

2017

# Special Deliveries: Towards a Methodology for Generous Fulfillment of Special Collections Interlibrary Loan Requests

Melanie Griffin

*University of South Florida, griffinm@usf.edu*

LeEtta M. Schmidt

*University of South Florida, lmschmidt@usf.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tlscd>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

## Scholar Commons Citation

Griffin, Melanie and Schmidt, LeEtta M., "Special Deliveries: Towards a Methodology for Generous Fulfillment of Special Collections Interlibrary Loan Requests" (2017). *Special Collections Faculty and Staff Publications*. 20.  
<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tlscd/20>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Tampa Library at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Special Collections Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact [scholarcommons@usf.edu](mailto:scholarcommons@usf.edu).

**Special Deliveries:**

**Towards a Methodology for Generous Fulfillment of Special Collections Interlibrary Loan  
Requests**

**Melanie Griffin<sup>1</sup> and LeEtta Schmidt<sup>2</sup>**

**Accepted Manuscript for article published in *Public Services Quarterly* 13(4), 2017,  
available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15228959.2017.1332499>**

---

<sup>1</sup> University of South Florida, [griffinm@usf.edu](mailto:griffinm@usf.edu)

<sup>2</sup> University of South Florida, [lmschmidt@usf.edu](mailto:lmschmidt@usf.edu). Both authors contributed equally to this article.

**Abstract**

This article explores the implementation of special collections interlibrary loan policies and procedures at the University of South Florida (USF), focusing particularly on the development of policies related to physically loaning published materials, and traces the development of these policies through a pilot project to routinized implementation. Particular attention is paid to developing mutually beneficial workflows between special collections and interlibrary loan departments, creating transparent policies for the criteria under which requests are or are not filled, and technical considerations for implementing special collections loans. Through this case study, we highlight the potential for collaboration in the fulfillment of special deliveries.

**Keywords:** Special collections, Interlibrary loan, Collaboration; Academic libraries

## **Introduction**

While it is difficult to imagine a 21<sup>st</sup> century academic library without interlibrary loan services, it is equally difficult to imagine an academic library that offers unlimited access to their rare book, archival, and special collections materials via interlibrary loan. The idea of sending incunables, manuscript letters, or even ephemeral modern publications that would be difficult, impossible, or expensive to replace through the mail is daunting at best. Although the reticence to loan irreplaceable materials through the mail is understandable, in 2012, ACRL and RBMS published revised guidelines for interlibrary and exhibition loan of special collections materials. These guidelines, which exist to “enhance access, support research, and promote awareness of [...] collections,” advocate for “institutions receiving requests [being] as generous as possible” in the loan of materials (ACRL, 2012, n.p.).

Despite these robust guidelines from ACRL and RBMS, many special collections repositories do not routinely loan physical materials via interlibrary loan. While an increasing number of special collections repositories provide scans of materials via traditional ILL channels (Massie, 2013), very few regularly lend physical copies of rare materials, particularly to libraries outside of established consortia. Those that do tend to limit materials loaned to extremely low risk items, such as contemporary paperback publications or materials that have been re-bound in library buckram (see, for example, Iowa State University Special Collections and University Archives, 2005), thereby decreasing the utility of an interlibrary loan lending program for special collections items.

This article explores the implementation of special collections interlibrary loan policies and procedures at the University of South Florida (USF), focusing particularly on the development of policies related to physically loaning published materials, and traces the

development of these policies through a pilot project to routinized implementation. The University of South Florida is a metropolitan public research university serving more than 48,000 students on the west coast of Florida. It is classified as doctoral university with highest research activity, and it has been designated as “community engaged.” While the USF System includes three independently accredited institutions, the focus of this article is on the library and library services offered at the main Tampa campus (exclusive of USF Health and the Shimberg Health Sciences Library).

Special Collections at the USF Tampa Library embraces a philosophy of balancing use and access with long-term preservation. While we are committed to ensuring that our materials are available for subsequent generations of scholars, we are equally committed to ensuring that materials are available for use to as broad a user base as possible. Our experimentation with and eventual implementation of interlibrary loan procedures for special collections materials reflects our continued desire to provide timely, secure access to our collections. Special Collections houses approximately 100,000 monographic and serial items, all cataloged in WorldCat, and approximately, 5,500 linear feet of archival materials. Collection strengths include Florida history and culture, historical children’s literature, book history and book arts, science fiction, Latin American and Caribbean studies, and Holocaust and genocide studies; Special Collections is also home to teaching collections in history of the book, book arts, and cartoon art. Interlibrary Loan at the Tampa library is high volume, intensely automated, and functions under a number of state and regional reciprocal agreements and programs.

Piloted by the special collections librarian and the resource sharing librarian at USF in 2013, substantially revised in fall of 2015, and permanently launched in spring 2016, this case study explores methods to create a safe, secure environment in which we could be as generous as

possible with requests for the physical loan of material, including rare and fragile materials that are not typically loaned. Our goal in implementing this new practice was to expand services to distant researchers and take a small but important step forward to reducing obstacles between the researcher and their work. Success would mean a permanent extension to both interlibrary loan and special collections services that would outlive the implementing librarians. This article pays particular attention to developing mutually beneficial workflows between special collections and interlibrary loan departments, creating transparent policies for the criteria under which requests are or are not filled, and technical considerations for implementing special collections loans in an ILLiad / Aeon environment. Through this case study, we highlight the potential for collaboration between resource sharing and special collections librarians in the fulfillment of special deliveries.

