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Document Delivery and Interlibrary Loan in INAF Libraries: A Proposal

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Abstract. Due to the continuing increase in the cost of astronomical publications, new solutions are being sought for effective acquisition and collection development policies, including regulation of Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery (DD) services. The current problem that exists in Italian Astronomical Observatory Libraries is described along with a drafted proposal for the regulation of ILL/DD services.

1. Introduction

In Italy, research in astronomy is carried out by three different institutions: Universities, CNR (National Research Council) and astronomical observatories. Of these, only the observatories are devoted exclusively to astronomical research.

Until last year, there was no official library policy common to all the observatories because each observatory was considered an independent research institution. Nevertheless, Italian Astronomical Librarians have always considered cooperation fundamental for their work. They have been networking since 1993, when they created the metaOPAC CUBAI for books, and have started other projects such as the Italian Astronomy Serial Catalogue.

Since 2002, the 12 Italian observatories merged into INAF (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica / National Institute of Astrophysics) and, as a result, Observatory librarians are trying to cope with this change and at the same time improve services to their respective institutions.

2. Observatory collections

Although INAF libraries have a rich collection of about 3700 journal titles (that begin in 1800 and continue through the twenty-first century) access to them is limited. In addition, the book collection is comprised of approximately 100,000 modern scientific books. There is also a valuable collection of 50,000 antique

Astronomical Observatories	12
Astronomers	300
Technical - Administrative staff (including librarians)	480
Library staff	30

Table 1. Some data about INAF

books and pamphlets. These materials can be primarily found in the Milano, Bologna, Napoli and Palermo libraries.

The observatory collections can be consulted in different ways:

- Most INAF Libraries (10) put the list of current serials and/or some kind of catalogue on web pages.

- Some of them (eight libraries) put their complete serial collection on ACNP (Archivio Collettivo Nazionale dei Periodici, Italian National Serial Catalogue) and from this has derived the Italian Astronomy Serial Catalogue.

- The remaining libraries do not have put their serial collection on the web.

A considerable part of the monograph collection (10 of 12 libraries) is accessible from the metaOPAC CUBAI (Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Astronomiche Italiane/Unified Catalogue of Italian Observatory Libraries). Since 1993, the CUBAI provides access to the book collections from a common HTML interface.

3. The present situation of ILL/DD services

ILL/DD services between INAF libraries, although informal and voluntary, remain effective and reliable.

There are two types of requests:

- internal, i.e. coming from other INAF observatories.

- external, i.e. coming from other research institution (Universities, CNR, etc.).

The number of requests depends on whether an observatory is part of MetaOPAC or Unified Catalogue (not necessarily astronomical).

Document transmission. Actually, the most common communication channel between INAF Libraries is the mailing list ASTROBIB. When exchanging documents with other libraries, every institution follows its own strategy. Only one of twelve libraries has recently entered into a national project for document delivery, i.e. NILDE (Network Inter Library Document Exchange). This project, promoted by C.N.R., allows one to conduct all its Document Delivery activities online. INAF libraries transmit most of their documents by means of fax and postal delivery, rarely electronically, even though this type of transmission is becoming more common.

Costs. There are no specific rules for payment. Every library adopts its own rules. Until now, there have been no charges for DD services between the observatories.

4. The proposal

It is clear that Italian astronomical research institutes need a real library system. Hopefully, one result of the restructuring of our astronomical observatories will also produce new organizational results for the libraries as well.

Most of INAF library budgets are spent on journal subscriptions. Moreover, prices continue to rise while budgets remain the same or less. As a result, the trend is to buy fewer books and sometimes to order fewer journal subscriptions. The 2001 cost for journal subscriptions in INAF libraries was ca. Euro 555.000,00, while the expenditure for monographs was about Euro 70.000,00, ca. 10%-15% of the budget, with an outlay for each observatory of about Euro 6.000,00. The average number of monographs purchased by each INAF library was ca. 80 (presuming an average price of ca. Euro 65). If our assumptions are correct (see Table 2), it is evident that only a very small percentage of relevant monographs are purchased. A solution to this problem could be to set up a

Professional and popular astronomy books	ca. 200-250
Relevant Physics/Mathematics/Computer Science/Engineering/ Miscellaneous Books	ca. 150-200
Total amount of relevant books	ca. 350-450
Monographs purchased by each INAF Library	ca. 90
Percentage of relevant monographs purchased by each INAF Library	20%-25%

Table 2. Data about monographs of interest for astronomical libraries on a year basis. These numbers are estimated from 2001 catalogues of ASP, Cambridge University Press, Kluwer, Springer plus an elaboration based on average number of monographs purchased yearly by ESO

definite acquisition and collection development policies, that would include an effective regulation of ILL/DD services. While many approaches to this topic exist, we have adapted a model inspired by the impressive NAILDD (North American Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery Project) developed by the American Research Libraries.

5. Preliminary Steps and System Requirements

Preliminary steps to be determined:

- Which documents are admitted to loan
- Identification of users
- Reproduction and transmission types and times
- Costs
- Software

System Requirements:

- To search a variety of catalogues (local and remote)
- To check if the document is available locally or not
- To direct the request to a library or a commercial supplier
- To communicate with the supplier electronically

- To receive the requested item in a given time
- To track and register all the operations (including costs)

6. Goals and actions

- Phase I
 - Goals
 - * To make all the Observatory library catalogues available on the web (joining CUBAI for monographs and Astronomical ACNP for periodicals);
 - * To uniform ILL/DD requests by using a unique request form;
 - * To regulate ILL/DD services between INAF libraries;
 - Actions
 - * Set up a list of formal regulations for ILL/DD services;
 - * Local implementation of CUBAI and Astronomical ACNP masks;
 - * Local implementation of the INAF libraries request form (see after);
 - * Identifying and markup of items admitted to loan;
- Phase II
 - Goals
 - * To regulate ILL/DD Services between INAF libraries and other Italian libraries.
 - Actions
 - * Agreements with other institutions/libraries
- Phase III
 - Goals
 - * ILL/DD services between INAF libraries and other international research institutions.
 - Actions
 - * Assess feasibility of international agreements

References

- ACNP - <http://www.cib.unibo.it/cataloghi/infoACNP.html>
 Astronomical ACNP - <http://www.cib.unibo.it/biblioteche/mask/ASTRO.html>
 CUBAI - <http://www.arcetri.astro.it/BIBLIO/cubai-http/>
 NILDE - <http://nilde.bo.cnr.it/index.php>
 NAILDD - <http://www.arl.org./access/ naildd/naildd.shtml>