Evolution of the ILL service at the University of Liège: Moving forward with RapidILL

Fabienne Prosmans, Fulfillment and ILL Coordinator
François Renaville, Head of Library Systems
Agenda

1) About us
2) Simplification of the ILL backend of our ILL service
3) Moving forward with RapidILL
4) Future plans
About us
A multisite university in Wallonia

3 CITIES
4 CAMPUSES

- Liège town-centre
- Liège Sart Tilman
- Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech
- Arlon Campus Environment

11 Faculties

- Philosophy and Letters
- Law, Political science & Criminology
- Sciences
- Medicine in association with Liège University Hospital
- Applied sciences
- Veterinary medicine in association with Liège University Veterinary Clinic
- Psychology, Speech Therapy and Education Sciences
- HEC Liège, Management School
- Social Sciences
- Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech
- Architecture

One of the broadest selection of courses in Belgium

37 Bachelor’s degree courses
207 Master's degree courses
65 Specialised Master's degree courses

24,520 Students
2,120 Doctoral Students
1,400 Teachers
University of Liège Library

- One library
  - composed of 16 branches
  - spread on 4 campuses in 3 cities

- Staff: ca 110 people

- ILL:
  - Staff 1 FTE (6 operators)
  - Coordinator: 0,1 FTE
ILL partners at ULiège Library (until 2020)

- Impala
  - Developed by the University of Antwerp (1990)
  - Adopted in 1992 as the national ILL document ordering system
  - For all kinds of libraries (university, research, public, gov, corporate..)
  - More than 600 affiliated libraries
  - Clearing house for cost accounting

More info: Corthouts et al (2011)

- Subito

![Completed Borrowing Requests by Partner (2018-2019, Physical and digital formats)]
Simplification of the backend of our ILL service

Team and workflows
Prior to go live with Alma

- 8 libraries
- 15 operators

manage ILL services

- Interlibrary Loan service was processed using an in-house solution developed with APIs (not in Aleph)
Alma Go-Live - step 1

- Go live in February 2015: reduction of the numbers of libraries and operators actively involved in ILL supply
  - 5 libraries
  - 10 operators (no FTE!)

- More simplification and standardization
- No negative impact noticed on service quality
- Large freedom in organization for each ILL service
- Service still strongly relying on the library type (STM vs HSS)
Organization

- Library A
  - Operator 1
  - Operator 2

- Library B
  - Operator 1
  - Operator 2
  - Operator 3

- Library C
  - Operator 1
  - Operator 2

- Library D
  - Operator 1

- Library E
  - Operator 1
  - Operator 2
Post Alma Go-Live - step 2 - To one unique RS Library

- At the beginning of 2018:
  - Reorganization and centralization of the interlibrary loan service
  - Use of the default Resource Sharing Library in Alma (only used for resource sharing)

- 1 Resource Sharing Library
- 7 operators (no FTE)

- Again, more simplification and standardization
- Not always (easily) accepted by all ILL operators...
RS Library has a physical address, but
• Operators take it in turns to do the ILL tasks (shared calendar)
• They do it in the library where they usually work
• Only some hours ILL task per week
Experienced advantages of one RS Library

- Automatic allocation of the Resource Sharing Library to all users
- Reduction in the number of transits of physical documents for borrowing requests
- More collaboration between ILL operators
- More fluency in ILL delivery
- Harmonization of the practices between RS operators


We do think that this experience and backend simplification have been useful when joining the RapidILL community.
Moving forward with RapidILL
Key pain point...

- Working with Impala (and Subito) = **duplicate data entry**
  1. Impala
  2. Alma
- No possible integration between Impala and Alma!

→ **Huge need for simplification**

- RapidILL as an opportunity...
From a trial at the beginning of the Covid19 crisis...

- Proposal from Ex Libris to integrate the Covid19 Pod to test RapidILL
  - For borrowing requests for electronic journal articles or book chapters

- Advantages:
  - Discovery of a service “at the right time”
  - Covid-19: Positive responses to users’ requests when
    • Our library branches were physically closed (only remote services)
    • Our usual partners no longer offered ILL services

- Results:
  - Approximately 200 requests satisfied from April 23 to August 31
  - 95% of the requests submitted to RapidILL (positive matching) were satisfied
  - Delivery time: from a few hours to a few days (week-ends)
... to a subscription to RapidILL

- Subscription from Sept 2020

- ULiège has integrated the following pods:
  - Academic Pod E (Very High or High research activity universities*)
  - Academic Pod I (Doctoral/Research universities*)
  - Academic Pod M (Large Master’s degree granting institutions*)
  - Cosmo Pod (open to all institutions subscribing to RapidILL)

- No French-speaking pod at this time
  - Really necessary?

- Other interesting RapidILL members for us:
  - Belgian universities: UGent, KU Leuven, Free Univ of Brussels
  - Université Clermont Auvergne
  - Swiss partners: BCU Lausanne, SLSP (< Rapido)

* According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education
Why has ULiège decided to subscribe to RapidILL?

1) Integration of RapidILL with Alma
   – Avoids encoding and tracking our requests in the Belgian ILL platform (Impala) or the German platform (Subito)

2) Several steps of the workflow can be made automatic
   – In Alma, the RapidILL partner can be automatically assigned to an article or chapter request in digital format
   – Sending a borrowing request from Alma to RapidILL can be automatic
     • Enabled at ULiège
   – If the request is accepted and processed in RapidILL, the file can directly be emailed to the requester (without the intervention of an operator)
     • Not yet enabled at ULiège
Why has ULiège decided to subscribe to RapidILL?

3) Lower costs?
   – Annual subscription to RapidILL <-- On-demand fees for Impala and Subito
   – Consequence: reduction (or even suppression) of ILL charges to our users?

