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Abstract

Our paper presents a collaborative experience between Italy and France aimed at implementing a standard and shared management for ILL and DD services. Specifically it describes interoperability between the Italian ILL-SBN service and the ILL/DD service of the University of Strasbourg.

The ILL-SBN service, which includes more than 600 Italian libraries, interfaces with OPAC SBN, the catalogue of the Italian National Library Service (SBN) and with other z39.50 catalogues and provides a real-time ISO-ILL interoperability to handle integrated interlibrary loan and document delivery services.

Two libraries affiliated with the Universities of Trieste and Turin are directly involved in this experience together with the French partner library: the National and University Library in Strasbourg. This latter and the libraries at the University of Strasbourg as well, have adopted the Sebina and SebinaYOU software, but this experience can be easily extended to different kinds of libraries and/or ISO-ILL interoperable systems.

The report will examine the main features of this partnership, the results of the joint activities and the future developments towards a wider cooperation, with the purpose of overcoming organizational and technological obstacles in international interlibrary services.
Title

International cooperation an Italian-French experience for resource sharing

Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate an interoperability experience in resource sharing between the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg (BNU) and the ILL-SBN interlibrary and document delivery service.

Our experience can be extended to Italian and foreign libraries which are interested in cross-border collaboration and is based on the belief that sharing resources and services is a prerequisite for international cooperation in ILL services.

Due to its historical background, Italy’s large bibliographic heritage is distributed throughout the country and most libraries are gathered into local systems with their own catalogs and interlibrary services managed within local networks. Thanks to the cooperation between state, local and university authorities, the National Library Service (SBN) developed from the periphery to the center, aiming to guarantee both national and local services. In this context, shared cataloguing and standard ISO-ILL interoperability are the appropriate tools for the management of national interlibrary loan and document delivery services.

6108 Libraries of all types are currently partners in the SBN system split into 99 local hubs. The SBN national catalog - SBN OPAC - is the union catalogue of the SBN cooperation with 16,485,852 bibliographic records and 86,633,452 holdings.

ILL-SBN service

ILL services in Italy are organized into several territorial and university systems that need to be linked to each other for the management of national ILL services regardless of the software application in use and/or the institution to which they belong.

ILL-SBN is a free web-based system for interlibrary lending and document delivery between Italian libraries. It is fully integrated with the OPAC SBN catalog and it’s an open system both able to integrate with other catalogs and to interoperate with lending systems and ILS that use ISO-ILL compliant systems. (1) (2) (3)

Italian libraries (single libraries, system centers, centralized loan services) can freely join the ILL-SBN service on web without interfering with their local organization and the same occurs with foreign libraries who want to cooperate with the Italian system.
Foreign libraries using ISO-ILL compliant applications can also interoperate in real-time with ILL-SBN server.

Today ILL-SBN partner libraries are 639 of which 252 are Sebina libraries integrated via http and 40 are Aleph 500 and Alma libraries integrated with IPIG; the remaining libraries are working on the web interface. (4) (5)

**Main features of Italian-French partnership**

This use case outlines the exchange of loan and document delivery requests between the *Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg* and two Italian ILL-SBN libraries: the *Biblioteca di scienze letterarie e filologiche dell’Università degli studi di Torino* and the *Biblioteca Europa generale dell’ Università degli studi di Trieste*.

Our presentation aims to highlight the simple use of the integrated service, the easy communication between partner librarians, the monitoring of all information steps and the immediate updating of the various management environments.

ILL-SBN integration with each management system particularly allows libraries to handle every kind of request (local, national and international ILL/DD requests) with just one software. Communication between the different systems takes place in real time via ISO-ILL and, if the requesting and supplying libraries are both integrated, the two management system updates are simultaneously implemented. In this latter case ILL-SBN acts as a bridge between Italian and foreign library services using different applications and protocols.
Use of the integrated system

In the following example the requester and the supplying library are ILL-SBN partners using SebinaOL ILS.
The ILL transaction is between:

- Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg (BNU) as requesting library
- Biblioteca generale dell’Università di Trieste as supplying library.
A) Submitting a ILL request following a search in OPAC SBN catalogue
Form 1. Search the Opac SBN catalogue to find a document and submit a ILL request
Form 2. ILL-SBN creates interlibrary loan request by automatically including the bibliographic and location data from records you have selected.

Form 3-4 ILL-SBN redirects ILL request both to the requesting library and to the supplying library. The management systems of the two partner libraries update automatically.
Form 3. Requesting library

Form 4. Supplying library
B) Processing ILL request

Form 5. Supplying library ships the book to the requesting library

The status of ILL request is: **shipped**

Form 6. Requesting library receives the book and notifies the patron.

The status of ILL request is **received**
The iter of the request continues according to ISO-ILL protocol until the book is returned to the requesting library.

The immediate benefits of this integration for BNU are:

- searching the SBN union catalog, locate and simply apply for a document in the same way for all ILL-SBN libraries
- avoiding double work in processing ILL requests with ILL-SBN libraries (libraries often have to use several ways of managing ILL requests: e-mail, web form, different procedures).
- tracking the entire ILL transaction
- faster processing of ILL requests

The Italian libraries who took part in the tests also were pleased to:

- easily locate documents in foreign libraries by searching various catalogs at the same time starting on OPAC SBN interface (see available catalogues Z39.50)
- overcoming the use of e-mail in different languages and handling more requests in integrated mode, thus ensuring comprehensive statistics

In both cases, ISO ILL interoperability greatly reduces some of the librarians’ tasks because internal requests and ILL transactions can be managed on the same system and are processed by the librarians through a single interface as recommended by IFLA (6).