## **Literature Review**

A review of the literature on the interlibrary lending of special collections materials reveals that the practice is, at best, problematic and more often hotly contested, usually due to a fear of risk (Massie, 2013). Predating the publication of professional guidelines that recommend interlibrary lending, a handful of special collections repositories implemented loan procedures. Schaffner et al. (2012) found procedures in place for intercampus consortial lending of archival materials in Wisconsin as early as 1961, while a Missouri network followed suit in 1978. By 1988, when the original ACRL / RBMS guidelines for interlibrary lending of rare books were in early draft form, *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship* dedicated a special issue to the topic of interlibrary lending of special collections materials following a seminar on the topic at the 1988 RBMS Preconference. In this issue, librarians and researchers alike considered the threats and benefits associated with loaning rare books or archives.

The conclusions reached in this issue's three articles are worth exploring at some length as they foreshadow the continuing debate over interlibrary lending, security, and access. Lange (1988), then Associate Curator of Rare Books for Early Printed Books at the Huntington Library, explores alternatives to interlibrary lending at an institution whose charter explicitly prohibits taking materials outside of the library (p. 107), including photocopying, microfilming, and arranging for borrowed special collections materials to be available within the library. Even these processes are strictly moderated by curators; Lange notes that 30% of interlibrary loan requests for copies were rejected for fear that copying would damage the materials (p. 109). Hickerson and Kenney (1988) provide a perspective from Cornell University, an institution that practices interlibrary lending because the curators feel that the topic "should be addressed in the context of the research library's role in broadening access to materials in both printed and manuscript form" (p. 113). While not explicit in detailing Cornell's policies or procedures, the authors review special collections and archival lending practices within the context of burgeoning guidelines and professional standards, addressing the few lending programs in existence in 1988. The authors conclude that "[s]ome of the fears of special collections curators and archivists could be eased if information on existing interinstitutional sharing arrangements were better known, and if they themselves participated in the development of policies designed to protect their material" (p. 116). Finally, Woolley (1988) provides a researcher's perspective on "special lending," focusing on why a researcher might need access to actual physical materials rather than facsimiles or microfilm surrogates. While it is now almost axiomatic that instances exist where researchers need access to physical items, Woolley's next argument remains more controversial. He notes that "there are risks associated with special lending," including loss and damage, but concludes that there is "a less easily quantifiable risk that the book will sit on its shelf unused and that the

book and the library will not have contributed as they should to the advancement of learning” (p. 123). Woolley concludes by advocating for the creation of an RBMS task force that would publish guidelines for “acceptable standards and procedures” for special lending and borrowing (p. 123).

The standards for which Woolley (1988) and Hickerson and Kenney (1988) advocated were well underway by 1988. In fact, there is a long history of professional standards governing interlibrary lending in general and the interlibrary lending of special collections, rare books, and archival materials in particular. In 1979, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) issued a joint statement on access to original research materials in archival and manuscript repositories. While strongly advocating for researcher access to collections, including access to photographic surrogates, this statement included a clause that “normally, a repository will not send research materials for use outside its building or jurisdiction. Under special circumstances a collection or a portion of it may be loaned or placed on deposit with another institution” (ALA / SAA, 1979, n.p.). In 1987, however, the *RLG Shared Resources Manual* added an appendix for “Additional Guidelines for Access to Archives, Manuscripts, and Special Collections,” which considered the role of interlibrary loan in greater detail. More expansive than the 1979 ALA / SAA joint statement, the RLG guidelines advocated a case-by-case review of loan requests with the goal of repositories interpreting “their lending policies as generously as possible” (RLG, 1987, qtd. in Woolley, 1988, p. 126).

In 1994, ACRL adopted the first iteration of RBMS’s guidelines for interlibrary lending of rare, unique, and special collections materials (ACRL, 2004). These guidelines were updated in 2004 and not superseded until 2012, when RBMS combined the guidelines for lending special collections materials for exhibition loans with those for individual researchers (ACRL, 2012).



The goal of each iteration of the guidelines was, as in the RLG guidelines, to provide increased access to special collections materials through safe and secure interlibrary lending when possible while acknowledging that not every request for a loan could (or should) necessarily be filled.

