COURSE RESERVES, E-RESERVES AND SERVING THE REMOTE USER

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At the end of the last century, American academic libraries developed the concept of a special collection that could help to ensure the availability of high demand items. These collections were known as academic reserves, or more typically, just reserves. Reserve collections circulated these special "reserved" materials for a very short period, typically 2-4 hours for in-building use. Although this increased the availability of these items, it also created several other problems for both the library and for students.

The high turnover of these reserve materials made this a very labor-intensive process for libraries. The constant cycle of checking materials out, checking them back in and re-filing was time-consuming and actually led to a loss of control, since a particular item could be in any of a half dozen steps at any one time. The concentrated demand for these materials also created long lines, as hordes of students competed for the limited resources. This queuing negated the ready access that the system was intended to provide. The solution was to add extra copies to the reserve collec-

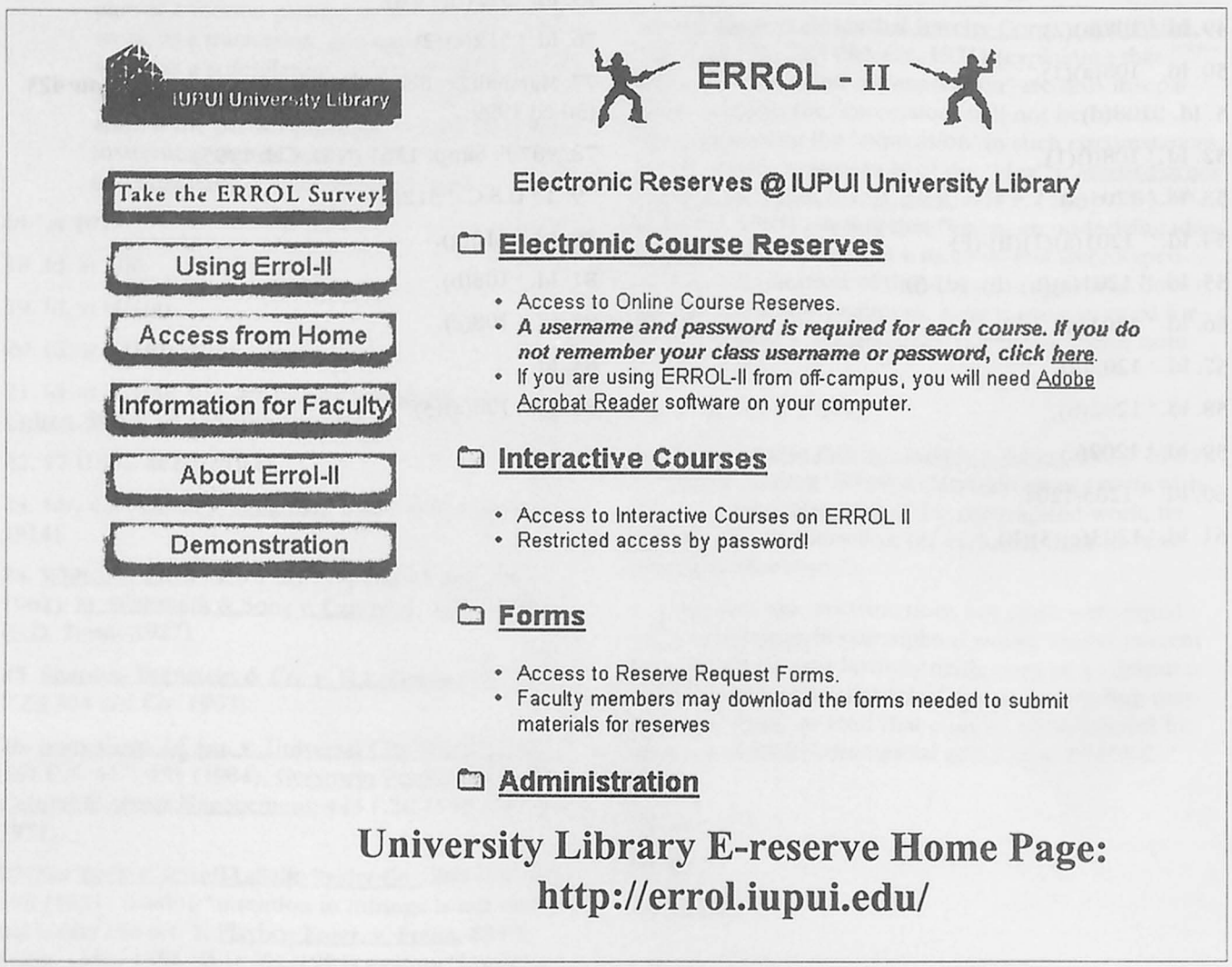


Figure #1: University Library E-reserve home page: http://errol.iupui.edu/

tion, which added to the staff's burden.