Currently, ILL transactions between BNU and Italian libraries are only handled via e-mail and, as a result, there’s no way to check ILL service, nor to provide accurate statistics about international services.

Towards a wider cooperation

Interoperability with integrated library systems has been one of the key pillars of ILL-SBN since its devising; it was made possible by the easy availability from Information Retrieval systems, the implementation of the ISO-ILL standard and the use of ISIL code for the unique identification of partner libraries:

- ILL-SBN allows to extend the cooperation to libraries that use different applications and communication protocols according to technical specifications of interoperability (7)
The use of ISIL standard code allows to overcome different library identifiers employed in various ILL systems, resulting in smooth interoperability in both national and international ILL transactions (8).

ILL-SBN will soon be a service provided within the IDEM federation and in the eduGAIN interfederation. This way a foreign user of a partner library will be able to access the interlibrary services with the same institutional account as for other utilities (9).

On this basis, integration could be effectively extended to foreign libraries, so that they can conveniently interact with Italian libraries, either by directly participating in the ILL-SBN web service or by taking advantage of the integrated mode with their own application.

Finally, the experience here illustrated lays the groundwork for a profitable cooperation between colleagues and specifically promotes the discussion about some crucial issues like: response timing, delivery methods, payment methods, fees and free reciprocity.

Standard interoperability eliminates language barriers and software differences and highlights the need of best practices and policies agreements among partner libraries.

Italian libraries have been working together to ensure shared cataloging and ISO-ILL interoperability, also establishing reciprocal agreements. Now it’s time to ponder over the role of a national lending service and a national/international policy of services, as required by IFLA, for an effective benefit to users in Italy and abroad.

On this subject, a first survey among ILL-SBN libraries was launched in August, and will be extended to more Italian libraries this autumn. So far 193 libraries replied to our questionnaire and their answers undoubtedly confirm the theme we are discussing in this paper is a truly vital one.

Currently most of these libraries use different modes of managing ILL requests, strongly feel the need for more integrated services and trust in SBN cooperation as a starting point for setting out Italian guidelines for interlibrary services at national and international level (10).

**Conclusion**

This presentation outlines an effective option to collaborate between Italian and foreign libraries and suggests a wider integration of ILL/DD services within Italy too,
considering that the future of interlibrary services and their use by increasingly demanding users depends on the mutual effort and commitment of libraries to progressively integrate services, data and identity management in the web.

We hope our experience of interoperability between Italian and French libraries, through ILL-SBN server, will be regarded as a useful step towards the achievement of that ideal objective defined by IFLA as the idea of the global library, a networked resource sharing mechanism that enables access to resources through the collaboration of libraries worldwide.

Notes

1. ILL SBN is a service managed by ICCU (Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche). For information above ICCU activities, OPAC SBN and ILL-SBN services see on website: http://www.iccu.sbn.it/opencms/opencms/en/

2. The ILL SBN service is integrated with OPAC SBN and can be integrated with other Italian and foreign Z39.50 catalogues. The service is also accessible via the ACNP Italian Periodicals Catalogue and the ESSPER Periodicals Catalogue.

3. The ILL-SBN service is ISO-ILL compliant (ISO-ILL 10160-10161) and enables the standard communication between partner libraries

4. Sebina is a LMS software for the management of business processes and the full support of back office librarian activities; SebinaYOU is an OPAC that unifies in a portal the library catalog (or library system), editorial pages and reader services. http://www.datamanagementpa.it/

5. Interoperability with Aleph500 ExLibris ILS has been defined in a Protocol of intent with Italian Ex Libris Product Users Group - ITALE. ILL-SBN supports Resource Sharing also with Alma library services platform https://developers.exlibrisgroup.com/alma/integrations/resource_sharing/p2p


7. From a technical point of view, ILL-SBN publishes two integration modes with local library management software:

   a) An ILL-Apdu proprietary protocol is available in xml, which allows to exchange information between the central ILL-SBN system and each library management system. The integration takes place via a POST URL message containing the xml document.

   b) The second integration mode implements the ASN.1 standard and the IPIG specifications. Messages exchanged between systems are sent to a dedicated gateway that interprets them and forwards the messages to the appropriate local library management system.
Sebina libraries interact via HTTP; Aleph500 and Alma libraries work through HTTP/TCP-IP gateway. For more information: http://www.iccu.sbn.it/opencms/opencms/en/main/illsbn/specifiche_tecniche/

8. ISIL (International Standard Identifier for Libraries and Related Organizations) is a standard code for the unique identification of libraries. In 2009 ICCU was acknowledged as the National Agency for the assignment of ISIL codes to Italian libraries by the ISIL Registration Authority.

9. IDEM (IDEntity Management for Federation Access) is a service set up in order to simplify and secure access to web resources by users belonging to institutions participating in the Italian IDEM federation. As from the joining of IDEM, users may access to resources provided by federations members using their usual credentials.
   - eduGAIN interconnects identity federations in Europe through the GÉANT Project
   - ICCU is identity provider in the IDEM Federation and eduGAIN

10. So far, a total of 193 libraries completed the survey: 87 university libraries; 75 local government libraries; 16 state libraries, 6 other libraries.
    - 158 of them are absolutely interested in a wider integration between ILL services; 32 are very interested; 3 of them have little interest.
    - 139 of them have a strong belief that SBN cooperation can be the basis for an integrated national service; 52 do agree; 2 of them have little belief.
    - 120 libraries positively consider that SBN cooperation can be the starting point for a national policy on services; 62 do agree; 11 moderately agree
    - 154 of the libraries offer international ILL/DD services; 39 don’t