Interlibrary loan borrowing practices in Israeli college libraries: implications for Israeli university libraries/ Porat Lynne

Abstract

The recent establishment of academic colleges in Israel has not only affected the make-up of Israeli higher education, it has also caused changes in university libraries, particularly to the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) departments. The aim of this study is to characterize the ILL borrowing practices of Israeli college libraries in general, and in particular, those of libraries that send the majority of their requests to universities. It also aims to identify the disciplines of college library ILL requests and determine whether there is a connection to the disciplines prevalent in their own collections. In addition, it aims to identify the Israeli university libraries that have received increased requests between 1997 and 2001, to assess the effects on them, identify changes already implemented in interlibrary loan departments, and those desired.

The first questionnaire was sent to the directors of thirty-eight colleges known to have libraries, and the second was sent to the seventeen ILL units of the seven university libraries. A 95% response rate was received.

Results show that 91% of college libraries sent ILL requests to universities in 2001, and 40% sent approximately three-quarters of all their ILL requests to universities. Sixty percent of colleges have library collections in the Social Sciences and Humanities fields, and these fields also dominate their ILL requests. University libraries with predominantly Social Sciences, Humanities and Medicine collections have seen the greatest overall increase in incoming ILL requests over the five-year period from 1997-2001. Moreover, libraries with collections in the Social Sciences and Humanities saw significant increases in ILL requests from college libraries in particular. In addition, there is a statistical connection between the size of university library collections and the number of incoming ILL orders from college libraries. University libraries with large book collections received more incoming ILL requests from colleges than libraries with smaller collections. Forty-seven percent of university libraries

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supplied greater numbers of ILL requests in 2001 than they did in 1997. Four libraries reported that since 2000 the percentage of orders supplied to colleges has risen by more than 25%.

The main effect of the increase in the number of ILL requests was that the university library ILL staff felt more pressure. Seventy-three percent of university libraries reported that some organizational changes had taken place in their department such as purchase of software and more staff. Ninety-four percent of libraries acknowledged that some changes should take place on a national level. The creation of a national ILL code of practice and the implementation of sophisticated ILL software were the main measures recommended by to ease the burden on the universities.

The main recommendation of this study is that college libraries use the same library software as the universities and continue to develop their collections so that they are able to reciprocate in the ILL process. It also recommends that college and university libraries increase cooperation by creating consortia especially for ILL, to ensure standardization of prices, methods of ordering, corresponding and supply.

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