# The usage of ILLiad and *Get It Now* at a US medium-sized academic library over a three-year period

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – As medium-sized academic libraries' budgets continue to shrink or cannot compete with inflation rates, document delivery options like ILLiad and unmediated *Get It Now* can play a prominent role in providing content lost due to the inevitable cancellation of serial subscriptions. This paper aims to evaluate the impact of using these two options in a US university.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper examines the usage of these two services for the three fiscal years following the implementation of *Get It Now* at Bradley University.

**Findings** – Questions addressed are as follows. How have they been used over the three-year time period? Which user status group has been using them, undergraduates, graduate students or faculty members? Which departments on campus have been using them the most?

**Originality/value** – This study is the first to look at the usage of *Get It Now* and ILLiad together over multiple years.

**Keywords** Document delivery, Electronic journals, Copyright Clearance Center, *Get It Now*, ILLiad, Pay-per-view articles

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Bradley University's Cullom-Davis Library finally experienced something that many other academic libraries had been dealing with for years, budget problems which resulted in the cancellation of approximately 33 per cent of the library's materials budget; the majority of which was from its serials budget in both paper and electronic formats. Toward the beginning of this cancellation process, several Bradley librarians attended a virtual demonstration of Copyright Clearance Center's *Get It Now* electronic article delivery service (Copyright Clearance Center, 2016). We felt this service would be a way of supplementing our serials subscriptions and the more traditional interlibrary loan (ILL) service, Interlibrary Loan Internet Accessible Database (ILLiad). Thus, we began using their unmediated service in July 2012. It has proved very popular with Bradley students and faculty, especially after Copyright Clearance Center added more publishers to the service. We were curious to find out if there was any effect of the *Get It Now* service on the usage of ILLiad. We also wanted to know which user group (faculty, undergraduates or graduates) and which departments were using each of these services, and if there was a difference between *Get It Now* and ILLiad with regard to both user groups and department.

## The environment

Bradley University is a medium-sized academic institution with approximately 5,400 FTE (Bradley University, 2015). The majority of the students are undergraduates, with the largest populations in the subject areas of engineering, business, education and health sciences, which includes nursing. The Colleges of Fine Arts and Liberal Arts also offer popular programs for undergraduates. Until recently, the only advanced degrees offered were Master's Degrees in specific disciplines, with the majority in engineering, business and education. Within the past seven years, two new doctoral programs were created in physical therapy and educational administration. Nationally, the University is known as an engineering school and to a lesser degree for its College of Business. This may seem unusual for a medium-sized non-denominational private college, but the University was formed in 1897 as a school of horology (watch-making). This tradition plus the University's close proximity and ties to the Caterpillar Corporation, whose international headquarters are located in Peoria, Illinois, contributed to the strong engineering emphasis of the school.

Cullom-Davis Library is an integral part of the University community. It serves student needs with numerous multidisciplinary and subject-specific databases and a substantial number of electronic journals for a library of its size. We also serve as the prime study space and meeting rooms on a campus lacking in these types of spaces in other buildings. The majority of monograph purchases are in a physical format (rather than online/electronic) and are mostly books or DVDs. Overall, the budgets have remained the same

for about 15 years with endowments supplementing the purchase of materials in some areas. Despite the lack of budgetary growth, the library has increased its access to electronic journals and databases due to its participation in the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) and by some generous e-journal package pricing from publishers.

Since 2010, numerous new degree programs have been added to the curriculum of the University which include the doctoral programs in Physical Therapy and Educational Administration. During this same time, only one established degree was dropped. In a perfect world, the library would have received an increase in its serials and monograph budgets for each of these new subject areas to develop the collections. However, in reality, we did not receive new money to provide materials to any of these new programs. This meant that the well-established degrees already in place experienced cuts in monograph allotments. Also, with a couple of exceptions, no new journal subscriptions were ordered. As a result, our document delivery requests increased significantly, particularly in the area of Physical Therapy. Although, we have a Nursing program, there is not much subject overlap between these two disciplines, so the journals subscribed to for Nursing do not include the materials needed by Physical Therapy students. The Educational Administration degree did not affect usage of document delivery as much because many general education journals deal with leadership subjects.

