An Analysis and Expectationsfor Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery Servicein the Chinese Public Libraries

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Abstract：Interlibrary loan and document delivery Service in are two kinds ofimportant services in the public libraries in China. They are also ties and effective ways for public libraries to share resources. Compared with Several literature guarantee mechanism, such as CALIS and Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, this paper is going to demonstrate the necessity and possibility and analyze the current problems and difficulties for the National Library Combined with the provincial libraries to provide the interlibrary loan and document delivery services. Based on the real situation, this paper also makes analysis on the current situation of interlibrary loan and document delivery services in the public libraries in China, the role that National Library of China should play in guiding the services and its current statues, and the prospects of the two services in the public libraries in China.

Keyword：Interlibrary loan　　document delivery Service　　public library cooperative network　　the National Library

With the development of China's economy, scientific technology and the improvement of its social civilization, the service in public libraries has evolved from lending paper books only into providing documents in various formats via different methods, which makes us realize that a higher level of service is required from the public libraries in this new network information era. What role should the traditional Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery Servicein(DDSs) play in this new era?Is it possible to set up a new bridge connecting each public library by providing such services?How would the National Library offer help in such process? In this article we'll talk about the necessity and the process ability of setting up a cooperative network between the National Library and the nation's provincial libraries for the ILL and DDSs.First, we need to understand what a public library is; what ILL and DDSs are.

1, Public library, the ILL service, and the definition of DDS

A public library is supported and managed by the central or local government, and provides services to the public free of charge.Unlike special libraries, a public library faces the ordinary people, providing non-professional books including popular literature, periodicals, magazines and reference books, public information, internet connection and library education.

According to China Library Yearbook 2012, by the end of 2011 there had been 2952 public library institutions, among which one reached national level, 38 reached

regional, municipal or provincial level, excluding 94 junior libraries; the number of user received all over the country within2011 was 381,510,000, risen by 16.24% compared to the number within 2010;and the number of document conserved had reached 697,190,000 pieces, rose by 12.95% compared tothe number by the end of 2010; more specifically, the number of newly purchased book is 39,850,000 in 2012, rose by 34.81% compared to the number in 2010.

Big Dictionary of Library Science and Information Science, published in 1995, noted that document delivery is a kind of service provided by a library or other service units offering original or copies of the document in various formats depending on the users' requirements.

XiangboTu and Youzhi Chen from the library of Hunan University pointed out in their book Document Delivery Theory and Practice that both document delivery and ILL are useful tools that will help share resources and meet the need of the users; yet interlibrary loan requires the return of the original document whereas document delivery does not. Therefore, it is commonly accepted that ILL is a branch of theDDS.

2, An introduction to the institutions conserving important documents

At present the Chinese document and information conserving alliances mainly comprise of CALIS CASHL and NSTL.Important document conserving institutions are the Document Supply Center of NLC and the document inquiry department of the National Science Library - Chinese Academy of Sciences.Local document conserving institutions are BALIS and Capital Library Alliance.

2.1 Approved by the State Council, CALIS was one of the three public service systems designedin the Chinese higher education plans"211 Project", "Five Years Plan" and "the Tenth Five Years Plan".The administration center of CALISis situated in Peking University, comprising of 12 branch document service departments throughout the country, covering 4 categories from culture, engineering, and agriculture to medicine.CALIS aims to gather all the technology information, and the investment throughout the nation so as to best serve the higher education system and the public society.

2.2Initiated on March 15th 2004, CASHL has now collected over 17,343 different kinds of social science periodicals, over 1,950 kinds of electronic periodicals, 352,000 kinds of electronic books and 1,119,000 kinds of foreign books. Users of CASHL have full access to the catalog of foreign colleges and universities' periodicals and books with respect to social sciences and humanities, and users of member libraries of CASHL are entitled to subsidized services.CASHL has now 700 members from libraries of colleges and universities to other social science and humanities research institutions. CASHL has also over 70,000 individual users as well as over 3,000 group users. Upon till now CASHL's catalog has been used more than 40,000,000 times, by using which over 700,000 documents have been delivered. CASHL consists of 2 national centers, 5 regional centers and 10 subject centers.