Professional discussion about the implications for implementing these guidelines abounds. In 2002, the RLG Members Forum, titled “Sharing the wealth,” devoted a day-long session to the topic, with Robert Martin arguing in his keynote address against the idea of special collections libraries as museums for the book, stating that “preservation alone is not enough...books (and other library materials) are for use” (n.p.). Martin tempers this by noting that “we must acknowledge that different materials support different kinds of use” (n.p.). The presentations that followed Martin’s keynote outline the range of potential responses to interlibrary lending in special collections departments, in many ways mirroring the conclusions reached in the 1988 special issue of *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*. Clapinson (2002) explored interlibrary lending at the Bodleian Library, noting that it is largely non-existent outside of Oxford’s 30-library system but that photocopies and digital surrogates instead are used as supplements to research trips. Snyder (2002) reported on a pilot project at the University of California, Berkeley’s Bancroft Library, which experienced 469 patron-initiated requests. Of these requests, 21 were filled with microfilm, 98 with photocopies, and only 20 with physical loans, one of which was damaged in transit. Snyder reports that loan denials “fell into two groups – too dear to lend or too common to lend” (n.p.). This pilot, it is important to note, did not lead to a permanent program because it “was not able to guarantee the security and safe handling of Special Collection materials during loans” (n.p.). On the other end of the spectrum, Hickerson (2002) described the interlibrary lending program at Cornell’s Special Collections. In 2002, Cornell received 700 requests for physical loans and filled approximately 15% of those requests

to libraries across the country, with materials loaned including scrapbooks, personal papers, institutional records, and rare books. Hickerson noted that almost all requests are from users directly, rather than from other interlibrary loan departments, which suggests the need for alternate or supplementary workflows. Kempe (2002) explored resource sharing at the Frick Art Reference Library, reflecting that “liberal lending is a basic tenet of the SHARES program...Photocopies alone won’t cut it” (n.p.). Importantly, Kempe documents failure (the first booked loaned via ILL failed to come back to the library) as well as noting how the library used that failure in order to refine procedures and processes rather than stopping the service. Kempe outlines the case-by-case method used at the Frick Art Reference Library, noting that “most requests do get approved” (n.p.), but also noting that there are types of collections that simply cannot be loaned due to sheer size or volume.

While the result of this forum was a working group that reached no actionable conclusions (Dupont, 2010), in 2009 RLG launched a steering committee, headed by Dennis Massie, to re-investigate the idea of best practices for lending special collections materials. The project culminated in a white paper that benchmarks current interlibrary loan practices for special collections departments and highlights “strategies for providing efficient and affordable interlending of actual physical items from special collections for research purposes” (Massie, 2013, p. 7). Building upon the work of the Sharing Special Collections Working Group’s 2010 survey of 88 special collections departments, Massie reported that over 67% of all surveyed departments will consider lending special collections materials. Consortial lending remains the norm, with only 10% of institutions surveyed indicating a willingness to even consider lending libraries outside of the consortium (p. 11). The second prong of the report makes recommendations for lending special collections materials and advocates a tiered approach that

takes into account the material request, the nature of the request, and the lending library's tolerance for risk. The report also calls upon special collections librarians to recognize four principles: not all requests must be agreed to; not all special collections material is equally special; not all requestors realize that they are asking for special collections material; and interlibrary loan staff know how to lend things and get them back. In spite of the report's findings and recommendations, Gee and Legge's (2012) survey of the 15 member institutions of the University of North Carolina system suggests that many special collections repositories remain hesitant to lend their materials. Responses to the idea of interlibrary lending of special collections materials were lukewarm at best in this survey, with only one respondent indicating willingness to change current practices and allow ILL of special collections (p. 5). More heartening is the willingness of repositories to create scan on demand services (Schaffner, Snyder, and Supple, 2011), including some (e.g., Shrauger and Dotson, 2010) that make use of existing interlibrary loan channels.

While thought pieces and policy guidelines abound, case studies exploring the actual implementation of interlibrary lending of special collections materials are few and far between. In addition to the studies presented at the 2002 RLG Member Forum, there are two additional exploratory studies. Turner and Scott (2004) present a case study exploring an early implementation of patron-initiated direct requests for special collections materials between the University of California campuses in 2001. This pilot project, which was conducted in a consortial environment, allowed any eligible UC patron to request special collections materials through standard interlibrary loan procedures rather than contacting the owning department directly; librarians and curators, meanwhile, would assess the requests after they were placed. The authors note that "most requests were filled without actually shipping a special collections

item” (p. 30), with photocopies, circulating copies, different editions, or different formats serving to fill a significant portion of requests. The study concludes by noting that the pilot raised more questions than it answered, and the authors do not note if the pilot project became standard operating procedure. More recently, Olivieri and Mehaffey (2015) reported on the creation of interlibrary loan policies and procedures for special collections at the University of West Georgia. A pilot project began in 2014; 91 libraries made requests, and all but three declined the offered loan of special collections materials based on the terms of service, which were offered after the loan was made by the requesting library: materials were for use in a supervised reading room use only, materials were not eligible for renewals, reproductions on a flatbed scanner or copier were prohibited, and no labels could be affixed to the materials at any time. Despite the low fill rate, the pilot concluded with the implementation of continued services.

## **Methodology**

This article reports on the three-part phased implementation of interlibrary lending of special collections materials at the University of South Florida: a pilot project, a reflection period, and final implementation. Between 2012 and 2013, researchers occasionally contacted Special Collections directly to inquire about the possibility for arranging either a loan of materials or to request digitization of unique collection holdings. While Special Collections considered these requests on an ad hoc basis, there were no formal guidelines in place. As these requests came to Special Collections directly, with researchers bypassing Interlibrary Loan, they were cumbersome to process and difficult to track. Without codified policies and procedures, the loans were contingent upon a single staff member’s willingness to fill the requests in Special Collections. As loaning materials physically was so cumbersome, most of these requests were filled with low-resolution scans; there was no mechanism for adding these scans to the Library’s

digital collections. When materials were loaned, each situation would be handled on a case by case basis and required constant reminders to all the staff involved to be on the lookout for the material.

