WORLD LIBRARY
AND INFORMATION
CONGRESS:
78ᵀᴴ IFLA GENERAL
CONFERENCE
AND ASSEMBLY

IFLA
2012 Helsinki

LIBRARIES NOW!
INSPIRING
SURPRISING
EMPOWERING

EVA (ErwerbungsVorschlags-Assistant) assists in collection building! Using ILL Data for patron-driven acquisition

Ania Lopez
University Library of Duisburg-Essen
Essen, Germany
E-mail: Ania.lopez@uni-due.de

Peter Mayr
North Rhine-Westphalian Library Consortium (hbz)
Cologne, Germany
E-mail: mayr@hbz-nrw.de

Session: **139 — *Treating print in an increasing digital collection: issues, dilemmas and directions* — Acquisition and Collection Development**

Abstract:

The "ErwerbungsVorschlags-Assistant" (EVA) explores the methodology of patron driven acquisition in regard to printed material, specifically interlibrary loan requests. The requests are automatically compared to specific criteria in regard to their suitability as an acquisition, enriched with external data and presented to the appropriate subject librarian. Since October 2011, EVA is in production with several German university libraries. This paper describes the project and its underlying concepts.

1. Motivation

Interlibrary-loans that originate at the local institution can highlight deficits in its holdings.

This – seemingly mundane – assertion stood at the beginning of our project. Before the automation of the interlibrary-loan (ILL) processing Germany this data was put to use. At that time every request was reviewed by a subject librarian, who then made the decision to buy the requested medium or to let the interlibrary-loan go through.

This step was abolished in 2002 during the course of the establishment of new discovery interfaces which allowed direct ordering by end-users. The new work flow allowed for a dramatic decrease in delivery time and increased the service quality for the patrons. However, the subject librarians were cut off from important data that could aid local collection development.

EVA—the "ErwerbungsVorschlags-Assistant" – is a new tool to aid patron driven acquisition of analogue material without having a negative effect on the high service quality of interlibrary loan.

Aim of this project is to automatically filter interlibrary loan requests by a range of criteria. Requests, which might be considered as an acquisition are presented to the respective subject librarian and she/he can decide, if the request should go through or if a purchase is the better option.

The presented model is integrated in the infrastructure of the North Rhine-Westphalian library system and is an optional add-on for its participating libraries. However, EVA's modular build also allows the re-use of certain components in differing infrastructures.

2. Opportunity

This project started 2010 in the context of the extra-occupational degree program "Master in Library and Information Science" at the University of Applied Science of Cologne. In this course, a project with a workload of 240 hours is required.

A big opportunity of this setting was the collaboration between different institutions, so the expertise of subject librarian work at the University of Duisburg-Essen and the management of the interlibrary loan systems of the North Rhine-Westphalian Library Service Centre (http://www.hbz-nrw.de) could be applied. At the end of the project a prototype of the proposed EVA-system could be presented which then was transformed into a regular service of the Library Service Centre.

3. Preliminary Stages

3.1 State of the art in Germany

The following similar methods have been researched as part of the project:

3.1.1 Subsequent use of interlibrary loan data

In some institutions of the North Rhine-Westphalian library network ILL data is transmitted to the local library via email after an order has taken place. In order to reach all subject librarians, the recipient email is a mailing list.

Another subsequent use of ILL data is provided centrally by the Bavarian Library Network. Every ILL request is written to a separate database and the data is enriched with additional bibliographical data or the number of orders. This information can be queried by the Bavarian libraries. Various filters (e.g. subject of title, time frame) aid this analysis.

3.1.2 Purchase request form in the local discovery system

The "Digitale Bibliothek" (http://www.digibib.net) is a popular discovery interface which is operated by the hbz and used by over 200 public and academic libraries in Germany and Austria. Since the last release it is possible to integrate a purchase request form for

selected views. The form gets submitted to the relevant library and – at best – an ILL request is avoided.

   In practice, both methods have certain weaknesses: in the first case, ILL data is only analyzed after the order has taken place, so the purchase and the ILL request may happen in parallel. In the second case, the patron decides if an ILL order should go through and not the subject librarian.

3.2 Concept and work flows

The following basic concepts were relevant for designing the work flows:

- *"Unnecessary" ILL orders should be avoided*

    ILL requests for titles that could form a relevant addition of the local collection and that can be procured within an acceptable time frame should be intercepted.

