

More Face time!

Less time on the shelf, more time in patron's hands

Prepared by Gerri Moeller

At the July 2009 AAC meeting, OWLSnet librarians expressed interest in finding ways to more effectively and efficiently put materials into patron's hands. Here are some possibilities:

Give precedence to local holds

If we enabled this option, Millennium would fill holds with locally-owned materials before those materials are used to fill non-local holds, regardless of when the holds were placed. Holds would no longer be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. The speed at which holds are filled would become more a function of local library collections. Patrons of libraries with larger or stronger collections might have their holds filled faster, while patrons of libraries with smaller or weaker collections would be likely to wait longer for their items.

PROs: This would be simple to implement. Holds would be more likely to be filled by items owned by the pickup location, which has been popular with staff and patrons of libraries that have enabled this option.

CONs: Libraries and consortia using this option have not noticed a decrease in transit volume – even libraries who really like this feature. If an item is set in transit to a non-owning library, and a hold is placed during transit at the owning library, the item turns around and goes back home instead of filling the item for the patron at the non-owning library. This increases transit time. Because the hold queue is no longer representative, the hold queue is suppressed from display in Millennium circ. Patrons and staff can no longer estimate when an item will arrive to fill a hold because holds aren't filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Make some items not "holdable," i.e., not eligible to have holds placed on them

Browsing collections of new items – Option 1

We could designate specific titles (by using best-seller lists, or High Demand Holds) to be local use only. No holds could be placed on these items.

PROs: This would reduce the number of holds processed and the amount of materials traveling in delivery. More items would stay at their owning library, increasing the number of items available for browsing by patrons.

CONs: This option requires ltypes to be assigned correctly and consistently. Failure to handle ltypes correctly would result in inconsistent availability for holds and confusion to patrons. Patrons wouldn't be able to place holds on these popular items. Larger libraries are likely to benefit more, as they are more likely to be able to purchase all of the titles.

Browsing collections of new items – Option 2

Libraries could put one copy of a title into a browsing collection, as long as they had another copy available for holds, and for lending. We could designate specific titles (by using best-seller lists, or High Demand Holds), we could designate a specific number of items per library (perhaps determined by the library's circulation or size or lender/borrower ratio) or we could leave it to individual library's discretion how many items can be in the browsing collection. No holds could be placed on these items.

PROs: This would reduce the number of holds processed and the amount of materials traveling in delivery. More items would stay at their owning library, increasing the number of items available for browsing by patrons.

CONs: This option requires Itypes to be assigned correctly and consistently. Failure to handle Itypes correctly would result in inconsistent availability for holds and confusion to patrons. Patrons wouldn't be able to place holds on these popular items. Larger libraries would benefit more, as they are more likely to have the dollars to buy multiple copies.

Browsing collections of specific types of items (Itypes or Material Types)

It is possible to make some Itypes ineligible to have holds placed on them, such as videos. These items would only be available to patrons who retrieve them from the shelves.

PROs: This would reduce the number of holds processed and the amount of materials traveling in delivery. More items would stay at their owning library, increasing the number of items available for browsing by patrons.

CONs: This option requires Itypes to be assigned correctly and consistently. Failure to handle Itypes correctly would result in inconsistent availability for holds and confusion to patrons. Patrons wouldn't be able to place holds on these types of items.

Make some items local pickup only

We could make some titles (either from a best seller list or from High Demand Holds) local holds only. We would need to agree on the titles, and all items attached to those titles would be local pickup only.

PROs: This would reduce the number of holds processed and the amount of materials traveling in delivery. Library's items would go only to their patrons or to patrons willing to travel to their library. Patrons could still place holds on items owned by their library.

CONs: This option would be complicated to administer effectively. It would work by forcing item holds on the titles chosen (by putting information into the volume field.) Patrons would have to pick the specific item they wished to place a hold on. The location code label could read something like, "Must pick up at Suring Area Library."

It depends upon Itypes being assigned correctly and consistently. Failure to handle Itypes correctly would result in inconsistent availability for holds and confusion to patrons and staff.

Shorten the time on the holdshelf

Currently, items spend 8 days on the holdshelf (for libraries open 5 days a week or more.) We could agree to reduce this time, to get items into patron's hands faster.

PROs: Items would spend less time waiting on the hold shelf.

CONs: Items might spend more time in transit. Patrons might be more likely to miss the pickup window, and place the hold again. Wouldn't work for the patrons who visit the library once a week. Wouldn't work well for libraries that mail hold pickup notices.