The University of South Florida Tampa Library Interlibrary Loan department had historically cancelled requests from other libraries for material that was held by Tampa library Special Collections. Interlibrary loan staff operated under the assumption that special collections materials could not leave the reading room under any conditions. An informal arrangement had been established where interlibrary loan staff brought copy requests to special collections staff in the event that the requested material could be copied, later scanned, and delivered to the requesting library. As with the scans created by Special Collections at the request of researchers, there was no process to harness these scans for later addition to the Library's digital collections. Interlibrary loan staff also passed on offers from lending libraries to send material that would have to be accessed within the library and under supervision. Rarely, interlibrary loan would be contacted by a local patron to arrange a loan of another library's archival material that would be viewed in Tampa library's Special Collections reading room.

The best process for this case-by-case request handling was cumbersome and complicated. It involved the patron at library A contacting the special collections department that owned the material at library B, library B's special collections department contacting their own interlibrary loan department, library B's interlibrary loan department contacting library A's interlibrary loan department, and finally, interlibrary loan at library A arranging the reading room accommodations for the loan with their own special collections department. The process was undeniably awkward, and the Resource Sharing Librarian had long been interested in programs at other institutions where interlibrary loan requests were turned into scan on demand

requests for Special Collections materials, but attempts to implement similar programs at USF failed due to the radically different systems and procedures in place in the two departments.

Two events occurred that made the formal implementation of special collections interlibrary lending possible. First, the special collections librarian documented a growing numbers of requests from distance researchers. Increasingly, these requests came in batches from the same researcher, with requests to see multiple items from the same collection. A request from a researcher at Villanova University for periodic, ongoing access to titles in our Children's Literature Collection prompted the Special Collections department to revisit its policies and procedures. Second, Special Collections acquired and became fully acclimated with the Aeon automated request and workflow management software. Aeon was created by Atlas Systems, the same company that created ILLiad, the interlibrary loan request management system that the USF Tampa library interlibrary loan department had been using since 1999. The similarity of the platforms and their interoperability offered hope for new opportunities to join the workflows of the two departments and overcome obstacles to collaboratively addressing the needs of researchers at distant locations.

### Planning

The Resource Sharing Librarian worked with the hosting provider of both the Special Collections request management system, Aeon, and the interlibrary loan request management system, ILLiad, to establish a link between the two systems. Incoming requests from libraries interested in borrowing Special Collections materials could be forwarded within the ILLiad staff interface to the Aeon system as a new request complete with all the relevant item information. These requests would be attached to an interlibrary loan 'patron' in Aeon. Special Collections staff would know to pull all requests for the interlibrary loan patron and deliver to the interlibrary

loan department. The pilot program would gather data to provide a more complete picture than could be seen by either interlibrary loan or special collections in their daily workflows. If properly configured the systems used by both departments would gather request rate, requestor, time on loan, and more information that would be used to evaluate the program in reference to the goal of permanently extending services.

### Execution

Once the connection between ILLiad and Aeon was established in September of 2013, Interlibrary Loan staff were instructed to send all copy/scan requests for Special Collections via the system connection, but to continue to cancel requests for loans of material. This decision was made to test the system without adding the extra steps, and associated risks, of physically loaning materials during the early stages of the pilot. Early requesting showed errors with the way fields were matched between the two systems. Work on ILLiad's External Field Mapping table and request processing continued through November as both departments identified issues in the workflow. A system email from ILLiad to Special Collections staff was also added as an alert that a request had been sent and needed to be acted upon within interlibrary loan's goal 24-hour turnover window.

Building renovations slowed the implementation of actual interlibrary lending of materials. Request processing for copies/scans of Special Collections materials continued without alteration through the temporary displacement of Special Collections staff, followed by the temporary displacement of Interlibrary Loan staff, during the renovations. In September of 2015, once renovations were complete and both departments were comfortable that the request system was fully operational, we implemented procedures that would allow for scan and deliver as well as interlibrary lending. Interlibrary Loan staff began sending all requests, loans and

copies/scans, to Special Collections staff for consideration. Special Collections' review focused on a tiered, multi-step process: first, requests were reviewed to ensure that the requesting library had a supervised reading room to oversee the loan. Second, staff confirmed that copies were not readily available elsewhere, either in USF's circulating collections or in other North American libraries. If the first two criteria were met, staff inspected each requested item for condition.

When it was noticed that requesting libraries of the initial loans often did not anticipate the required access restriction of the Special Collections items, interlibrary loan added a step to the request process where ILL staff would send a message, referred to as a conditional, to any requesting library desiring a loan of material to make sure they understood and would adhere to providing access to the loaned material within a supervised reading room only. A field was also added to the alert email from the ILLiad system to inform Special Collections staff of the requesting library's name. If the conditional message was agreed to then ILL staff would email Special Collections staff with the request information and forward the request to the special collections request management system, Aeon, from the interlibrary loan request management system, ILLiad. Following the tiered, multi-step review by Special Collections staff, the material would be delivered to interlibrary loan. In the case of electronic fulfillment, ILL staff would retrieve the file from Aeon via an ILLiad extension called an addon and deliver the file electronically to the borrowing library, ending the request. In the case of a physical loan, ILL staff would add book bands with the interlibrary loan information and package the material for delivery via UPS.