- *Subject librarians should be able to make ILL order decisions fast and conveniently*

    A web interface should present simple and effective means to deal with potential purchases in order to avoid an unnecessary increase in the duration of request fulfillment.

The basic concepts were developed in collaboration with the University Library of Duisburg-Essen. However, the resulting project should be generally applicable to the libraries within the hbz network and certain modules should be even re-usable in other infrastructures.

   In order to satisfy such a general approach, two basic work flows have been developed: on the one hand the "standard work flow", which includes the option to halt ILL requests for a certain time; on the other hand an "alternative mode", in which order data is only stored in parallel to the normal ILL work flow. This mode allows also the participation of libraries, which do not have procedures for "fast track purchases" in place.
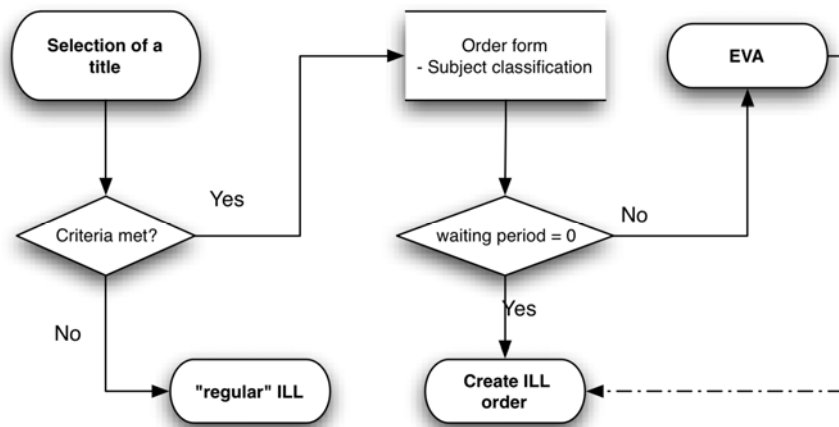
3.2.1. Standard work flow

Figure 1: Standard work flow

Figure 1 illustrates the "basic work flow": A subject classification is stored for every local library view in the discovery system. The subjects are oriented after the departments at the respective institution. For every subject a "waiting period" is defined, which determines if and – where required – for how long a potential ILL order is held for review by the subject librarian.

If an order requests meets the general (ISBN is present and availability in the book trade is given) and institution-specific (e.g. specific language, date of publication > X) criteria, the patron is presented with the subjects form in order to classify the title in question.

After the order form is submitted the system handles the request in two possible ways:

1. *The waiting period for the selected subject is greater than 0*

   If a waiting period is defined, then no ILL order is placed, and only the purchase request is created. The patron is informed about the procedure and is presented a tracking number (with an "EVA:" prefix in order to differentiate from "normal" ILL request numbers, cf. figure 2).

2. *The waiting period for the selected subject is greater than 0*

   If a waiting period is defined, then no ILL order is placed, and only the purchase request is created. The patron is informed about the procedure and is presented a tracking number (with an "EVA:" prefix in order to differentiate from "normal" ILL request numbers, cf. figure 2).

Figure 2: Result page after a successful order

The purchase request is then also listed under this number in the patron's account. The subject librarians can process the incoming requests in a password protected web interface. (see also 4.2.).
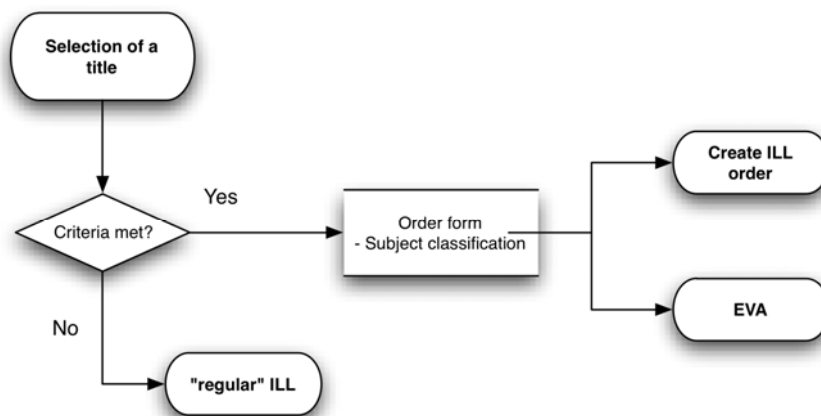
3.2.2 Alternative mode

Figure 3: Alternative work flow

Figure 3 illustrates an "alternative mode" to the standard work flow: In this version the regular ILL order flow is not interrupted and patrons may only notice the new system, when they are asked—if the criteria are met – to classify their request.

