more experience is acquired all of these policies will be revisited by SOPAG and others.
- By effecting workload savings in borrowing, library staff can devote greater effort to lending.
- Benchmark data on total transactions, turnaround time, and fill-rates have been extracted from OCLC during Phase I and II. . These data have been consolidated and are accessible via the Web (at http://www.cdlib.org/libstaff/sharedcoll/projects/pir/PIR_statistical_review.PDF).

3. *Could increased volume of requests drive up costs (for staff, delivery, and OCLC) to campus libraries.*

- Although the measures above are designed to mitigate against overwhelming cost increases, everyone expects that we will move more materials and may invest more in resource sharing, but at a lower per transaction cost.

- The Project Team is available to assist libraries in considering different workflow models to mitigate workload costs.

4. Where can library staff get more information?

There are staff members on each campus who are directly involved in the Request planning and implementation. These include ILL unit heads, a group of "PIR" Liaisons, and staff members who have attended update sessions. A web site (www.cdlib.org/libstaff/sharedcoll/projects/pir/) is available with background information. A listserv for those involved with Request operations, as well as other interested staff, is available for subscription (send "SUBSCRIBE PIROPS-L <Your Name>" to listserv@ucop.edu).