All library to library shipments, including returned special collections items and items from a parallel consortial borrowing program, were unpacked simultaneously by ILL staff and students along with other interlibrary loan deliveries. Staff and students opening deliveries

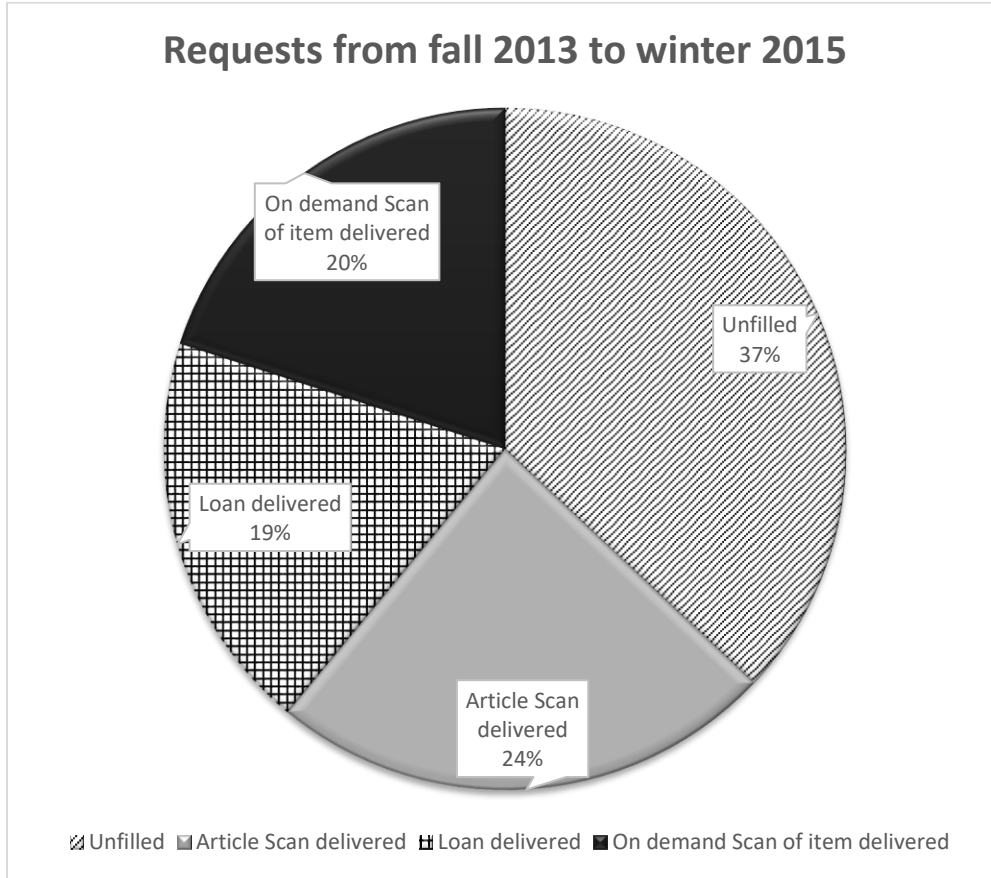


typically sorted materials into several groups: incoming interlibrary loan borrowed materials, materials lent and borrowed through the State University unmediated borrowing service, and returning USF materials. Paperwork would be removed from the returning USF materials. That paperwork would go to Interlibrary Loan staff while the books would be taken to the bookroom for check in processing. Special Collections returns would be taken by ILL staff to Special Collections to finish the request.

From fall 2013 to winter 2015, 141 requests were sent from ILLiad to Aeon, and 89 of those requests were filled by Special Collections (see figure 1). 53% of those requests were for loans. Of the 59% combined article and loan requests that were filled by Special Collections, twenty seven were filled with a loan of the item to the borrowing library's reading room. Twenty eight of the filled requests had been sent to Special Collections as loan requests and had resulted in on demand digitization of the item.

The libraries taking advantage of the expanded service were primarily university libraries in the South East and along the East coast. Unexpectedly, the local document delivery service was one of the heaviest requestors of scans from Special Collections materials. Requests from local patrons are filtered through the patron services side of interlibrary loan and forwarded to document delivery services when the item could be found in house. At the time of the trial, document delivery services were only available to faculty, graduates, and distanced learners. This means that faculty and graduate users were making interlibrary loan requests for material held by Special Collections, which may indicate that they were unaware of Special Collections services, or unable to visit the library during Special Collections' open hours.

Figure 1: Special Collections ILL requests, fall 2013 to winter 2015



The most requested collections are shown in figure 2. Unsurprisingly, given that researcher requests for access to our children’s literature collections were what inspired us to reconsider our interlibrary lending policies, the Children’s Literature Collection was the most requested collection. 45% of these requests were filled and represent the collection most often loaned or, in the case of only two, scanned in response to an interlibrary loan request. The remainder of filled requests were spread thinly over several collections: Science Fiction, 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature, Tampa Cuban Collection, Queer Literature Collection, Dime Novel Collection, Suhoff Bartokiana Collection and the Memorial Collection.

