

## From the Editor: Delivering Documents

This issue of *LLJ* features a commentary by my colleague, Meg Trauner, librarian at the Fuqua School of Business at Duke.<sup>1</sup> Meg's subject, approaches to document delivery, is a matter of concern and interest in the Duke libraries as it is elsewhere. She provides a thoughtful discussion of the issues involved in developing models for document delivery systems in university environments characterized by dispersed collections and autonomously administered and funded libraries. Initially, her paper was prepared for circulation among Duke librarians as we began working toward rationalization of on-campus document delivery systems in light of the completion of the campus backbone network, the increased availability of desktop e-mail, and nearly universal access to telefacsimile machines in university departments.

Before commenting on some of the issues raised by Meg's article and on her "client-based" model for document delivery, I will write a bit about the libraries at Duke and the means through which Duke faculty and students can locate and obtain information. I doubt that there is much that is unique or even unusual about document delivery possibilities at Duke. Indeed, the likelihood that similar options and opportunities are available at other universities, as well as to seekers of information outside the academic setting, should (I hope) lend these comments some value to law librarians in a variety of institutional settings.

In addition to Duke's main university library system, the William R. Perkins Library and its branches, university faculty and students are served by separately administered and funded professional school libraries for law, business, and medicine. All Duke libraries share the same automated systems: currently Innopac is used for serials and acquisitions; for the public catalog, circulation, and local editing of records, the libraries use a locally developed system that is shared as well by the libraries at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University in Raleigh. Terminals in libraries on each campus provide access to records of holdings at all three campuses. By mid-1993, the libraries of the three universities (which cooperate as the Triangle Research Libraries Network, or *TRLN*) should all have switched to a new public catalog and circulation system supplied by Data Research Associates (*DRA*). Plans call

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1. Meg Trauner, *Commentary: Client-Based Document Delivery Services*, 85 *LAW LIBR. J.* 409 (1993).

for an eventual switchover to DRA for all modules in an integrated system.

The Duke libraries, as well as most other buildings on campus, are linked by the university backbone network, known locally as DukeNet. The extension of the backbone has spurred the installation of local area networks throughout campus buildings and departments, particularly in the professional schools, which have been less dependent on central funding for automating their operations than have the academic departments. The law school, for example, currently links all faculty, librarians, secretaries, and some administrative offices in one network; thirty-three computer-equipped library carrels are linked in a separate student network administered by the library. With the completion in 1994 of the next phase of a building expansion program, all administrative offices should be added to the faculty network and the student network will be expanded significantly. The School of Business and the Medical Center have similar capabilities.

Among the benefits of Duke's commitment to extensive networking has been improved direct access to the information available in the local libraries (the online catalog is accessible and searchable via DukeNet, as are the acquisitions and serials data in Innopac), and to information in remote databases and other sources accessed through the Internet. The ready availability of a variety of sources of networked information to anyone with a connected terminal calls into question the viability of the document delivery models described in Meg Trauner's article, regardless of their relative desirability.

Under Meg's client-based model, the faculty and students of a university business school or law school take their information requests to the specific library designated to meet their needs as clients, rather than going directly to other libraries or information sources. From a librarian's perspective, the client-centered approach is attractive, particularly for professional school libraries established primarily to cater to the specialized needs of a limited clientele. The client-centered model guarantees a continued essential role for skilled librarians capable of guiding their clients through the maze of alternative sources of information and assisting them in locating what they need. Meg's article gives a number of reasons why the client-based model makes sense for researchers as well. In the end, it should improve the chances that a search for information will be conducted both effectively and efficiently.

One wonders, however, how much a library can control or even influence how its clients seek information in a networked environment, particularly when the network increasingly allows them not only to find out what information is available, but to order its delivery as well?

