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ARTICLES INCOMING!

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Interlibrary loan provides fast and easy access to research materials

BY CAILIN RILEY

At first glance, it seems like a simple process. A user submits an online request for a book, chapter or article that the Libraries doesn't own, and another library lends them a copy.

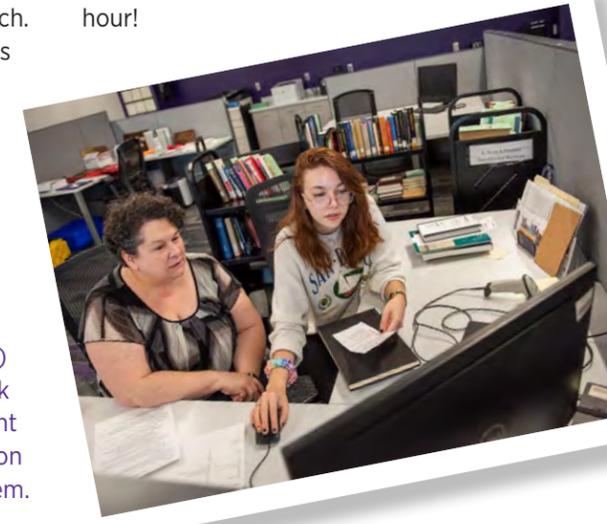
But behind the scenes, interlibrary loan staff are working hard to get the materials that students, faculty and staff need to complete their research. Interlibrary loan allows the Libraries to borrow from and lend to other institutions throughout the U.S. and abroad. K-State Libraries started providing interlibrary loan services in 1969.

In addition to hunting down the right materials, they frequently navigate intricate copyright laws. And boy, are they fast.

Last spring, 65 percent of article requests were filled in less than 24 hours. Eighteen percent were delivered in less than one hour!

Marcia Eaton, library assistant III, said she loves seeing borrowed books come in from a variety of libraries throughout the United States and even abroad. Eaton has worked with the Libraries for 6 years.

Leah Hennes, (right) Hale Library help desk specialist, trains fellow student employee, Stacy Vars, (left) on the interlibrary loan system.





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 Shipping Method: KKU-KSLibExpress

Linda Marston, digital collections coordinator, uses a scanner to capture a select portion of a book for another library.



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Marcia Eaton, Linda Marston and Kathy Coleman dedicate a large part of their daily duties to making sure Libraries patrons get access to the research materials they need. Coleman herself has worked for the Libraries for 37 years.

Their speedy delivery is in large part due to advancements in automation and partnerships with other libraries. The automation for many articles allows the Libraries staff to focus on fulfilling other requests more quickly. Marcia Eaton, library assistant III, said her favorite part of her role is analyzing unclear requests to best identify what a patron wants, and pinpointing ways to get around roadblocks such as copyright restrictions or unavailable items.

“Problem solving is a large part of what I enjoy about my job,” Eaton said. “I like trying to figure out what exact materials patrons are seeking and making educated guesses if the information in a request is incomplete or incorrect. To me, it’s rewarding to help find what they need.”

The interlibrary loan staff’s fast, detailed and friendly service has made them a beloved resource among K-State students and faculty. Their dedication was especially noticeable throughout the last three years as Hale Library’s physical

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collection was inaccessible due to a 2018 fire. Requests for physical items increased by 74 percent during this time.

Things became even more interesting when a global pandemic was added

to the mix beginning the spring of 2020.

Sara Luly, associate professor of German, said her teaching and research could not have continued during the pandemic without access to the service.

“No matter however obscure the book I need is or how vague the reference I have, interlibrary loan staff are always able to find the materials I need and get them to me quickly,” Luly said.

K-State Libraries interlibrary loan program goes above and beyond for users; staff will try their best to locate any item a patron requests, even if that requires borrowing internationally. In addition, distance

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— KATHY COLEMAN

students, or those located 40 miles away or farther from K-State’s Manhattan campus, can request physical materials be shipped to them for free. Additionally, the Libraries budget covers the fees for articles and items that have hit their copyright lending limit so there is no charge to K-State students and faculty.

“Interlibrary loan is vital for teaching and research faculty, as well as graduate students,” said Jason Coleman, department head of library user services. “All libraries have a limited budget and this service exists to offer a community of resources.”

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Kathy Coleman, interlibrary services coordinator, said that interlibrary loan programs are an essential service because they expand a community’s learning opportunities.

“No single library can own every book or article that faculty or students need to complete their research,” Kathy Coleman said. “Every library has different collection strengths and by sharing through interlibrary loan, we’re allowing easy access to expert material.” ■

INTERLIBRARY LOAN DEDICATED SERVICE