A full century later, many of these reserve processes have been automated, but the fundamental administration of most of these operations has barely changed. This is in spite of the fact that the volume of materials involved and the complexity of maintaining this type of system have increased exponentially.

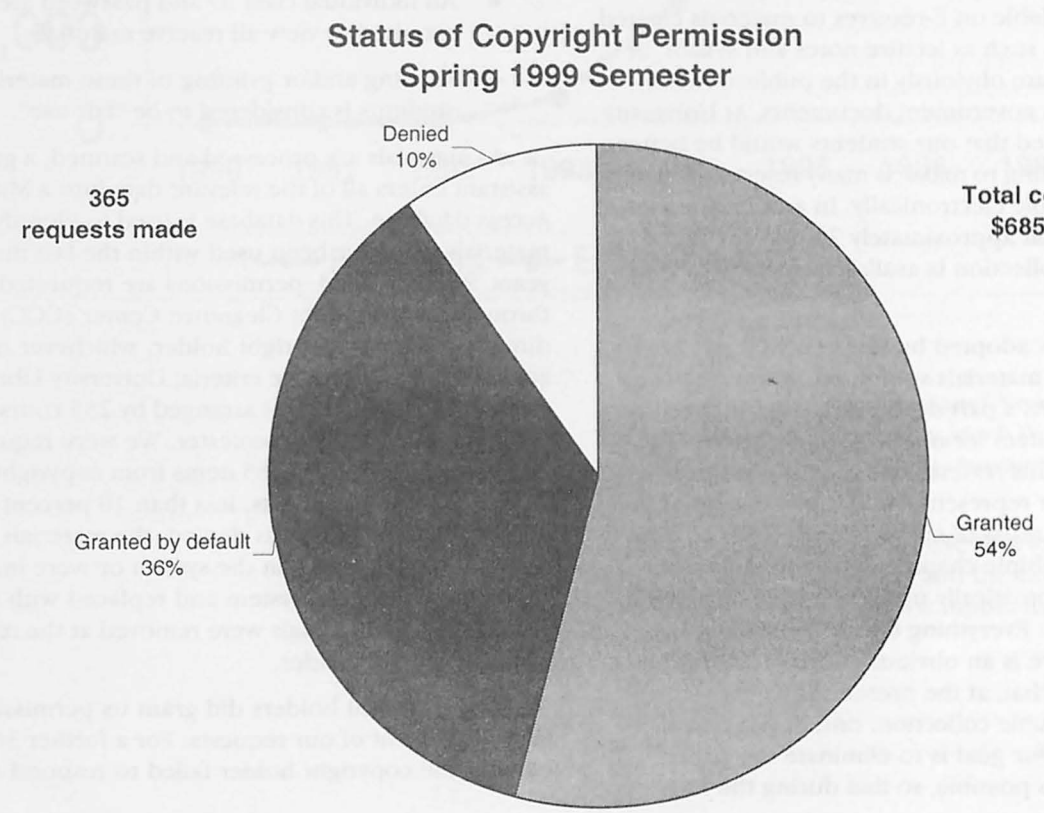
During the last decade, many libraries discovered that the solution might found through electronic access. Electronic reserves, commonly referred to as E-reserves, are the process where the course readings are converted into an electronic file format. These files are then made available over the Internet or campus network. Electronic access to high-demand materials has several benefits for both the library and its users.

The benefits for the users are most evident. First of all, both the library's hours and its location become irrelevant, since users can now access reserve materials at any time of the day or night. Multiple users can also access the same materials at the same time, doing away with the long lines of people at the circulation desk waiting for the material to become available.

University Library at IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis) is a classic example of a case where an E-reserve system makes sense. IUPUI is an urban commuter school which serves over 27,000 students in central Indiana. The vast majority of the students do not fit the traditional 18-year-old college freshman profile. On average, students at IUPUI are five to seven years older and are working at least part-time. Many are trying to juggle the responsibilities of work, school and family, and a large number commute an hour or more one-way to attend classes. In this type of environment, students do not have time to stand in line at the reserve desk, hoping that the one copy of the one item they must read before their next class session is available. With E-reserves, this is no longer an issue. After class is over, these students can go home, put their kids to bed or just spend some quality time with their families. Then, when their schedules permit, they can log on to the E-reserve system and review or print the relevant class readings.

