

STATE OF INTERLENDING AND DOCUMENT DELIVERY AMONG GHANAIAN STATE FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The state funded universities in Ghana participate in informal interlending. A questionnaire survey of Head Librarians of Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery (ILL/DD) Units was used to ascertain performance levels of the ILL/DD services. It was found that informal interlending was active. These ILL/DD services however operated far below their potentials. There was no fully fledged interlending unit in all the respondent libraries. These services were run as supplements of other library service units, sharing staff time, attention and other resources. The services therefore suffered from low fill rate, high turnaround time, untimely delivery of documents and consequently, low volume of transactions. Tools needed to effectively run the services: union lists or automated catalogues of the various libraries and codes to guide transactions were nonexistent. ILL/DD transactions were limited to the lending of journals and the delivery of photocopies of documents. No books were ordered or loaned during the survey period. Despite this state of affairs, interlending staff were very positive that the services satisfied an important niche of the information needs of their clientele. This is the silver lining. It is suggested that the University Librarians of these libraries endeavour to formalize the ILL/DD services, build codes to guide transactions and create full fledged ILL/DD units to better serve the information needs of their users.

Keywords: RESOURCE SHARING, LIBRARY COOPERATION, ACADEMIC LIBRARIES.

Introduction

Interlibrary loan is “a transaction in which, upon request, one library lends an item from its collections, or furnishes a copy of the item, to another library not under the same administration or on the same campus” (Baker and Jackson, 1993). Document Delivery, however, is the provision of non-returnable documents, published or unpublished, in whatever format, at an established cost upon request by users (Alemna, 1997; Baker and Jackson, 1993). Interlibrary loan/Document delivery (ILL/DD) services are part of resource sharing or library cooperation. These seek to link a user community with its information needs and also cooperate with information providers, which may not be libraries (Bakewell, 1990). Interlibrary loan departments in libraries provide document delivery services as well, in so far as they provide photocopies of materials and facilitate their delivery.

Interlending is an established aspect of library practice the world over. This is due to the fact that no matter how endowed libraries are, they are no longer able to provide on-site all the needs of their patrons. This is attributable to factors such as:

- Information explosion – the large quantity of information being published daily in the world;
- The variety of formats in which information is available;

- Increasing costs in acquiring information and the technology to access the various formats;
- Lack of know-how in using the technology (especially in developing nations);
- Disparities between resources available to users by reason of geographic location and (or) socio-economic position; and
- The large number of courses being offered by institutions; sometimes without appropriate provision of readily available and relevant course materials.

These have compelled libraries to optimize the use of their individual resources through networking. This provides them the means to solve the problem of inadequate provision in their local situations.

Libraries share information by formal and informal borrowing. Informal arrangements are unsustainable in an environment of increasing demands for information and limited resources (Rao, 2006). In this respect, effective interlibrary lending systems are essential through formal agreements with codes to guide transactions between libraries.

In Ghana, there is no formal interlending scheme. Between 1996 and 2004, two projects: the Ghana Interlibrary Lending and Document Delivery Network (GILLDDNET), and Project for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) were in operation in five Ghanaian public funded academic libraries. These were document delivery projects involving foreign databases/libraries and the various Ghanaian libraries. According to Martey (2003), the GILLDDNET project fostered cooperation and resource sharing among Ghanaian libraries, however, “this ... was still informal”. Alemna and Cobblah (2004) also confirmed this informal sharing of resources on the GILLDDNET project. GILLDDNET and PERI ended in 2002 and 2004 respectively. These notwithstanding, the informal sharing of resources among the state funded universities still continued.

Libraries are one of the structural foundations of teaching, learning and research (Limb, 2002). This is asserted further by a statement attributed to Olausson by Hansson (2006) that, “The prerequisites for learning and research are good teachers, adequate pedagogical methods, and rich information resources, stimulating study environments, curiosity, and high motivation among students”. Rich information resources for academic work at universities can be attained through formal interlending in the light of factors necessitating the need for ILL/DD services stated above. The state of informal interlending among state funded academic libraries in Ghana is the subject of this paper. The libraries are:

- Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra;
- Library of the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast;
- Library of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi;
- Library of the University for Development Studies, Tamale;
- Library of the University of Education, Winneba; and
- Library of the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa.