Consider the range of options available even now to users of the Duke law school faculty network. After logging on, a member of the Duke law faculty can select a "Library Services" submenu from the main network menu. Choosing "Library Services" allows the user to search the Duke online catalog for local holdings and circulation status information, Innopac for on-order and serials records, LEXIS or WESTLAW, OCLC FirstSearch, CARL Uncover2, the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals* through RLG CitaDel, and the locally mounted *Current Index to Legal Periodicals*. All services are accessed via the campus network either from a local host or from a remote source via DukeNet. And nearly all provide not only access to information, but the means to order its delivery without using the library as an intermediary. Duke law professors continue to rely on the law library staff to obtain copies of documents located through these resources or any other means. It is clear, however, that members of our faculty *need* to rely on the library to obtain information for them much less frequently than they have in the past, regardless of where that information is held.

If, for example, they wish to obtain a copy of an article located in another Duke library, the Duke University Document Delivery Service allows them directly to request telefacsimile or campus mail delivery of copies of articles from most libraries on campus.

Beyond the local libraries (although still not nearly fully exploited by law faculty or student users) is the universe of full-text information available on LEXIS/NEXIS and WESTLAW/DIALOG. The Internet connection to these services gives all Duke law faculty direct and simultaneous desktop access for searching, and the network provides the ability to produce hard copy at a nearby local printer. In an article is not found in one of these sources, the CARL Uncover2 service provides a table of contents service for over 10,000 journal titles and indexing back to 1988, as well as direct telefacsimile delivery of copies of the articles listed. If faculty members can locate articles from journals not held in the law library, should they have to go through the library to obtain copies when Uncover2 offers delivery to the nearest fax machine within twenty-four hours?

Other networked tools now available to our faculty (OCLC FirstSearch, the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*) either have developed or are developing integrated document delivery services as well. Nationally, the number of competing and specialized document delivery services continues to grow.<sup>2</sup>

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2. For descriptions and fees of many currently available services, see Mounir Khalil, *Document Delivery: A Better Option?*, LIBR. J., Feb. 1, 1993, at 43.

With these few tools already available locally and the enormous, largely unexplored sources of information available directly through the Internet, it may be that the time has passed for librarians to create models for services like document delivery. Choices among alternative sources of information will be made increasingly by the information users themselves, who will have their own bases for calculating values of efficiency and effectiveness. In response, some libraries have begun already to allocate significant funding to support user-based document delivery systems.<sup>3</sup>

Ten years ago, I published in *LLJ* an article speculating on the future roles of law librarians in the light of the technology emerging at that time.<sup>4</sup> Among the many changes in the information environment since then have been the expansion of networks, the continued growth in the number of full-text databases,<sup>5</sup> and, most recently, the spreading applications of imaging technology. A major effect of these trends has been to improve the abilities of end users to search for, access, and obtain journal articles and other documents directly. Much of the mystique of online searching has disappeared, and along with it, some of the end user's need to rely on the librarian as intermediary either for locating materials or for obtaining them.

If anything, the information environment in law, as elsewhere, has grown more complex, in part because of the new array of document delivery services. This complexity argues as strongly now as it did in 1983 for the continued importance of the librarian's role. The question, however, is whether researchers who can easily search for and obtain some information on their own really care whether a librarian can perform these activities more effectively or efficiently.

The existing paradigms for library services in the electronic era are changing, and it will be a major challenge for law librarians, as well as their colleagues in other specialties, to develop new paradigms that describe the actual requirements of researchers and the roles of librarians in meeting those requirements.

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3. At Texas Christian University, for example, \$100,000 was allocated in FY 1993-94 to fund electronic document delivery services for faculty and graduate students. See F.M. Heath, *User Initiated Document Delivery* (Feb. 1993) (handout distributed at the Fourth I.T. Littleton Seminar, Raleigh, North Carolina, Feb. 26, 1993). At Duke, we have determined that it is unreasonable to impose the library's role as a mediator for either the campus document delivery service or Uncover2. We pay the charges for faculty who choose to order non-law materials directly through either source.

4. Richard A. Danner, *Reference Theory and the Future of Legal Reference Service*, 76 *LAW LIBR. J.* 217 (1983).

5. For an analysis of the reasons for this development, see Carol Tenopir, *Electronic Access to Periodicals*, *LIBR. J.*, Mar. 1, 1993, at 54.