In Illinois, Bradley is a relatively small fish in a big pond. Within a three-hour drive, there are numerous large universities, Illinois State University (20,000 FTE), the University of Illinois at Urbana (44,000 FTE), Western Illinois University (12,000 FTE), Northern Illinois University (14,000 FTE) and DePaul University (23,000 FTE). Therefore, via CARLI and a statewide delivery service, we obtain ILL returnable materials very quickly. Also, within in a three-hour drive there are numerous small private colleges and community colleges. This means that we lend much material on interlibrary loan as well. In fact, if both non-returnables and returnables are included, we are a net lender and have been so for many years. This is due in part to our geographic proximity but is also due to our experienced and determined Interlibrary Loan staff. In addition, library faculty obtains articles from publishers' websites when either ILLiad cannot fill a request or when an individual faculty or student makes a request directly to the librarian. In theory, all library faculty can do this, but as almost all of the requests come from the Nursing and Physical Therapy Departments, our Sciences/Health Sciences Librarian processes the vast majority.

## Survey of literature for both ILLiad and *Get It Now*

ILLiad is an automated software system designed by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and Virginia Tech University and licensed by OCLC (Kriz *et al.*, 1998). A study of the implementation of ILLiad was completed at Nicholls State University and centered on user satisfaction with the relatively new system (Tonn, 2003). Studies at this time also looked at user acceptance of electronic delivery through ILLiad (Kriz, 2000; Herrera, 2003). At the time of this article being written,

1,200 libraries worldwide use this system for their ILL services, including Bradley University (OCLC, 2016).

Since the implementation of automated ILL services like ILLiad, multiple research studies of the usage of these systems have been completed. A study at John Jay College of Criminal Justice saw a decrease in the usage of these services and determined that it was a consequence of the increase in electronic journals (Egan, 2005). Yue and Syring (2004) found a decrease after the implementation of the electronic Elsevier collection at the University of Nevada, Reno; however, the next school year had a large increase in ILL usage. A large ARL study in 2007 found a decrease in non-returnables between 1998 and 2004 attributed to the increase in electronic archiving of journals (Beaubien, 2007). Williams and Woolwine (2011), Tolppanen and Derr (2010) and Rheiner (2008) all found that the increase in electronic journal content had no effect on ILL usage. This increase at other institutions has been so drastic as to warrant work flow changes (Kappus, 2009). As the cost of journal packages increased, studies began to focus on whether or not cancellations of these packages would increase ILL usage. However, Calvert *et al.* (2014) found only a 2 per cent increase in ILL requests, and Knowlton *et al.*, 2015 found only an increase of 0.2 per cent.

*Get It Now* which was developed by California State University was released by the Copyright Clearance Center in 2011 (Brynko, 2011). *Get It Now* can be either unmediated or mediated and promises to deliver the article as a PDF by email within eight hours (D'Amato, 2014). It operates with the library's link resolver, which in the case of Bradley University library is SFX. However, it also works with Primo and the delivery solutions from (Ex Libris, 2011) (*Get It Now* Service Available Through Ex Libris, (2011). By the end of 2015, it was being used by nearly 300 libraries, and this number will only continue to grow because this service has been fully integrated with OCLC WorldShare Interlibrary Loan (Copyright Clearance Center, (2015) *Get It Now* service available through PRIMO. Because this is a relatively new service, very few studies have been completed on its specific implementation or its usage patterns. However, other Pay Per View (PPV) services are available from other companies for which some research has been done.

Sammonds, 2012 was able to tailor the journal collection to the specific needs of the library users by using a PPV service, but it required stakeholder buy in. Another study found that PPV service may help reduce the amount of money spent on journal packages; however, the potential to spend just as much in the PPV service is still there (Weicher and Zhang, 2012). Hosburgh, 2012 looked at multiple PPV services and found that the *Get It Now* platform offered more flexibility than the ones available from other companies like Wiley or Elsevier because tokens did not have to be bought nor was a deposit account necessary. The library at Furman University decided to implement the *Get It Now* service because the deposit account style PPV service was so popular, it required an increase in the work load of the staff (Nazar and Bowen, 2014).