Methodology

The state of a service can be ascertained by some form of evaluation. Bundy and Amey (2006), cited Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (in their work on education evaluation) as stating that the ‘the most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve’. The goals of a library service are only worthy when they adequately satisfy the needs of users. When users’ needs are not being satisfied steps are taken through increase in inputs or the

introduction of innovations to improve the service. Output measures resulting from the service, such as, circulation statistics, perceptions of users and staff of the service, (Bundy and Amey, 2006) and material 'availability' (Revill, 1987) are some performance measures that qualify the state of a service and can be used to evaluate it. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) used four performance measures: cost, fill rate, turnaround time, and user satisfaction to evaluate performance of ILL/DD in North American research and college libraries in 1995/96 (Jackson, 1998).

This study was carried out by a questionnaire survey of Head Librarians of ILL/DD units in the six (6) Ghanaian state funded universities mentioned above. A copy of the questionnaire was sent to each library. They were to report on ILL/DD activities in the six months prior to September 2006. The questions were designed to solicit the following:

- The number of libraries providing ILL/DD services and information on staff;
- Services used to deliver documents;
- Types of documents delivered;
- Volume of ILL/DD activity;
- Fill rate and document delivery time;
- ILL/DD staff's perceptions of the services;
- Use of web resources /Internet databases;
- User education/ publicity of the ILL/DD services;
- Cost of the services to users;
- Automated library catalogues; and
- Comments and suggestions by respondents.

The questions consisted of closed questions mainly; open-ended questions were used where respondents' opinions were needed and to make distinctions that were not possible with closed questions. The Likert type scale was used to measure staff perceptions of services.

Findings

Five libraries responded to the questionnaires; these were:

- Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra;
- The Library of the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast;
- The Library of the University for Development Studies, Tamale;
- The Library of the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; and
- The Library of the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa.

The last mentioned did not participate in the informal ILL/DD services while the other four did. The Library of the University of Education, Winneba, did not respond to the questionnaire. The detail of the four replies was generally clear, though there were a few out of context remarks to the open-ended questions. Also, in a few cases questions were not answered.

Information on participating libraries and ILL/DD staff

From responses received, four libraries participated in the informal ILL/DD services. The Readers' Service Unit handled the ILL/DD in two libraries, the Electronic Support Unit in one, while the fourth did not state the unit of the library responsible for the services. Personnel responsible for the services were Assistant Librarians (two libraries), Senior Assistant Librarian (one library) and the University Librarian in the fourth library. Three of these had training in ILL/DD services while one did not. Two libraries had four staff each and the other two, three staff each responsible for ILL/DD services. The heads of service

were females in three libraries and a male in the fourth. The findings indicate that the ILL/DD services were run by professional librarians with adequate staff complements.

For the purpose of easy narration the four respondent libraries are presented as **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D**. They were requested to indicate the number of libraries each sent materials to and received materials from. Library **A** sent materials to three libraries but did not receive from any library. Library **B** did not respond to the question. Library **C** sent materials to four libraries and received from two, while library **C** sent materials to two and received from two. This indicated the informal ILL/DD services were active and library **A** was a net lender.

ILL/DD Delivery Methods

TABLE 1: DETAILS OF ILL/DD SERVICES

SERVICE	LIBRARY			TOTAL RESPONSES		% RESPONSES
	A	B	C	D		
E-MAIL	x		x	x	3	42.9
POST	x		x		2	28.5
COURIER			x		1	14.3
OTHERS		Reminder			1	14.3
TOTAL	2	1	3	1	7	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Four services were used for delivering documents to users by these libraries, as shown in Table 1. Where such a service was used by a library it is indicated by the symbol “x” in Table 1. Library **A**, used E-mail and Postage, Library **C**, E-mail, Postal and Courier services. Library **D**, only E-mail while Library **B**, mentioned “Reminder”, a service which was vague.

E-mails were used most, (42.9 %), to deliver documents to clients, followed by postage (28.5%). Courier (14.3) and other services (14.3) were less used.

E-mails and postage were therefore the major means used to deliver documents to clients.