However, in parallel to the ILL work flow the request data is also stored in the EVA system and the subject librarians get notified about new requests that may be useful for collection development.

Even if no ILL orders are directly converted into purchase requests, this method still offers considerable improvement over the simple mail notifications mentioned in 3.1.1, since subject librarians are only notified about relevant titles (e.g. available in the book trade) in their respective subjects.

4. Results

The result of the original project was a working prototype, that included 3 modules:

1. Automatic analysis of ILL requests with regard to their suitability as purchase request
2. A web interface for subject librarians in order to process requests
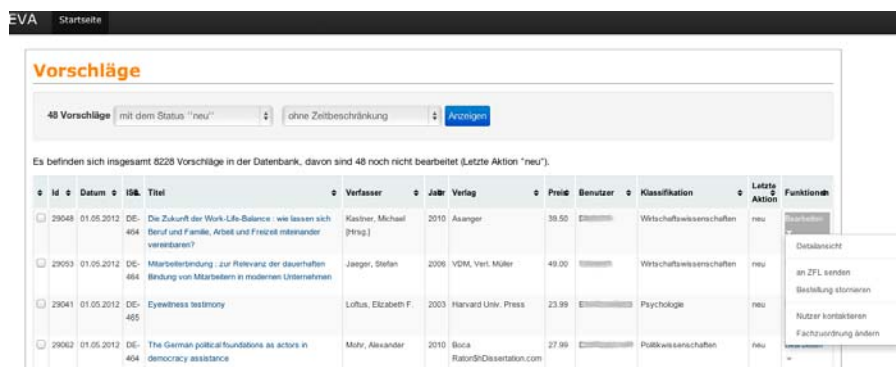3. A tracking module for patrons

4.1 Automatic analysis of ILL requests

Orders, which may be suitable as purchase requests are filtered out from the pool of ILL requests. During the first step mainly formal criteria are checked. For example, availability in the book trade is an important criteria. This requires the existence of an ISBN which is used for querying the appropriate API (in this case an Amazon web service).

Another important criteria is the date of publication, since only recent literature should be acquired. Each institution can either define a specific cut-of-date or a "moving wall".

A recently added criteria is the language of the titles, as determined by the group identifier of the ISBN. For example this allows the library to only consider titles in their local language, which may be procured faster than foreign literature.

4.2 Web interface for subject librarians

Figure 4: Web interface for subject librarians

Each subject librarian should be able to process their respective orders easily and to speedily make the decision between a purchase or the continuation of the ILL order. Figure 4 shows the web interface for subject librarians. Requests can be exported via email or CSV-file or forwarded to the ILL system. Librarians are also able to check back with the patrons, if they have further questions.

In addition, various option for personalization exist, e.g. for assigning substitute librarians, changing notification options, email addresses, etc.

4.3 Tracking Module

Depending on its configuration, EVA changes the way patrons perceive the ordering of non-local material. In that case it is highly important to keep the patrons informed about the current status of hi/her request.

Therefore a tracking module was developed which is integrated in the patron's ILL account.

5. Current status and first experiences

On September 30th, 2011 EVA went into production. As of May 2012, 15 libraries use this system, e.g. the university libraries of Duisburg-Essen and Bielefeld, or the libraries of the universities of applied science of Münster or Aachen.

Approximately 30% of ILL requests meet the critera and get routed into the EVA module. Obviously this rate is highly dependent on the selected value for the minimum date of publication, e.g. one institution selected a minimum year of 1982 which led to 64% conversion rate, another institution selected 2009 and got a figure of 17%.

Currently further evaluations are undertaken at the participation of the participating libraries, in order to examine the influences on the purchasing process as a whole. The results will be included in the oral presentation of this paper.

Author profiles

- Dr. Ania López (MA LIS) is a subject librarian at the university library of Duisburg-Essen and also responsible for several IT-related projects (OPAC-development, library portal, journal catalogue)
- Peter Mayr (MA LIS) is an administrator for the ILL-system at the North Rhine-Westphalian library consortium (hbz) in Cologne.