Figure 2: Special Collections interlibrary loan requests by collection

<b>Interlibrary loan requests by Collection</b>		
<b>Collection</b>	<b>Requests</b>	<b>Filled</b>
19th Century American Literature Collection	12	4
Children’s Literature Collection	33	15
Floridiana Collection	12	6
Holocaust & Genocide Studies Collection	10	4
Memorial Collection	12	6

Failures/Conclusion of Pilot

One of the items loaned from the Holocaust & Genocide Studies Collection was returned with minor damage, and four of the items from the Children’s Literature Collection were misplaced between interlibrary loan check-in and return to Special Collections. As more items returned from being sent out on interlibrary loan, increased monitoring and searching for missing items led to the end of the pilot early in the 2015 spring semester.

A number of other issues were revealed during the tracking and searching process to complete the remaining Special Collections interlibrary loans; most of these issues could be traced to a misunderstanding of each other’s services and processes before beginning the pilot. For example, during the sorting of mail, Interlibrary Loan staff and students assistants would separate out incoming books and remove the paperwork from books that were returning from being on loan. This could, and did, result in Special Collections materials being forwarded to the general collections if they were not obviously marked as belonging to Special Collections. Ideally, this problem would also be stopped when the items were checked back in from being on loan during book room processes, but the training levels and turnover of book room student assistants was not known of or controlled by either Special Collections or Interlibrary Loan.

Removal of the interlibrary loan paperwork from Special Collections items also resulted in books with no identification at all. Neither Interlibrary Loan nor Circulation were aware that

Special Collections items were often not marked for ownership or collection outside of a bookmark with the call number. Beyond the confusion this caused when paperwork was removed during mail sorting, this also created a problem for miss-mailed interlibrary loan items. It is very common for paperwork to be removed from an ILL book before ever being returned to the lending or home library. When this happens, borrowing libraries, or libraries that have accidentally been shipped the item in error, can use ownership stamps to locate the home library and return it.

Circulation, which managed the book room, also relied on library ownership marks to separate miss-delivered items from other unmarked books received in the bookroom. Unmarked books in the book room were one of two types: from patrons who had misplaced their own books and might return to collect them or from members of the public that wanted to donate their materials to the library. These unmarked donations were set aside in a lost and found area until a certain amount of time had passed and then evaluated for addition to the reserves collection, in the case of textbooks, or for donation to a book reseller/recycler.

Analysis of the tracking history on four still missing items revealed that the items had been returned by the borrowing libraries, and that paperwork removal on unmarked items most likely caused them to be folded into the bookroom lost and found/donation process. This was an unacceptable and unusually high rate of loss when typical interlibrary loaned materials were lost only .03% of the time in the two years preceding the pilot.

Additionally, Special Collections items that were scanned on demand to fill interlibrary loan requests were not added to USF Library's permanent digital collections. Should Special Collections continue demand based scanning in response to interlibrary loan requests, this could cause increased stress on popularly requested items. The issues of paperwork processing,

ownership marks, and permanent digitization would have to be addressed if interlibrary lending of Special Collections materials could ever be considered as a permanent service enhancement.

### **Findings: Creation of Policy and Procedure**

The unfortunate end to the pilot forced both Interlibrary Loan and Special Collections to realize that creation of a full policy and step by step, cross-departmental, procedure should have preceded expansion of Special Collections lending to Interlibrary Loan, but it did not deter either unit from seeing this expansion of services as a necessary and beneficial goal. After discussing communication and processing failures experienced in the pilot, the Resource Sharing Librarian built a draft policy and procedure based on the ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries (2009) and the ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Interlibrary and Exhibition Loan of Special Collections Materials (2012).

Each interlibrary loan request for special collections material would initially be evaluated for on demand digitization for permanent addition to the digital collection by USF Tampa Library's Digital Services department. Permanent addition to the digital collection would seize the opportunity to make requested items publicly discoverable and would lessen the stress on items that may be re-requested.

Borrowing libraries would be asked to:

- 1) verify their researcher need for direct access to special collections materials,
- 2) restrict material use to supervised reading rooms,
- 3) adhere to treatment and packaging instructions that come with the loan, and
- 4) note the condition of the item before return.

In return, USF Special Collections would make every effort to fill interlibrary loan requests for materials from libraries within the contiguous United States with the exception of

oversized items, mass market items for which there are many circulating copies, items on loan to but not owned by USF, and fragile items that would not survive the loan (see appendix 1).

This information would be posted on the library's public web pages and linked to both Special Collections and Interlibrary Loan service pages. A link to these pages would be included in the conditional message sent to requesting libraries asking them to limit access to a reading room and adhere to the publicly posted policy.

In order to address the issues caused by unmarked books and removed paperwork, Special Collections evaluated the possibility of an ownership stamp that could be applied to requested books before being sent out on loan. Additionally customizations to ILLiad and Aeon would facilitate the printing of a pull slip that could be used as a book band on Special Collections loans. This band would be applied by and removed by Special Collections staff only. It would include both Special Collections information and usage restrictions as well as interlibrary loan request information in order to be useful to both processes. Further, Special Collections would print this band on colored paper, rather than ILL's customary white, to provide an immediate visual cue to processing staff that this loan was different than normal.