Two very small studies on *Get It Now* exclusively have been completed, but both used very short timeframes and therefore contained extremely small population sizes. Firstly, at Kent

State University, researchers determined that initial savings in an unmediated service may be significant, but the researchers noted that the viability of this service for both publishers and libraries was unknown (Suhr, 2013). Secondly, Messner *et al.*, 2015 presented at Academic Library Association of Ohio (ALAO), on research that showed more usage by faculty and graduate students than undergraduates and by users in the "bio-health" areas such as psychology.

## Local *Get It Now* customization

*Get It Now* provides access to articles from a number of publishers. In those cases where the library has a subscription to a title, the access through *Get It Now* is turned off. Bradley subscribes to several publisher packages that were available via *Get It Now*. They are listed below:

- American Society of Civil Engineers Journal Collection.
- Cambridge Journals Online (over 250 full-text titles).
- Emerald Management 120 collection.
- IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) All Periodicals Package.
- PsycArticles (American Psychological Association).
- Sage Complete (over 660 full-text journals).
- Wiley Journal Collection via Carli (over 1,800 full-text journals).

Because our Wiley package through CARLI is so large, we elected to leave the entire Wiley collection turned off in *Get It Now*. In the beginning, we also did not allow access to the largest publisher, Elsevier ScienceDirect, because of a deposit account we had in place at the time. When the deposit account ran its course eight months later, we allowed *Get It Now* access to all Elsevier articles not subscribed. In addition to the overlapping packages listed above, some publisher content is also available in JSTOR packages. We subscribe to all the JSTOR Arts and Sciences packages so where there was overlap with *Get It Now*, access via that source is turned off.

## Methodology

Usage statistics were collected from ILLiad on a monthly basis from the web-based statistical feature provided by OCLC. *Get It Now* monthly usage statistics was received by email from Copyright Clearance Center. Data from the fiscal years 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 were compiled. We did this because we really did not know how the *Get It Now* service would be used, how much it would be used and if it would be used differently from ILLiad. We recorded the user status (faculty, staff, undergraduate or graduate) and departmental affiliation for each user. Usage statistics for each user group and department plus the most requested journals were determined for both services.

## Results

The first fiscal year we turned on the *Get It Now* service we did not allow access to the largest publisher, Elsevier Science/Direct which affected our totals significantly for 2012-13 (Figure 1). Traditional document delivery via ILLiad (6,481 requests) was used significantly more than the newly added *Get It Now* service (2,014 requests).

**Figure 1** Total ILLiad and *Get It Now* requests over three fiscal years
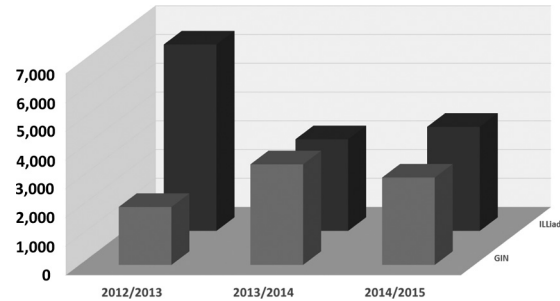


In 2013-14, a significant decrease in the number of ILLiad requests occurred. During 2013-2014, all publishers available in *Get It Now* were turned on, plus the service was working smoothly. The end result was that the total requests via *Get It Now* (3,498) were slightly higher than those via ILLiad (3,185). These results point to a correlation that ILLiad usage decreased after the full set up of *Get It Now*. For 2014-15, more requests were filled via ILLiad (3,618) than via *Get It Now* (3,038). However, this can be explained by the fact that we had difficulties with *Get It Now* for several months in the later part of 2014. Users reported that the service "timed out", closing out the website before the article request could be finalized. This definitely caused a decrease in the usage of *Get It Now* during those few months and skewed the numbers somewhat. However, the overall trend for ILLiad usage has been downward since we implemented *Get It Now*.