The popularity of such a system is very easy to measure. Traditionally, paper-based reserves amounted to approximately one-third of University Library's total circulation, averaging between 40,000 and 50,000 reserve transactions each year. In the six years since University Library began offering E-reserves, use of the paper-based reserve materials has declined at a steady rate, to a figure less than half than was common at the start of the decade. Meanwhile, use of E-reserves has skyrocketed.

Figure #2: Comparison of Traditional & E-reserves Use at University Library



Despite the obvious success and popularity of this system, the transition from paper has not always been an easy one. In any E-reserve system, there are three major components which must be balanced: usability, labor, and copyright.

In order for an E-reserve system to work, the system must be easy for both users and library staff. In a commuter environment like IUPUI, it is imperative for the system to be intuitive for users, because it is not possible to provide hands-on training for over 27,000 remote students. The question of usability also arises when you consider the technology that is available to your users, both on campus and at home.

In 1993, University Library partnered with Xerox Corporation on the development of a web-based interface known as ***DocuWeb***, which was based on their established ***DocuTech*** Image Management System. ***DocuWeb*** uses standard Internet browsers and the Adobe Acrobat reader to locate, view, and print files in .pdf format. Five years later, after outgrowing the capabilities of that particular system, University Library chose ***Digital Curriculum***, another Xerox service, to upgrade its E-reserve system. On the surface ***Digital Curriculum*** looks very similar to ***DocuWeb***, but behind the scenes, it greatly enhanced the capabilities on the library staff side while simplifying the overall workflow.

Many libraries with extensive E-reserve operations limit materials on their system to items that do not present copyright complications. Typically this restricts the readings available on E-reserves to materials created by the instructor, such as lecture notes and syllabi, or to materials that are obviously in the public domain, such as most U.S. government documents. At University Library, we decided that our students would be better served by attempting to make as many reserve materials as possible available electronically. In a normal semester, this means that approximately 70 percent of our entire reserves collection is available electronically at any one time.

The workflow adopted by University Library is to process all of the materials submitted by the faculty for paper reserves. As a part of this process, a staff member reviews each item for our E-reserves system. The criteria used for this review are straightforward. Reserve item requests that represent a major percentage of the entire work, or consist of multiple parts from a larger work, such as multiple chapters from the same book, are excluded automatically until the copyright issues can be addressed. Everything else is considered fair game, unless there is an obvious copyright issue. This workflow means that, at the present time, we are still maintaining a double collection, one in paper and another online. Our goal is to eliminate the paper system as much as possible, so that during the 1999/2000 academic year, University Library will begin to drop the paper copies of as many of these reserve items as possible and move toward a totally paperless system.

Over a century ago, long before the advent of photocopiers and E-reserves, Mark Twain wrote, "there is one thing [that is] impossible for God, and that is to make sense out of any copyright law in existence."[1] To a great degree, he was right. The interpretation of copyright law can be very complicated and is best left to lawyers. For this reason, University Library chose to work closely with Dr. Kenneth D. Crews, J.D., Indiana University Copyright Management Center, to distill a small set of guidelines to help library staff deal with the copyright issues in a timely fashion.

Some critical aspects of our copyright policies are as follows:[2]

- The first time that a particular instructor uses a particular item for a particular class is considered "fair use" and the item can be mounted on an E-reserve system.
- The next time that same instructor uses that same item for that same class, the library is responsible for requesting permission from the copyright holder before that item can be mounted on an E-reserve system.
- All reserve materials are searchable by department, course number, and instructor only.
- An individual class ID and password are required to view all reserve materials.
- Viewing and/or printing of these materials by students is considered to be "fair use".