Types of Documents Delivered

TABLE 2: DOCUMENT TYPES

DOCUMENTS	LIBRARY				TOTAL RESPONSES	% RESPONSES
	A	B	C	D		
Books			x		1	11.1
Journals	x	x	x		3	33.3
Photocopies	x	x	x	x	4	44.5
Others				E-copy of	1	11.1

				journals		
TOTAL	2	2	3	2	9	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

“x” in Table 2 gives an indication of the types of documents used in the ILL/DD services. Libraries **A** and **B** delivered journals and photocopies of documents. Library **C** delivered books, journals and photocopies of documents while library **D** delivered photocopies of documents and e-copies of journals. Library **C** delivered more document types than the other three libraries. It was the only library that loaned books to the remaining libraries. It was also noted here that although Library **B** was a non-respondent when asked above to indicate the libraries it sent documents to and received documents from it provided document types it delivered in the ILL/DD services. Library **B** was thus a participant in the ILL/DD services and delivered (as well as received) documents to the other libraries.

Photocopies (44.5%) were the main document type delivered by the libraries, followed by journals (33.3%). Books and e-documents were the least delivered. It was noted that the main service, e-mail, which the libraries stated was used most was not analogous to the main types of documents delivered (photocopies and issues of journals). Also, Library **D**'s assertion in Table 2 that it delivered photocopies of documents was contrary to the only document delivery service, e-mail it used (Table 1).

Volume of ILL/DD Activities

Respondent libraries were asked to indicate the volume of materials ordered from or delivered to other libraries under the following limits during the six months under review: ‘No order/ delivery’; ‘one order/ delivery’; ‘2-10’ orders/ deliveries; ‘11-20’ orders/ deliveries; and ‘over 20’ orders/ deliveries. The following were the responses from the libraries:

Books: No interlibrary loan order or delivery of books was made during the period.

Journals: Library **B** was the only library that requested for journal loans during the six month period; the quantity was within the ‘11-20’ category (Table 3). The rest (75%) did not make any requests. In the case of deliveries, libraries **A** and **B** made interlibrary loan deliveries in the ‘11-20’ quantity category. Libraries **C** and **D** neither ordered from nor loaned journals to any other library during the period. Library **B** was the only library that ordered and also loaned journals during the period. The total quantities of orders and deliveries of journals were 33-60; (i.e. adding the lower and upper limits of the quantity categories involved). This gave an average of 6 – 10 journals loaned per month during the six month period; assuming all orders were satisfied. It is to be noted in Table 3 that the symbol “x” represents journal orders and deliveries in the six month period of the study.

Table 3: JOURNAL ORDERS AND DELIVERIES

JOURNAL ORDERS							JOURNAL DELIVERIES					
QUANTITY	LIBRARY				TOTAL	%	LIBRARY				TOTAL	%
	A	B	C	D			A	B	C	D		
None	x		x	x	3	75			x	x	2	50

One												
2-10												
11-20		x			1	25	x	x			2	50
Over 20												
TOTAL	1	1	1	1	4	100	1	1	1	1	4	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Photocopies of Documents

Table 4 shows photocopies of document orders and deliveries during the six month period. The symbol “x” denotes orders and deliveries of photocopied documents in Table 4. Three libraries, **B**, **C** and **D** ordered photocopies of materials in quantity categories of ‘11-20’, ‘over 20’ and ‘2-10’ respectively. Library **A** ordered no document photocopy during the period. In respect of deliveries, libraries **B**, **C**, and **D** delivered photocopied materials to other libraries in quantity categories of ‘2-10’, ‘over 20’ and ‘2-10’ respectively. Library **A** was a non-respondent in respect of photocopy deliveries during the period. The libraries were thus active in the ordering and supply of photocopied materials. The total quantities of orders and deliveries of document photocopies were 17-90+ (i.e. adding the lower and upper limits of quantity categories involved) They ordered and delivered an average of 3-15+ photocopies per month.

It is noted that Library **D** made untenable statements in Tables 2 and 4, vis-à-vis Table 1. E-mail was the only delivery service in use at Library **D** but it claimed to deliver photocopies of documents.

