

A Charmed Brew: Document Delivery and Collection Development in the Fast Lane*

By: Rosann Bazirjian[†]

Bazirjian, Rosann. "A Charmed Brew: Document Delivery and Collection Development in the Fast Lane." Collection Management 19(3/4): 7-10 (1995). [Also published in Practical Issues in Collection Development and Collection Access (edited by Katina Strauch) pp. 7-10, Haworth Press, New York (1995).]

*****Note: Figures may be missing for this format of the document**

*****Note: Footnotes and endnotes indicated with brackets**

"Double, double toil and trouble: fire, burn; and cauldron, bubble";[1] I smell confusion in the air. As the witches in Macbeth prepare their "charmed pot"[2] of "powerful trouble" [3] we sit here today with an array of powerful ingredients ourselves. But, unlike the witches' blend of fillet of fenny snake, eye of newt, toe of frog or even wool of bat,[4] we need to find a tasty recipe for Uncover2, ArticleFirst, Loansome Doc, Citadel, Adonis, Dialorder or how about these acronyms: UMI, IOD, NTIS, ISI, ERIC, ACS or EI; I wonder what those would conjure up. As we choose between on- site document delivery services or remote services and attempt to evaluate types of access available, costs involved, turn-around time, ease of order placement, delivery options, frequency of update, and technical support provided, we have created for ourselves not only a charmed brew, but as Ronald Leach says, "an electronic tower of Babylon." [5]

Confused? Where does the confusion lie? Not only must we choose between the services I just mentioned, but we need to decide on the system and mode of delivery as well! Will we use fax, or how about Federal Express, Overnight Courier, United Parcel Service, Next Day Air, and please don't forget Second Day Air. The option of electronic scanning also exists, and for some, Ariel is the answer, where a scanned fax is sent over the Internet. Others may model their delivery system on that which the National Agricultural Library has developed, or Ohio State University, where scanned images are received directly on a patron's work station. So I repeat, the proliferation of services and types of access available are confusing.

But believe me, the confusion does not stop here. What about our bibliographers? As patron expectations increase due to their ability to gain access to so much more information in our on-line systems, the bibliographer is faced with even more demands. There are more variables on which the subject selector must make spending decisions. As budgets shrink, and as funds dwindle due to unfavorable exchange rates and inflation, do they still stress ownership, or pro-

* [Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "A Charmed Brew: Document Delivery and Collection Development in the Fast Lane." Bazirjian, Rosann. Co-published simultaneously in *Collection Management* (The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 19, Nos. 3/4, 1995, pp. 7-10; and: *Practical Issues in Collection Development and Collection Access: The 1993 Charleston Conference* (ed: Katina Strauch et al.) The Haworth Press, Inc., 1995, pp. 7-10. Multiple copies of this article/ chapter may be purchased from The Haworth Document Delivery Center [1-800-3-HAWORTH; 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST)].

[†] Rosann Bazirjian is Head of Bibliographic Services at Syracuse University Library, 123 Lake Country Drive, Syracuse, NY 13209.

vide access? Coupled with these fiscal realities, the bibliographer must determine if access really is cheaper. As the volume of publishing increases and the size of our staffs decrease, it certainly becomes a luxury to provide both access and ownership. Yet, if they opt to provide access, which journals apply? What subscriptions can they afford to cancel? And what amount of their budget should they siphon off for document delivery? In this period of re-evaluating library collections, in this battle between traditional and alternative collection development practices, in this move to viewing the library as a "gateway of information,"^[6] the bibliographer is confused.

The confusion does not stop here! What about our library administrators. The questions for them are numerous. They need to decide on when. Is now the time to invest in document delivery? The service is young, that is true, so how much risk is involved in making such a commitment. They also need to decide on how. How can the library afford it? Administrators are responsible for deciding on the pricing structure, so they need to decide if this service should be completely subsidized by the library. If not, is it ethical to charge the patron? If the library agrees to charge, due to the great variety of services available, the pricing structure can become quite complicated. Another question administrators must answer is where. If document delivery is the way to go, where should this service be located? Is this an Interlibrary Loan function, or does it more rightly belong in Reference? What about Acquisitions? What about Serials? Where should the machinery be located? And how should this new service be integrated into the work flow? Finally, administration needs to decide on the what, by which I mean, what delivery options exist. Does the library go with faxing, or electronic scanning, or a combination of the two. Does the patron receive the article directly, or should he or she be forced to come into the library to pick-up the delivered material. The potential for the library without walls is certainly here.

Now we get to the library patrons themselves. Let's look at their dilemma as they ask, where do I go for this service? Am I even eligible to use this service? Is this service only available for graduate students and faculty, or can undergraduates and the local community request articles via document delivery as well? Patrons need to ask: must I pay for this service; may I only use this service if my request is rush (and what is considered rush anyway?); can I only use this service for items which the library does not own; how many requests may I submit on a weekly, daily, or monthly basis? Surely, the patron does not have the answers, and surely, the patron is confused.

Even vendors are uncertain. The subscription agent is developing "products and services to match librarians' changing expectations." ^[7] Vendors are forced to re-evaluate their role in order to survive the future as they begin to expand from traditional subscription suppliers to suppliers of documents. This is necessary as libraries continue to reduce serial subscriptions. Vendors are secure in the role played as subscription agents. They are important to us: they consolidate invoices, create statistical reports, do currency conversion. Now, that security is in jeopardy. So, who do they now go to visit when they call on a library? Is it still the acquisitions or serials librarian, or is it now the interlibrary loan or reference librarian? If they get into document delivery, how do they determine pricing structures? This is the sort of confusion that vendors must cope with.

I hope this has set the stage for the speakers who are following me, and I sincerely hope they can answer these seemingly endless questions; questions which continue to evolve as yet another new system or service comes our way. As Macbeth views the apparitions which the witches

conjured up, he says "whatever thou art, for thy good caution, thanks: thou hast harped my fear alright." [8] Call it confusion or call it fear, something is in the air.

REFERENCES

1. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (The Arden Shakespeare), 8th ed., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 109.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
5. Ronald G. Leach, "Electronic Document Delivery: New Options for Libraries," *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 18 (6) (1993), p. 364.
6. Peggy Johnson, "When Pigs Fly, or When Access Equals Ownership," *Technicalities*, 12 (2) (February, 1992), p. 6.
7. John Cox, "The Changing Role of the Subscription Agent," *Interlending and Document Supply*, 20 (3) (1992), p. 109.
8. William Shakespeare, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cox, John. "The Changing Role of the Subscription Agent." *Interlending and Document Supply* 20 (3) (1992), pp. 108-110.

Johnson, Peggy. "When Pigs Fly, or When Access Equals Ownership." *Technicalities* 12 (2) (February, 1992), pp. 4-7.

Leach, Ronald G. "Electronic Document Delivery: New Options for Libraries." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 18 (6) (1993), pp. 359-364.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (The Arden Shakespeare). 8th ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.