The heaviest user group of ILLiad over the course of the three fiscal years was undergraduate students with 51 per cent of all requests (Figure 2). This result is understandable because 83 per cent of our student population consisted of undergraduates. However, with a closer examination of the data it is obvious that individuals who are either graduate students or faculty use this service more heavily than individual undergraduates.

The average use per undergraduate FTE was only 0.42/student. However, graduate students were using the service more often per FTE at 1.19 per student while faculty members were the heaviest users at 1.66 per FTE. From year to year, these numbers stayed very consistent. Undergraduates

**Figure 2** ILLiad usage by user status over the three fiscal years in percentages
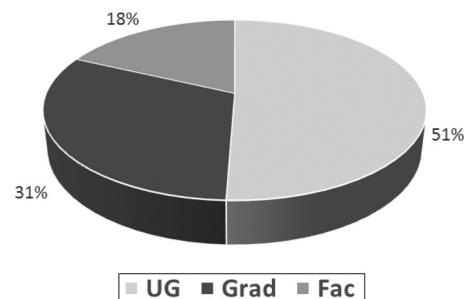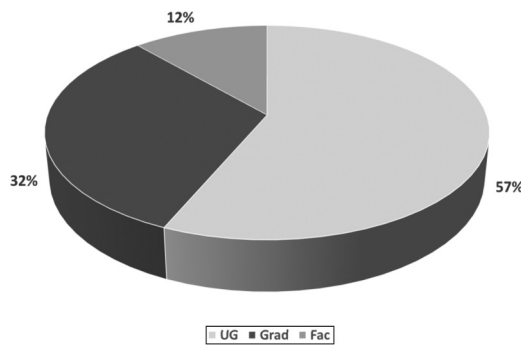


**Notes:** UG = undergraduate; Grad = graduate student; Fac = faculty

requested more articles overall, while graduate students and faculty members ordered more per FTE.

These percentages were slightly different for the *Get It Now* service (Figure 3). Once again, undergraduate students continued to be the heaviest users in total, with graduate students and faculty using it in similar percentages to the ILLiad service.

A possible explanation for the additional 6 per cent for undergraduates could be attributed to usability. *Get It Now* appears as an option at the point of accessing the article, while ILLiad needs additional steps via our SFX document delivery process. When we looked at average use per user status, the amount was 0.39 requests per undergraduate FTE for *Get It Now*. The graduate student and faculty member groups tied with 0.97 requests per FTE. Although, the percentages are different, the end result is the same with undergraduates

**Figure 3** *Get It Now* usage by user status over the three fiscal years in percentages



**Notes:** UG = undergraduate; Grad = graduate student; Fac = faculty
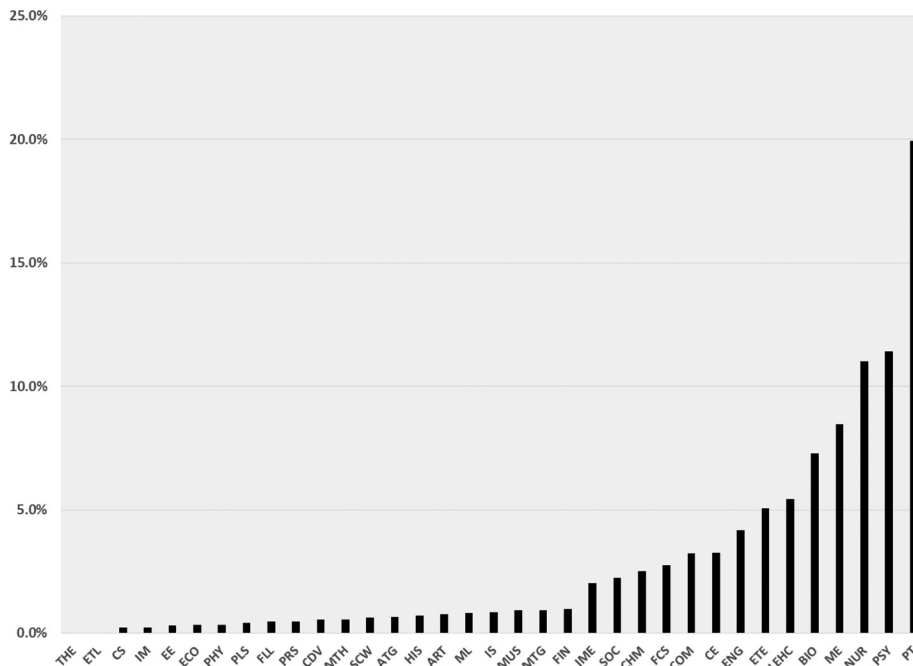
requesting more articles overall while graduate students and faculty members ordered more per FTE.