Table 4: PHOTOCOPY ORDERS AND DELIVERIES

DOCUMENT PHOTOCOPY ORDERS							DOCUMENT PHOTOCOPY DELIVERIES					
QUANTITY	LIBRARY				TOTAL	%	LIBRARY				TOTAL	%
	A	B	C	D			A	B	C	D		
None	x				1	25						
One												
2-10				x	1	25		x		x	2	66.7
11-20		x			1	25						
Over 20			x		1	25			x		1	33.3
TOTAL	1	1	1	1	4	100		1	1	1	3	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Fill and Delivery Rates

Respondents were asked to answer the following two questions:

- How long does it take your section to identify and process documents for delivery to clients?
- On the average, how long does it take to receive ordered documents **from other** state funded universities?

It took two libraries two weeks to identify and process ordered documents for delivery, while the other two libraries used one and three weeks respectively. Respondents indicated one, two and three weeks for the receipt of ordered documents from other libraries. One library did not respond to the second question. It can be concluded, therefore that fill rates averaged two weeks and delivery rates ranged from one to three weeks. Therefore turnaround time for loans averaged three to six weeks.

Perception of the ILL/DD Services by Staff

Importance of ILL/DD services

Respondents were asked to score on a Likert scale ranging from: 1, '**Not Important**' to 5, '**Very Important**' to indicate the importance of the ILL/DD services to their constituents. Their scores ranged from four to five. Three respondents, 75%, scored five each on the scale. The respondents were of the view that the services were very important to their constituents.

Timeliness of Deliveries

Another question based on a Likert scale was used to gauge the perception of the ILL/DD Services' staff. They were asked to score from a scale ranging from 1, '**Strongly Disagree**' to 5, '**Strongly Agree**' to indicate the extent to which they perceived the timeliness of documents delivered by the services. Three respondents (75%) scored 3 on the scale while the fourth scored 1. The score '3' divides the scale into two halves and indicates a state of ambiguity. To resolve this state of ambivalence, the fourth score, 1, was considered to conclude that respondents perceived the services as not timely.

Availability and use of Internet Resources

All respondents subscribed to internet-based resources. These resources are managed by the ILL/DD services unit in three of the libraries. On the extent of use of internet resources vis-à-vis local ILL/DD services, respondents agreed unanimously that internet resources were preferred by patrons.

ILL/DD with Foreign Libraries

All respondent libraries had this facility. Constituents of two of these libraries preferred to use ILL/DD transactions with foreign libraries while patrons of the other two libraries preferred the local ILL/DD services. The number of foreign libraries involved with each library and the nature of the transactions were not investigated. These libraries are also members of a Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries Ghana (CARLIGH) through which access to Internet databases is obtained.

User Education/ Publicity of the ILL/DD Services

Respondents used various methods to publicize the ILL/DD services to their patrons. These were: posters, workshops, seminars, tutorial sessions, student orientations, Faculty Board meetings and through pamphlets. Respondents also used a Likert scale to unanimously agree that users of their libraries were very much aware of the existence of the local inter university ILL/DD services.

Cost of the Services to Users

At three of the respondent libraries, clients paid for ILL/DD costs accruing from postage and photocopying of documents. At the fourth library, the services were offered free to users.

Automated Library Catalogues

Three of the responding libraries had no automated library catalogues; however plans were afoot to automate. In one library automation was in progress. There are no union lists of books and serials in the country. Automation of library collections is the current technological option to make these available in the future.

Comments and suggestions by respondents

The following were the gist of comments from respondents:

- Scanners and photocopiers should be provided to the ILL/DD units to enhance service delivery. Scanners will help in sending e-copies as e-mail attachments.
- Efforts on automation of library catalogues should be speeded up to make each library's collection easily accessible to staff and clients.
- The ILL/DD services should be formalized with codes to guide transactions and standard order forms created to capture the basic bibliographic descriptions of items for easy retrieval.

Discussion

Informal interlending was active among most of the state funded universities in Ghana. Not all the universities were, however participating. The ILL/DD services were also marginal as they were adjunct to other library services since none of the libraries had a fully-fledged ILL/DD services unit.