2.3 Authorized by the State Council, NTSL was built into a virtual service institution, providing science technology documents and information. Members of NTSL include Library of Academia Sinica, National Engineering and Technology Library, the library of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the library of Peking Union Medical College. Online partners include China National Institute of Standardization and National Institute of Metrology, China. In order to meet the requirement of the nation's science technology development, NTSL gathers and collects science technology documents on many subjects including science, engineering, agriculture and medicine, and provide document and information delivery service. NTSL aims to become the nation's authoritative science technology and information service center, a paragon in the usage of modern information technology and a window to the celebrated science technology libraries around the world.

2.4 The Document Supply Center of NLC was founded in 1997 as a service window assuming the responsibilities of document retrieval, information consultation and knowledge communication. With the luxuriant resource from the NLC and the domestic and overseas online database, the center associates other libraries and all the information institutions to provide the users with the most professional and personalized service. The center is the biggest Chinese document conservation institution and the biggest domestic institution for foreign documents inquiry.

2.5 The Document Service Department of National Science Library assumes the responsibility of conserving" all kinds of documents from periodical, books, conference papers, academic dissertations, reference books, academicians writings and ancient book reservations at Chinese Academy of Sciences.The department provides document delivery and ILL servicesand document retrieval and delivery on a specific subject or towards a specific research orientation to the research team or postgraduates at Chinese Academy of Sciences as well as to the public.

2.6 A further look at the document conserving institutions

The institutions tend to focus on providing documents on specific subjects according to their user groups.

The members of CALIS and CASHL are the college and university libraries whose users are students and teachers. The similarity in user groups contributes to the formation of the library alliance. CALIS provides documents on a wide range of subjects, including literature, science, engineering agriculture, medicine, etc. CASHL, on the other hand, is the authoritative provider of social science and humanities documents. NTSL faces not only users from colleges and universities but also scientists and the public. Documents provided by NTSL are mainly scientific and technical periodicals and reports, science papers, etc. The Document Service Department of National Science Library mainly faces the research team or postgraduates at Chinese Academy of Sciences as well as the public, and mainly provides scientific and technical documents.

Different institutions use different systems and they have separate database access.

For example, users of CALIS and CASHL may have to purchase a foreign database respectively in order to acquire the same periodical. This is why many colleges and universities have registered accounts at multiple institutions. Apparently, better coordination is needed among different institutions and alliances for higher resource efficiency.

We understand that it is not possible to unite each library, institution and organization within the whole country given the present circumstances; however, based on the fact that most of the Chinese public libraries have either founded or joined a document delivery alliance within their administrative region, and some of which have even been members of the Chinese Libraries Reference Allianceco-founded by the National Cultural Information Resource Sharing Project and Sun Yat-Sen library of Guangdong Province, I propose the idea of setting up a cooperative network for the provincial libraries in China.

3, An analysis of the processability of a cooperative network for the interlibrary loan and DDSs in Chinese provincial libraries

By going through the websites and consulting online as anonymous users of the most representative 31 public provincial libraries out of a total of 2952 within the whole nation, the development status of provincial public libraries is evaluated. Based on the evaluation, the processability of the cooperative network is analyzed.

3.1 Development status of provincial public libraries

The evaluation above shows an unbalanced development status of the provincial public libraries. Out of the 31 samples, 5 in the western part of China have not yet carried out the ILL or DDS. The following conclusions are made based on further investigation into the rest 26 provincial libraries.

3.1.1 Document delivery system is isolated from other library systems

20 out of the rest 26 libraries have either independent or united document delivery system. Registered users of these libraries are supposed to go through a certain process in the system in order to get the delivery whilst users of the other 6 libraries need to submit their application by phone, by fax, by e-mail,by letter or in person.