Promising to consider requested items for scan on demand to the permanent digital collection would require involving a third department, Digital Services, in the entire process. Meetings between the three departments finalized the step-by-step procedure for all future requests. Requested items that were available for scan on demand processing would be delivered to Digital Services by Special Collections staff. The requested items would be rush digitized to fit into interlibrary loans' required turnover time. An email with the URL to the final digitized item would be sent to interlibrary loan to complete the request. Finally, Digital Services staff would return the material to Special Collections when the scanning was complete.

Implementing a procedure instead of an understanding allowed all three involved departments to anticipate process issues before they arose and address issues learned in the pilot. A procedure and posted intention of service would also increase the chances that the expanded service could become an inheritable method of operation instead of a pet project tied to one or two staff members.

## **Outcomes**

The improved service was launched in January 2016. During the spring semester, from January to May, 54 requests were forwarded from Interlibrary Loan to Special Collections. Of those requests, 29 were filled with Special Collections materials, 20 with loaned items, and 9 with scanned items. The 54% fill rate showed a 14% drop from the fill rate of the trial and a marked decrease in the amount of article/scan requests referred to Special Collections from Interlibrary Loan. Over half of the requests cancelled after being sent to Special Collections were due to borrowing library reconsideration of required loan restrictions. The percentage of loan requests that were filled by Special Collections with an on demand digitized copy, 4 out of the 9 delivered scans, also fell. While many materials are eligible for researcher scans, copyright restrictions severely limit the number of scans we are able to include in our permanent digital collections.

Similar to what was seen in the pilot, the Children's Literature Collection was one of the most requested collections, tied with the Holocaust & Genocide Studies Collection. The Science Fiction and Floridiana collections were the most likely to provide requested materials with 100% fill rates (see figure 3).

<figure 3>

The libraries requesting special collections materials and agreeing to the terms of use in spring 2016 were spread much farther than the South East and East coast of the United States, though the bulk of requesting libraries were still those that were geographically close to USF (figure 4). Most of the requesting libraries, and all of the most frequent requesting libraries, were academic. Local document delivery did not show up as a heavy requester during spring 2016, as it had during the pilot. This could be due to faculty planning their research at other times during the year or because Special Collections offers materials access services directly to local patrons; patrons would not need to make a request of document delivery in order to obtain Special Collections materials.

<figure 4>

Mid-way through the spring 2016 semester, the Resource Sharing librarian created a report that spanned both interlibrary loan and special collections systems and showed all requests sent to Special Collections from interlibrary loan. This report provided a consolidated visual of request statuses that had not been available in the past and enabled both interlibrary loan and special collections to monitor loaned material much more closely. It is run weekly and saved to a shared location available to both departments.

## **Conclusion**

In presenting our experiences with interlibrary lending of special collections materials, we consciously chose to explore both our failures and our successes. When we established the pilot project for interlibrary lending in 2013, there were no successful case study models for us to follow that looked beyond established constortial boundaries, so we were forced to follow the more undesirable trial and error approach to implementation. Importantly, however, our errors,



while undesirable, led us to solutions. The worst that could happen has already happened: a book that was loaned has not yet found its way back to its permanent home, and another book suffered damages during the loan. Fortunately, this occurred during the early stages of our lending pilot, when we were more conservative in the types of materials offered on loan. The book that was lost was replaceable, and the damaged book was one with significant research rather than artifactual value. In dealing with these pitfalls we learned valuable lessons that we have highlighted here so that others might also learn from them. While these lessons are, perhaps, of most value to institutions with similarly sized special collections and interlibrary loan departments, we feel that they are also of broader use. It is imperative that clear, open communication channels exist between special collections and interlibrary loan, and it is equally imperative that neither department assume that the other knows standard operating procedures. If Special Collections had realized that standard ILL operating procedures involved taking items to the book room for processing, we would have planned accordingly. Similarly, if Interlibrary Loan had realized that Special Collections took such a minimalist approach to ownership marks on most items, processing instructions would have differed in our pilot. The experience underscored the notion that interlibrary lending of special materials is not for the faint of heart, but that, with practice and shared experience, risk can ultimately be mitigated and dramatically lessened. Since the re-launch of our lending service in 2016, we have experienced no damage or loss during loans.

Our experiences also suggest the importance of clear procedural guidelines that are operationalized rather than merely informally agreed upon. While the pilot project was largely an experiment between two collaborating librarians, the revised and fully implemented service is just that: an official service of the USF Tampa Library. By codifying our policies and

procedures, we have full departmental and institutional support. The transparency offered helps requesting libraries, staff in both departments, and, hopefully, will help ensure the longevity of the program beyond the staff who implemented it.

Even with improved policies and procedures in place, some factors remain outside of our control. While we require requesting libraries to agree to the terms and conditions of the loan, many libraries still cancel the loan after initially agreeing. We continue to receive requests for oversize materials that cannot be shipped or digitized due to their size. As has been observed previously (e.g., Olivieri and Mehaffey, 2015), we found that a disproportionate number of requests that we are able to fill come from academic institutions. This is due, in part, to the requirement that the loan be supervised in a special collections reading room. While we would like for our materials to be available to the broadest possible community of users, we have not identified a solution to this problem.