We were also curious as to which academic departments on campus were using the two services the most. Based upon observation by interlibrary loan staff and subject librarians, we believed that the health sciences (the Nursing and Physical Therapy departments) would be the heaviest users of the service, and for the most part we were correct.

The data indicated that the Physical Therapy (PT) department, one of our doctoral-granting programs which was added with no budget increase, was the heaviest user of the ILLiad service with 19.9 per cent of all ILLiad requests (Figure 4). The other health sciences department Nursing (NUR) showed up third on the chart with 11.4 per cent and almost tied with Psychology. Combined Physical Therapy and Nursing accounted for approximately 40 per cent of all ILLiad requests. The Department of Psychology often appears on our lists of heaviest serials users despite the fact that it is an undergraduate granting program only. We found that their curriculum encourages library research more than other departments in the College of Liberal Arts. The Department of Communication is the only other non-graduate degree granting department in the top ten of usage on this chart.

With regard to departmental use of the *Get It Now* service, we expected similar results. The Physical Therapy and Nursing departments would be among the heaviest users with other graduate degree granting departments using it heavily as well and this proved to be true. The list of the departments which requested the most *Get It Now* articles was very similar to those via ILLiad (Figure 5). The departments with the most requests via the unmediated *Get It Now* service were the Physical Therapy (26.8 per cent) and Nursing (19.1 per cent) departments. Combined, they accounted for about 46 per

**Figure 4** ILLiad requests by department over the three fiscal years

**Figure 5** *Get It Now* requests by department over the three fiscal years
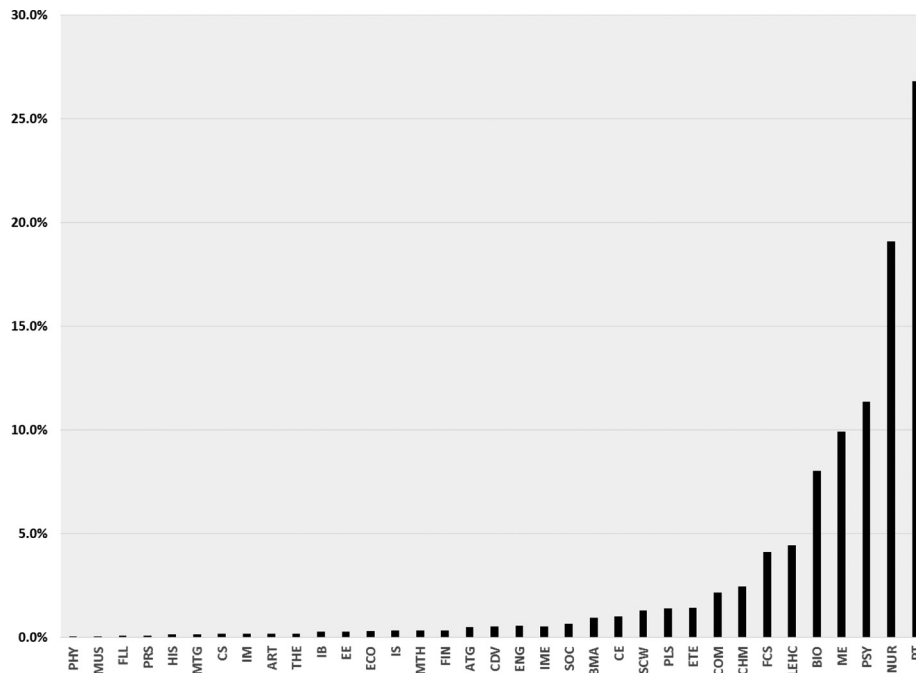


cent of all *Get It Now* requests. Once again, the Psychology and Communication departments were the only two non-graduate degree granting programs in the top ten.