There are very few libraries who do not have an independent document delivery system but may accept applications through other systems as well such as consultant websites or virtual consultant systems.

3.1.2 The Document delivery system Network at a political-regional scale

Among the 26 libraries, 18 have either founded or joined a regional document delivery alliance which enhanced the document delivery cooperation. Examples of such alliances are the service center of Zhejiang Library] founded by Zhejiang Library, the Jiangsu public libraries reference alliance founded by Nanjing Library, the Wuhan libraries alliance   founded by the library of Hubei province, etc.

Nevertheless, some libraries have even united as alliances across provinces which make the reference service as well as other services even more convenient for users and for providers both, examples of which are the Middle Yangtze public libraries alliance joined by Jiangxi Provincial Library, Anhui Library, the library of Hunan province and the library of Hubei provinceand the Chinese Libraries Reference Alliance who has over 10 member libraries including the library of Hainan province the library of Guizhou province and　the library of Fujian province, etc.
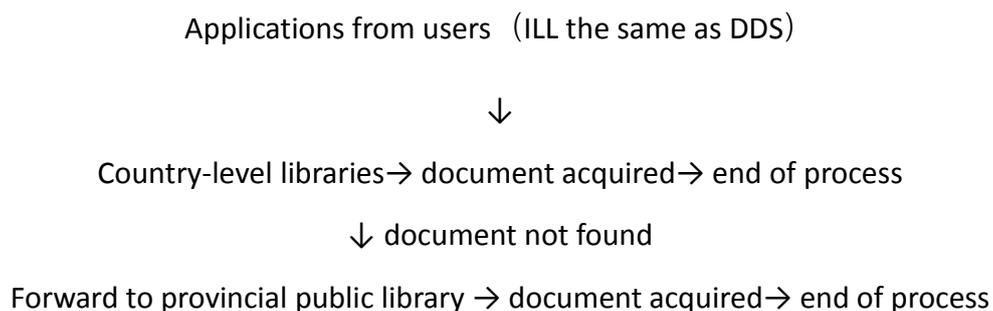
3.1.3 Charge

Among the 26 libraries, only 3 have announced the charges on their website. There could be mainly 3 reasons why the other 23 libraries do not announce their charge. First, these libraries provide charged service only which contradicts the nation's free public library policy. Second, the charge is unpredictable depending on the status of the document and the complexity of the procedure retrieving and delivering the document. Third, there is no cost at all retrieving the document because these libraries are members of certain document conserving alliances. Other possible reasons are not listed here, but one thing for sure is that the charges vary a lot among different libraries.

3.2 Process ability analysis

Inspired by different ILL and DDS alliances and based on the experience of the DDS at NLC, I would like to propose a new service model – a cooperative network for ILL & DDS in the provincial public libraries, abbreviated as "the network" here in after, which would best demonstrate the leadership of the NLC in the Chinese library industry and be a new path for the ILL and DDS.

3.2.1 Main Structure of the Network

The center house of the network shall be situated at the NLC, coordinating the work of other branches under the command of the Document Supply Center of the Department of Reference Services at NLC. ILL and DDS shall be processed separately in two different central departments to which each province shall assign a subordinated library. The subordinated libraries shall accept applicationsonly within its own province and coordinate with each other or contact the two central departments at the NLC for assistance. The following is a simple example of the process flow:

Applications from users（ILL the same as DDS）

↓

Country-level libraries→ document acquired→ end of process

↓ document not found

Forward to provincial public library → document acquired→ end of process

↓ document not found

Forward to other provincial public libraries → document acquired→ end of process

↓ document not found

Forward to the Document Supply Center of NLC→ document acquired→ end of process

↓ document not found

Forward to CALIS or CASHL or international institutions → document acquired→ end of process

↓ document not found

Unable to provide（end of process）

3.2.2 System Setup

(1) Submitting the applications: A unified link shall be added on provincial public libraries' websites connecting the application submitting page of the network. The webpage is accessible to members of the network only. Country-level libraries are not allowed to forward the applications to other libraries other than their own provincial Library. Only in case of failure in providing the document shall a provincial library forward the application to other provincial libraries or NLC according to the retrieval result. A list of provincial libraries shall be presented in the forward option.