Despite early hurdles, interlibrary lending of Special Collections materials ultimately proved a success at the USF Tampa Library. The service has provided major benefits to distant researchers, has significantly expanded access to our collections, and it has also opened new channels for communication and collaboration within the library.

## **Appendix 1: Procedures for Determining Loans of Special Collections Materials**

While our policies and procedures ask borrowing libraries to adhere to published guidelines in requesting special collections materials, Special Collections staff use the same guidelines to evaluate all requests before processing the loan. In particular, we:

1. Evaluate request for shipment. Before shipping, confirm:
  - a. The requesting library has a supervised reading room to facilitate the loan.
  - b. The requested material cannot be easily obtained elsewhere.
  - c. The requested material is not prohibitively large. While oversized materials are considered for shipment, they must fit into available packaging.
  - d. The requested material will physically survive the loan process. Staff should pay particular attention to brittle paper wrappers and glass negatives and consider how careful packaging might alleviate condition concerns for the loan.
  - e. The requested material is not currently being used by a class or researcher in the reading room. If material is currently in use, communicate this to the requesting library and consider digitization on demand or delaying the loan.
2. Evaluate request for digitization on demand. Before shipping a loan or digitizing a request, consider:
  - a. The fragility of requested item. If item will not survive shipping, contact requesting library to ascertain if a digitized copy will suffice.
  - b. The likelihood of digital surrogate receiving additional use. A second interlibrary loan request of the same material automatically triggers digitization on demand.
  - c. Always confirm with requesting library that a digital surrogate will meet the requesting patron's needs.

References

- American Library Association and Society of American Archivists. (1979). ALA/SAA joint statement on access to original research materials in archival and manuscript repositories. Retrieved from <http://ethics.iit.edu/ecodes/node/3136>
- American Library Association. (2004). ACRL guidelines for the interlibrary loan of rare and unique materials. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/rareguidelines>
- American Library Association. (2009). ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/jointstatement>
- American Library Association. (2012). ACRL/RBMS Guidelines for Interlibrary and Exhibition Loan of Special Collections Materials. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/specialcollections>
- Clapinson, M. (2002). The past, present, and future of lending the Bodleian Library's special collections, RLG Members Forum: Sharing the Wealth, Washington, CD, October 18 2002. Retrieved from <http://worldcat.org/arcviewer/1/OCC/2007/09/0000073852/viewer/file485.html>
- Dupont, C. (2010). ILL for archives and special collections: Enhancing access to unique and rare materials. Speech presented at the ILLiad International Conference, March 28, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/christiandupont/2010-il-liad-conference-dupont-ill-and-special-collections>
- Gee, C. William, and Legge, L. K. Gypsy. (2012) Unthinkable horror or emerging best practice?: Exploring access to special collection materials through interlibrary loan. *North Carolina Libraries*, 70, 2-14.

Hickerson, H. Thomas, and Kenney, A. R. (1988). Expanding access: loan of original materials in special collections. *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*, 3 (2), 113-119.

Iowa State University Special Collections and Archives. (2005). Interlibrary loan policy. Retrieved from [archives.lib.iastate.edu/using-our-materials/interlibrary-loan-policy](http://archives.lib.iastate.edu/using-our-materials/interlibrary-loan-policy)

Kempe, D. Sharing unique and rare materials at the Frick Art Reference Library, RLG Members Forum: Sharing the Wealth, Washington, DC, October 18, 2002. Retrieved from <http://worldcat.org/arcviewer/1/OCC/2007/09/28/0000073852/viewer/file291.ppt>

Lange, T. V. (1988). Alternative to interlibrary loan. *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*, 3 (2), 107-111.

Martin, R. (2002). Keynote address, RLG Members Forum: Sharing the Wealth, Washington, DC, October 18, 2002. Retrieved from <http://worldcat.org/arcviewer/1/OCC/2007/09/28/0000073852/viewer/file483.html>

Massie, D. (2013). Tiers for fears: Sensible, streamlined sharing of special collections. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Research. Retrieved from <http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2013/2013-03.pdf>

Olivieri, B., and Mehaffey, A. M. (2015). Interlibrary loan of special collections materials: An overview and case study. *RBM*, 16 (2), 113-126.

Schaffner, J., Snyder, F., and Supple, S. (2010). Scan and deliver: Managing user-initiated digitization in special collections and archives. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Research. Retrieved from <http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2011/2011-05.pdf>

Shrauger, K., and Dotson, L. (2010). Scan by numbers: Interlibrary loan lending statistics shape digital initiative. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve*, 20, 135-148.

Snyder, S. (2002). Testing the waters: Report on a pilot project for sharing special collections, RLG Members Forum: Sharing the Wealth, Washington, DC, October 18, 2002.

Retrieved from

<http://worldcat.org/arcviewer/1/OCC/2007/09/0000073852/viewer/file481.html>

Turner, D., and Scott, K. (2004). Interlibrary loaning special collections: A test run for the University of California. *Journal of Access Services*, 2 (2), 23-38.

Woolley, J. (1988). Special collections lending: a reader's view. *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*, 3 (2), 121-130.