4) Way to compensate the cancellation of a subscription?

5) Positive feedback from ILL staff after the trial
Configuration

- Configuring the RapidILL partner

- Borrowing requests:
  - Define a rule so that the RapidILL partner is automatically assigned to each borrowing request in digital format
  - When it cannot be fulfilled by a RapidILL partner, ILL operators proceed manually and check if an Impala or Subito partner can fulfill.

- Lending requests:
  - Export of electronic and print holdings to RapidILL: creation of sets and publication profiles (OAI)
    - Selection of Electronic Collections (mostly journal articles and book chapters)
    - Physical items that can be requested for a lending request (→ digitization of chapters)
  - Rota algorithm working fine (unfortunately no priority for electronic materials)
  - Respect of licenses for electronic materials (national delivery vs international delivery)
## Borrowing requests - Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Borrowing Requests</th>
<th>Borrowing Filled</th>
<th>Borrowing Unfilled</th>
<th>% Filled</th>
<th>System Avg % Filled</th>
<th>% Unfilled</th>
<th>System Avg % Unfilled</th>
<th>Avg Filled TAT (Hours)</th>
<th>System Avg Filled TAT (Hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calendar 2021</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>178</td>
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<td>94%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>195</td>
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<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>189</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>95%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>283</td>
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<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>93%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Many canceled requests in Jan related to a single journal that no RapidILL partner could provide.*
Borrowing requests - Statistics

From Nov 2020, RapidILL became the automatically assigned ILL partner in Alma.
Borrowing requests - Statistics


- Impala: 77%
- Subito: 19%
- Others: 4%

Borrowing requests in digital format (Nov. 2020 - Oct. 2021)

- RapidILL: 76%
- Impala: 11%
- Subito: 8%
- Others: 5%
## Lending requests - Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lending Requests</th>
<th>Lending Filled</th>
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<th>% Filled</th>
<th>System Avg % Filled</th>
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<th>Avg Filled TAT (Hours)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calendar 2021</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
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<td>72%</td>
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<td>26%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>80%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>119</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>67%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lending requests - Statistics

Number of requests by Material Type
- Book: 63%
- Journal: 37%

Number of requests by Resource Type
- Electronic: 25%
- Physical: 75%
Lending requests - Statistics

Number of Requests by Material type and Resource Type

- Book Electronic: 45%
- Book Physical: 30%
- Journal electronic: 6%
- Journal Physical: 19%

Requested materials by language

- English: 43%
- French: 31%
- German: 9%
- Italian: 7%
- Other: 6%
- Multiple languages: 4%
- Undetermined: 3%
- Spanish: 2%
What we like (as a Borrower)...

- Integration with Alma
  - Easy to implement
  - No need for ILL staff to work in both Alma and RapidILL
  - We only connect to RapidILL for tracking or statistics purposes

- Quick supply of requested materials

- Known annual cost
  - Higher borrowing usage has no financial impact
What we like (as a Borrower)...

- Growth of Rapido (in Alma) is beneficial to the RapidILL community
  - The Rapido community also participates in RapidILL, so any time another library joins Rapido, they will be a partner library through RapidILL.
  - And when RapidILL libraries decide to add Rapido (with Alma), they will still continue to participate in RapidILL.

- Worldwide community
  - No need to be an Alma customer either 😊
  - Internet Archive as a supplier
Internet Archive Pod

- Internet Archive offers access to 2 million books and thousands of periodical titles. As lending partner, Internet Archive fulfills requests, usually within an hour.

- In April 2021, Internet Archive contacted RapidILL customers asking us to add our library as a pilot member of the new Internet Archive Pod.
Internet Archive Pod
Internet Archive Pod

- Between May and October 2021, out of our 853 requests fulfilled by RapidILL, 48 were fulfilled by Internet Archive (representing approximately 5.5% of our requests)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lending Institution</th>
<th>Num of Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tufts Univ, Hirsh Health Sciences Lib.</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Archive</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghent University Library</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Université Libre de Bruxelles</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivet Nazarene University</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan University</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binghamton University</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ.of MD Baltimore Health Sciences Library</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KU Leuven LIBIS</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nice also to see that the 3 other Belgian RapidILL customers are in our top 10 suppliers (< local needs)
What we would like (as a Lender)...

- Available format should be part of the algorithm to select the most appropriate partner: **Priority for e-holdings**

https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.comforums/935109-rapidill/suggestions/43633749-electronic-holdings-should-take-priority-over-phys
Future plans
Next steps

- Monitoring of the evolution of Rapido

- Borrowing requests: Automatic supply of patrons with requested materials
  (Emails automatically sent from Alma to requesters)

- Evaluation of the possibility of offering a free ILL service to our patrons

- Continued use of Impala
  - RapidILL = additional partner (priority), but not exclusive
  - ULB = priority partner for physical supply (Alma P2P with the Alma Resource Sharing Directory)
Alma P2P with Alma Resource Sharing Directory

- The directory is a central place with up-to-date information about resource sharing libraries in Alma. Libraries in the Alma Resource Sharing Directory are grouped into regional pods. In this way, they can easily create peer-to-peer relationship for physical supply.

- Since the beginning of October, our resource sharing library has been added to the Ex Libris Resource Sharing Directory.

- Free University of Brussels (ULB) Library and the European Commission Library are also in the Ex Libris Resource Sharing Directory. We hope to organize our first tests with the ULB in the coming weeks.
Bibliography


Thank you!

Fabienne Prosmans
Fulfillment and ILL Coordinator
fprosmans@uliege.be

François Renaville
Head of Library Systems
francois.renaville@uliege.be