(2) Delivery

Document/books shall be delivered first to the institutions from whom the application was forwarded. In case that the application was forwarded many times, the same procedure should be followed until the document/book is delivered to the original user.

For ILL, loaned books shall be recovered and sent back to the institution by whom they are provided.

(3) Charge

In my opinion, services provided by the network shall be free of charge, expense arising out of which shall be borne by the government. Policies of CALIS and CASHL could be referenced for subsidy policy in detail.

For ILL, however, deposit could be charged for risk containment, and users shall be responsible for any fines or fees charged by the lending library for late, damaged, or lost items. Policy of ILL at NLC could be referenced.

4 Hardships Ahead

4.1 System Unification

At present, only a few provincial libraries are using the Chinese Libraries Reference Alliance system, while more than half are not, among which some are even using individual systems and follow private protocols. This has become a stumbling block for the introduction of the network.

Shall these individual systems and protocols be contained in the network? What we should do to make the new system compatible with the mature the Chinese Libraries Reference Alliance system? These questions are very real.

4.2 Enhance the Function of the Alliances

Referenced to the setup of the important alliances which I mentioned in chapter 2, I propose a setup of the network as follow:

4.2.1 Leadership

CALIS and CASHL are led by Ministry of Education. NSTL is led by Ministry of Science and Technology.

Since all the libraries in China are governed by the Ministry of Culture, so shall be the network.

4.2.2 User group

CALIS and CASHL face students and teachers. NSTL faces researchers.

The network shall face the public so as to create a knowledge sharing culture.

4.2.3 Aims

Our target user is the public. Be they the rich or the poor, the educated or the uneducated, the powerful or the powerless, they shall all be treated equally. Our service standard shall be more specified, compared to the other alliances.

4.3 Advertising

Inspired by the experiences of the document conserving systems such as CALIS, BALIS, NTSL, etc. who offer free trial and annual product promotions, I suggest the network be well prepared for user trainings and advertisement at its development stage by offering video demo and free lectures so as to guarantee a good beginning and a smooth operation.

4.4 Staff Training

There have been over 50,000 librarians in China, and each librarian may hold a different opinion upon a same service specification. In order to give our users the best experiences, librarians need to be further educated and constantly increase the quality of their own and self-cultivation.

4.5 Methods of Delivery

At present, CALIS, NTSL, BALIS and CASHL provide only electronic documents. Indeed, this is convenient for both the user to read and for the library to deliver, however,

when facing the public throughout the country the network must be prepared for any kind of requirement which means we need to be able to provide documents in multiple formats such as paper copies, tapes and disks.

4.6 New Concept

Both the users and the libraries should understand that communication and information sharing is going to be at the very core of future library industry.

4.7 Government Support

The government shall realize that investment in cultural construction, library industry for instance, will no doubt make a profitable return. The public cultural construction was raised to a higher level during the Twelfth Five-year Plan. Libraries are the carrier of this construction and will become the most important channel for information and knowledge communication.

I hope idea of the network would successfully draw the attention of the government and attract more investment to the library industry.

4.8 Library Legislation

It always has been a most popular topic on Chinese library legislation. I look forward to a healthy and effective library legal system being introduced for future services to follow so that each interested related party will be well protected.

4.9 Standardization

Standardized protocols are crucial for a healthy and smooth operation. New specifications for the system platform and technical standard must be added for better resource integration and long-term development.

5 Conclusion

There are many difficulties to form an alliance of each public library in China: differences in the development level and user groups, lack of services specifications, backward infrastructure, etc. However, it is almost certain that cooperative operation is the key to higher efficiency of information and knowledge communication and the tendency of the Chinese library industry. I here in ask each one in this industry to contribute oneself to the creation of such an alliance and bring us closer to the next generation of cooperative network.

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