In addition to determining our heaviest users by department, we wanted to determine which individuals were using these services the most. Are the same people on both lists? Are the heaviest users, faculty members, graduate students or undergraduates? There were surprises on this list. First, a sociology professor was the heaviest user of ILLiad with 88 requests over three years (Table I). Also, an undergraduate English major was the eighth heaviest user of the service.

Similar to the results above, the Physical Therapy department had three representatives in the top 11, along with the College of Engineering. The Biology department had two faculty members listed.

There were fewer surprises among our heaviest users of the *Get It Now* service. As with ILLiad above, there were two members of the Biology department faculty on the list (Table II).

The list was dominated by Physical Therapy graduate students and one Physical Therapy faculty member. The Chemistry department which barely made the top ten among the heaviest departmental users included two heavy users.

## Discussion

*Get It Now* has been a well-used service since its implementation in 2012. The requests increased as the number of publishers increased, and it appears that its use resulted in a reduction in requests through ILLiad. The sum of requests between both services decreased between the first and second year, but the sums for the second and third year are approximately the same. The department that uses both services the most is Physical Therapy for which the library did not receive an increase in budget when the program was

**Table I** Heaviest individual users by both status and department of ILLiad over three fiscal years

| Status | Department | Requests |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty | Sociology | 88 |
| Graduate student | Mechanical Engineering | 84 |
| Faculty | Biology | 82 |
| Graduate student | Physical Therapy | 82 |
| Graduate student | Physical Therapy | 81 |
| Graduate student | Leadership in Education | 72 |
| Faculty | Biology | 63 |
| Undergraduate | English | 62 |
| Graduate student | Mechanical Engineering | 60 |
| Faculty | Civil Engineering | 51 |
| Graduate student | Physical Therapy | 51 |

**Table II** Heaviest individual users by both status and department of *Get It Now* over three fiscal years

| Status | Department | Requests |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty | Biology | 94 |
| Graduate student | Physical Therapy | 84 |
| Faculty | Physical Therapy | 79 |
| Graduate student | Mechanical Engineering | 64 |
| Graduate student | Physical Therapy | 62 |
| Graduate student | Mechanical Engineering | 61 |
| Faculty | Physical Therapy | 55 |
| Faculty | Chemistry | 49 |
| Graduate student | Physical Therapy | 48 |
| Undergraduate | Chemistry | 46 |
| Graduate Student | Physical Therapy | 45 |

implemented. The other heavy users are for the most part from the departments with graduate degrees, and the individuals who request the most articles are typically faculty or graduate students.

Unlike Kriz, 2000 and Tonn, 2003 who found that the highest user groups by total number of requests were graduate students and faculty, at Bradley University undergraduates were the largest in both ILLiad and *Get It Now*. However, individual undergraduates use both services much less than individuals who are either faculty or graduate students. The reason why many undergraduates do not use document delivery services is unknown. According to Herrera (2003), undergraduates are apt to use more readily available materials. However, a 2007 study which surveyed this user group suggested that they did not use interlibrary loan because they did not know about it or how to use it, and not because they did not want to wait the longer time period (Frank and Bothmann, 2007). Undergraduates at Bradley University appear to be more apt to use *Get It Now* than ILLiad, which supports the idea that they do not want to wait for their materials.

## Conclusion

With a decreasing budget, Bradley University, like many other medium-sized academic institutions, must look to alternative routes to fill the requests for journal articles. Both *Get It Now* and the traditional document delivery service, ILLiad, are heavily used and seem to be meeting the needs of the faculty, staff and students.

Indeed, *Get It Now* proved to be too popular at an average article cost of $26.42, and as a result we had to greatly reduce the number of journals available through the unmediated portion of this service. Further studies are required to see the effect, if any, this change will have on the use of ILLiad. Also, the cancelled journal titles were not specifically looked at in this study, therefore, we do not know what proportion, if any, of the requests for either *Get It Now* or ILLiad were for these specific journal titles. A thorough monitoring of both of these services can be used to answer this question and as a continuing collection development tool.

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