Lending of issues of journal was relatively prominent among the libraries; 6-10 issues were circulated per month during the six-month period. Why should libraries lend issues of journals when articles could be photocopied and sent by post or scanned and sent to clients as e-mail attachments? No reason was given for this practice in the survey. One reason for this might be the application of copyright laws in the interlending practices of these libraries. It is better, for example, to send issues of journals which have several requested articles to requesting libraries than sending photocopies. In this case no infringement of copyright laws in respect of number of pages permitted for photocopying would occur. Interlending of issues of journals is practiced by some ILL/DD services. McKnight (2000) found that the needs of practicing nurses and distance-learning nursing students for primary literature (in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico) were being satisfied through interlibrary loan availability of nursing journals.

Interlending of books was not a prominent activity among the libraries. It was only library C which loaned books. During the six-month survey period neither requests for, nor were deliveries of books made. Without doubt these libraries as a whole have a large collection of monographs of diverse subject domains to facilitate interlending in books; as indicated below in volumes (Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, 2007).

- University of Ghana 375,500
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology 202,810
- University of Cape Coast 260,000
- University for Development Studies 24,000

The following have been adduced as reasons for this state of affairs:

- **Cost:** As noted above the libraries did not have any standard procedure on sharing costs. Monographs are bulky; therefore their delivery by post or a courier service will be more expensive than photocopies of documents. The libraries may not be able to bear the cost without formal agreements on cost sharing.
- **Security of materials:** The informal services do not cover risks such as losses and damage to library materials. Libraries would be unwilling to interlend all materials under these conditions.
- **Overdue management:** Without formal agreements, due dates of borrowed materials and overdue fines may not be well defined. This means loaned materials could be kept longer at borrowing libraries to the detriment of clients of lending libraries; a disincentive to lend.
- **Union lists:** The absence of a union list of monographs or automated catalogues of participant libraries makes citation and identification of materials by borrowers a game of conjecture; hence a reluctance to request for books.

Monographs are highly used by Faculties of Arts and Humanities; these have been found to be high users of interlibrary loans (Goodier and Dean; 2004). The lack of interlending in books puts clients in these Faculties in our universities at a disadvantage.

Inconsistencies were noted in the libraries' stated preferred delivery methods vis-à-vis their most delivered types of documents. All libraries surveyed had Internet facilities and stated e-mails (except Library B) were used in delivering documents (see Table 1). On the other hand, photocopies of documents were found to be the major document type delivered to clients, followed by journals; e-copies and books were not delivered. It was inferred therefore that the postal service or a courier service should have been the main method of delivery of documents. The implication of this anomalous claim is that there was inadequate documentation of ILL/DD transactions at the libraries. Guerrero (1995) also found this practice in informal interlibrary loan in Latin America. The non-delivery of e-copies as e-mail attachments might also be due to the absence of scanners at these libraries; it was one of the equipment requested by respondents as essential for facilitating ILL/DD services.

An examination of document delivery traffic indicated a maximum of about 32 documents was circulated within six months. These were made up of issues of journals and photocopies of documents. Neither books nor e-copies of documents was delivered. The variety of document types, quantities and formats circulated were limited. Inoti and Matanji (1990) also observed this low circulation level of documents in informal interlending among academic libraries in Kenya. Guerrero (1995) referring to interlending models by Clement put informal inter-institutional arrangements in a 'decentralized model'. He averred that "In a decentralized system, it is difficult to foster consensus directed at resource sharing between institutions (no one feels obliged to lend)." The difficulty of not being obliged to share resources translates into low circulation of documents in the informal interlending system.

The average fill rate of two weeks per documents was low, and the turnaround time of three to six weeks for loans was rather high. Document deliveries were therefore found to be untimely. As noted above ILL/DD services were adjunct to other library services. This meant staff time had to be shared with less speedy attention being paid to ILL/DD resulting in low fill rates and untimely deliveries. ILL/DD staff, however, perceived the service as very important in satisfying the information needs of their constituents.

Clients preferred using internet databases, subscribed to by the libraries and augmented by CARLIGH, to using the local ILL/DD services. This is obvious as hits could be printed out immediately. This also could have affected the volume of local ILL/DD orders. Electronic journal subscriptions by academic libraries have been found contributing to a downturn in ILL/DD activity (Goodier and Dean; 2004). Also, international ILL/DD arrangements by Ghanaian libraries with foreign document providers/libraries have been found to compete with local ILL/DD orders as clients of two of responding libraries preferred them to local services. Thus the above two options potentially decreased ILL/DD requests, perhaps because they offered a more timely information delivery option to patrons. Guerrero (1995) found “that informal interlibrary loan systems cost more money because of their inefficiency... and cause libraries to turn to commercial services”.