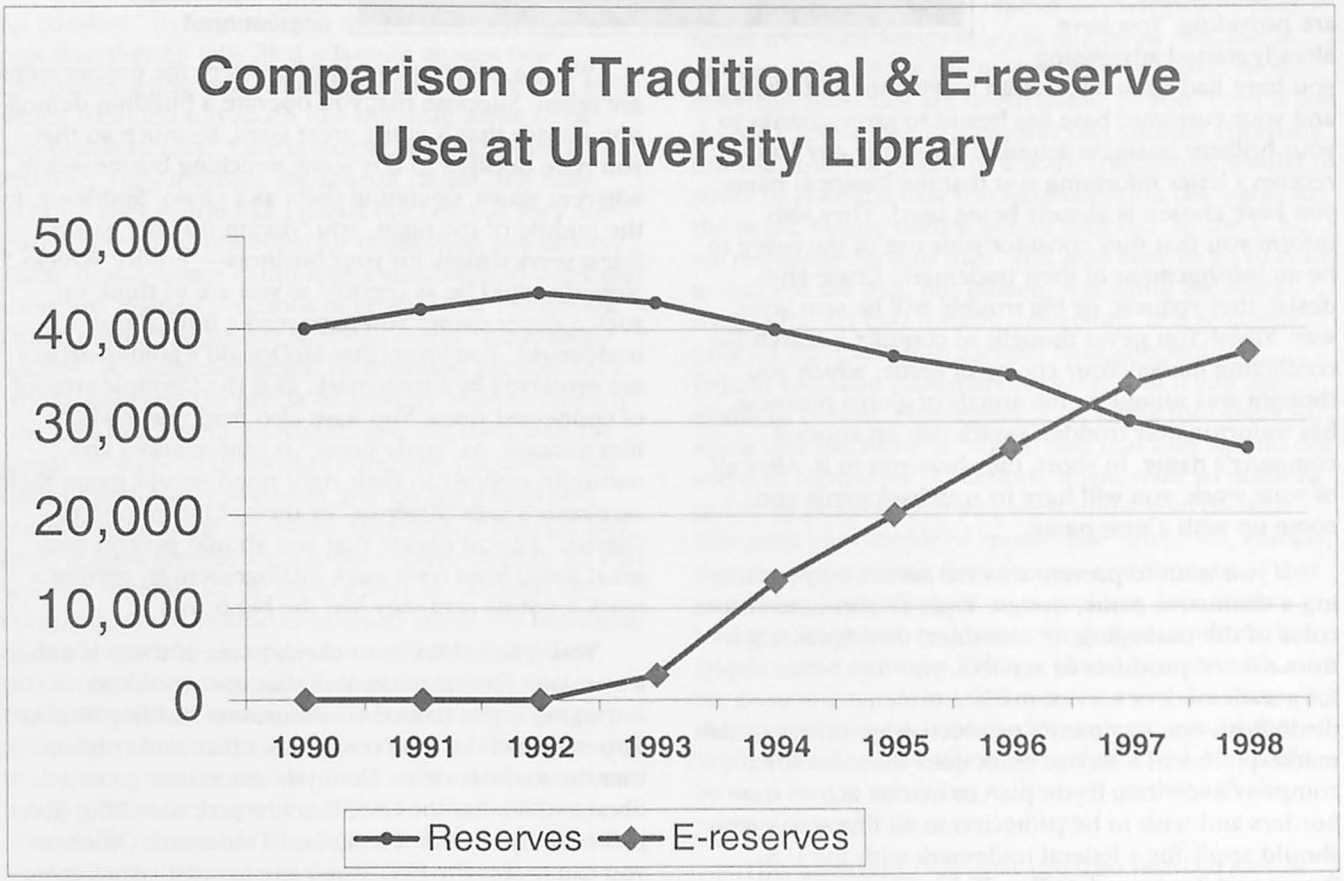
As materials are processed and scanned, a graduate assistant enters all of the relevant data into a Microsoft Access database. This database is used to identify materials that have been used within the last three years. When needed, permissions are requested through the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) or directly from the copyright holder, whichever is appropriate. Using these criteria, University Library mounted 920 documents arranged by 255 courses during the spring 1999 semester. We were required to request permission for 365 items from copyright holders. Of these requests, less than 10 percent were denied. If permission was denied, the materials were either never mounted on the system or were immediately pulled from the system and replaced with a flag stating that the materials were removed at the request of the copyright holder.

The copyright holders did grant us permission for over 54 percent of our requests. For a further 36 percent the copyright holder failed to respond to our

requests at all. In most cases, these articles were accepted as permission granted by default. For the spring 1999 semester, University Library paid $6,850 in royalties to the CCC and other copyright holders for these permission.

As these figures all too clearly show, there are some real costs associated with E-reserves that go far beyond the price of the equipment. However, these costs must be weighed against the convenience and service we are providing to our students. In the 1890s, our predecessors had to decide whether the programs they put in place were the right solutions for the times. Today, as we look past the end of a century and into the dawn of a new millennium, we have to make the same decision. Does the provision of E-reserves fit the needs of our students in today's society? At IUPUI, this answer is an overwhelming "Yes".

Figure #3: Status of Copyright Permission, Spring 1999 Semester.



NOTES:

1. "Mark Twain in Copyright Law," New York Times, December 25, 1881, quoted in *Mark Twain Speaks for Himself*, edited by Paul Fatout, Purdue University Press, 1978. pp. 132.

2. For the document on fair use developed jointly by the IUPUI University Library and the Copyright Management Center, see http://www.iupui.edu/~copyinfo/ereserves.html