Introduction

Workflow analysis of MSU interlibrary services (ILS) is the heart of our investigation. Our ultimate goal is to understand the current ILS workflow, processes, components, best practices from the point of view of ILS users and staffs. Our main aim is to provide faster, easier and flexible solution to the ILS day to day processes.

In order to have a user perspective of ILS we took a closer look at the borrowing workflow of ILS. Presently ILS borrowing requests are accomplished through one of the following system – MeLCat, Article Reach Direct, and iLLiad. Each system has its own workflow, processes and operates independently. They barely “talk” to each other.

The purpose of this report is to display the methods we have employed, tasks we have performed, and the materials we have reviewed while analyzing the current scenario of ILS.

Areas of investigation

During our investigation we concentrated on the following:

- Requesting a book/article through through MeLCat, iLLiad and ArticleReach Direct?
- What processes ILS staffs need to follow when a request comes to one of the systems of ILS – MeLCat, iLLiad and ArticleReach Direct?
- Is the ILS process is user-centric?
- Closer look at MeLCat, iLLiad and ArticleReach Direct
- How ILS works with the existing search services of MSU library
- A closer look at borrowing workflow by generating a real-life borrowing request
- Total time required to complete a borrowing request
Methods Used

Following are the analytical steps we have employed in analyzing the ILS workflow

1. Reviewing ILS materials available online and offline.
2. Review existing policy documents, help materials
3. A comparative analysis of ILS workflow of MSU and ILS in other libraries and universities.
4. Closer look at the “technology” feature of MSU ILS.
5. Interviewing Dennis Forro
6. Closer look at iLLiad, ArticleReach Direct, and MeLCat. We generated loan and article request using iLLiad, ArticleReach Direct, and MeLCat.
7. Workflow analysis of iLLiad, ArticleReach Direct, and MeLCat.
8. Creating a flow chart on the existing scenario
9. Closer look at iLLiad’s borrowing workflow: process, ease of use, information required when a patron creates a loan/article request, total time requires in completing a single iLLiad request.

Current Scenario - iLLiad

We started by going over to iLLiad and Article Reach web site. Our intention is to analyze and compare iLLiad and ArticleReach Direct workflow.

Here are the findings

- Through iLLiad you can place your request to 60,000 libraries in 112 countries and territories around the world
- Whereas ArticleReach Direct can sent your request to only seven libraries
- iLLiad process requests like: books, articles, chapter of a book, CD, etc.
- ArticleReach Direct processes only article request

But both the systems have advantages and disadvantages. Here is the iLLiad flowchart depicting the current borrowing process.
Problems with Current iLLiad Workflow

Prior registration
1. iLLiad doesn't allow you to create a loan/article request without first registering into the system. This is quite time consuming. Most of the iLLiad users have a student/faculty/staff account with MSU. But presently, there is no provision where you can import patron details from MSU database to iLLiad.

No Integration
2. Presently if patron makes an article request through ArticleReach Direct, and due to some reason the request needs to be diverted to iLLiad, ILS staff needs to import the request details to iLLiad and if the...
patron is not registered create a user profile in iLLiad. Each account creation process in iLLiad takes two hours.

**Staff Intervention**

3. Most of the iLLiad requests need staff intervention. When a request comes to iLLiad ILS staff has to open a request in iLLiad and go over it and then change the status. This slows down the entire process borrowing process.

4. When a patron submits an article request through iLLiad an ILS staff has to open the request and manually, search for the availability of that article in ArticleReach Direct or MeLCat, and if the required article is not found then request gets processed through iLLiad. This process is quite time consuming.

5. Patron when submits a request without ISSN (for article)/ISBN (book), ILS staff has to open the request, search for the right ISSN, and update the request. Sometimes they have to search the commercial search services to find the right ISSN/ISBN.