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Supporting Institutional Repositories through Interlibrary Loan Workflows

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Ohio Institutional Repository Day

I gave a lightning talk at Ohio IR Day, *Supporting Institutional Repositories through Interlibrary Loan Workflows*. Here is the text of that talk:

So, as something of a resource sharing evangelist and lover of the shiny and useful, I wanted to give a more theoretical talk about how interlibrary services workflows can support institutional repositories, because faculty request their own articles all the time for dossiers and other promotion and tenure stuff. First I'll explain a bit about myself and my library, so you're aware of what informs my thoughts on this.

I'm Angela Galvan, Digital Reformatting Specialist and Head of Interlibrary Services* for The Ohio State University Health Sciences Library. First, the Health Sciences Library at Ohio State is not part of University Libraries. This is fairly common for medical and health sciences branches anywhere, but it means we have an entirely separate, not always intuitive reporting line. I don't, for example, report through an Access Services or similarly titled librarian, but rather the Emerging Technologies Librarian. This is great for me: I can experiment, fail forward and quickly, and gives me a kind of agility other ILL people simply don't have. Health Sciences has its own separate instance of the interlibrary management program, ILLiad, and we have our own OCLC symbol. We have 1.0 FTE and 20 student hours/week devoted to managing the ILL volume of a mid-sized liberal arts college, somewhere in the neighborhood of 12,000 transactions a year.

We know the character of resource sharing is changing. Questions on listservs and in our own operations confirm what we've known: discovery systems, more intuitive user experience, and the ability to negotiate resource access are reducing the overall volume of interlibrary loan at a system-wide level. Stats from OCLC will tell you there's simply less happening, which means we're left to wonder what else ILL staff can do.

I think putting us in Circulation is an easy answer. It's also wrong. We're talking about people who might have spent their entire lives in Tech Services, where mortals seldom go. But it's more than that.

The natural home of ILL is in research and reference, and in support of campus library initiatives. We're already in reformatting, we put together citations like broken pottery with research, we understand markup and formatting. We're on the other side of poor metadata, and always on the other side of open access. ILL is the canary in the coal mine for your discovery issues. We know if library systems serve the user effectively because they come to us when they can't find things.

Resource sharing staff get to know their uses through their requests, so we see when they're requesting their own scholarly production—and again, they do this all the time. Go ask. Go see how many opportunities for intervention are occurring.

There are a few ways to get at this process in your ILL office, by either asking the user to indicate when this happens (“Check here if you edited, wrote, etc...the item you're requesting”), or work magic in Access or Excel to match citation fields and user information. You'd then follow up with those users every semester or so. Again, this depends on the shape of your local workflows, what you're comfortable asking users to do, and how you want to get at that data. Anyone using ILLiad can find me today and I'll be glad to go over how that might look.

So, although this conversation ends with an institutional repository or scholarly communications librarian, it can start in your ILL office. IRs have to be supported and promoted by as many units as possible, to avoid creating the situations Dorothea Salo at University of Madison-Wisconsin has written about in both *How To Scuttle A Scholarly Communications Initiative*, and *Innkeeper at the Roach Motel*. Digital initiatives aren't just for faculty librarians, they're for your staff too. You can't lay All The Digital Things at the feet of one or two people in your library, then blame them for inevitable failures.

Combining interlibrary services with Circulation is the easy answer—but this is a better one. It's a harder

one, for some of you. But, it will support your initiatives further. Because we go farther together.

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*Depending on the audience, I use ILL and Document Delivery interchangeably for my job title. Job titles (and descriptions) I find are quite arbitrary anyway, so I adjust my title to suit the talk.