User education was active at all respondent libraries and this was a positive activity.

There was no uniformity in service costs to clients at the various libraries. Clients at three libraries paid for postage and photocopying costs while these were free at the fourth respondent library. Disparity in cost sharing was a disincentive and could militate against the smooth running of the services. This disparity could be one of the reasons for the absence of ILL transaction in books as postage and courier service costs would be higher in this respect than those of other document types.

Information technology has permeated ILL/DD services. Sharing library resources effectively through ILL/DD services means access to bibliographic data on materials of participating libraries. Before the advent of computers, this was done through union catalogues, which were card based. Online catalogues were absent in our academic libraries when GILLDDNET was in operation. According to one project participant, “it is obvious ... that it would not be feasible... to start building a union catalogue based on cards. That would be like using yesterday’s technology to solve tomorrow’s problems” (Kisiedu, 1999).

During the survey, only one of the libraries was in the process of automating its services while plans were apace at the others to automate. There were Internet services at all the libraries surveyed. These set the stage for the easy accessibility of the bibliographic data of their collections should all of them automate. The various automated catalogues would act as “‘virtual’ union catalogues or ‘clumps’” (Gould, 1999), which could be accessed through the Internet by users.

The heads of ILL/DD services at the respondent libraries have noted the importance of library automation to ILL/DD services and recommended it. They also recommended formalization of the services with appropriate codes to guide transactions.

Active institutional networking among the universities exists through three major groupings: the Committee of University Librarians and Deputies (CULD), Vice-Chancellors of Ghana (VCG), and the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries Ghana (CARLIGH). All responding libraries are members of these networks. The formalization of ILL/DD services could be discussed by CULD and CARLIGH. Outcomes of these discussions could formally crystallize into agreements for the consideration and endorsement by VCG.

As regards the building of codes to guide the services, use can be made of existing codes (from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) section on Document Delivery and Interlending, Interlibrary loan code of the United States, etc) to build one that will suit local needs.

Conclusion

Informal interlending was active among the state funded universities in Ghana. The services are not well developed, interlending was therefore far below its potential. Basic tools such as union lists or automated catalogues and codes to guide transactions were absent. The ILL/DD services operated adjunct to other library services and shared staff time and attention resulting in a low fill rate, a high turnaround time of transactions and untimely delivery of documents to patrons. Line (1978) confirmed this when he stated “Interlending still tends to be regarded as a kind of marginal activity, an optional extra service which libraries use if they have to and give if – and when - they want to”.

Journals and photocopied materials were the main items of ILL/DD transactions. Interlibrary loan in books was absent though these libraries, as a whole, have a large collection of monographs of varied subject disciplines. Clients were therefore apparently denied access to information in books in this informal lending community.

The main method of material delivery was by post or a courier service. No e-documents were delivered during the period of the survey though all respondents had Internet services at their libraries. It was inferred these libraries did not have scanners to effect this type of delivery.

Internet databases and ILL/DD transactions with foreign institutions/libraries highly competed with local ILL/DD services; equally sharing local clientele.

Inadequate statistics were maintained on interlending transactions. This was inferred from the inconsistencies noted in respondents’ stated preferred document delivery methods vis-à-vis their most delivered type of documents.

Staff of the interlending units of responding libraries unanimously asserted that the informal ILL/DD services were very important in satisfying the information needs of their constituents notwithstanding the challenges faced. User education in various forms to publicize the services was therefore regularly undertaken.

Recommendations

It is recommended the state funded universities strengthen ILL/DD units in their libraries to enable them function well. The establishment of full fledged service units with adequate staff and equipment complements, and the building of the capacities of staff through training are suggested. Seminars on copyright law in relation to photocopying of documents, and interlending to underpin its role in information delivery to users are essential. Formal discussions among Head Librarians of these institutions to forge agreements on interlending and build codes to guide transactions should start now.

Formal interlending is a major service of many libraries the world over. The absence of formal interlending among our university libraries is a weakness which must be removed as it stymies adequate information dissemination to users; one of the prerequisites for learning and research (Hansson, 2006).

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