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The digital article service at the State and University Library, Aarhus, Denmark

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to present a new service providing Danish citizens access to articles from printed journals delivered in a digital form.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper describes the interlibrary loan infrastructure between Danish libraries and the legal agreement between the copyright holders and the State and University Library.

Findings – The service already covers 82 per cent of the Danish population.

Originality/value – The digital article service is a rather unique service, especially regarding the delivery of articles from popular printed magazines in digital form to the patrons.

Keywords Denmark, Document delivery, Copyright, Delivery services, End-users, Licenses

Paper type Case study

Background

The State and University Library is one of two national libraries in Denmark and has three national obligations:

- 1 The National Library responsible for the legal deposit of Danish:
 - printed books and journals;
 - newspapers; and
 - audiovisual media and web-based materials.
- 2 The National Center for shared services to Danish Public Libraries.
- 3 The Main Library at the University of Aarhus.

As the National Library and a legal depository of printed materials, the State and University Library holds a large collection of printed journals, currently held on 25 km of shelving. In an expanding digital world, the library still holds more than 4,400 current printed titles and a total of more than 40,000 printed titles.

As a provider of national services to Danish libraries, public libraries and academic libraries, the State and University Library wants to make these collections available to our customers. For this purpose, the State and University Library has developed a service called the digital article service to deliver articles in digital form to all Danish libraries and their patrons.

Danish library infrastructure

In Denmark, all libraries, public and academic, have an obligation to upload their records to a national union

catalogue called DanBib. These records are available for search and request, not only for professional librarians but also for ordinary patrons.

The union catalogue DanBib can be accessed from two platforms:

- 1 netpunkt.dk – a tool for librarians; and
- 2 bibliotek.dk – a tool for patrons.

These platforms can be used for searching records and requesting items. The system also delivers online holding and status information and supports the distribution of requests between Danish libraries (Figure 1).

To support this workflow, the Agency of Culture manages a national service that takes care of the transportation of books, journals and other materials between Danish libraries. This means in practical terms that items requested at a library in one part of the country will be delivered for pickup at another library at the opposite end of the country within three days.

Digital article service

The digital article service is integrated with these two national platforms and works together with the Danish Article Index. This index contains about two million records with descriptive metadata from articles in Danish journals; 16,000 new records are added to the index every year.

When a patron is searching and requesting an article using one of these platforms, the metadata from Danish Article Index and the bibliographical record of the journal in question is connected.

The request is sent to the State and University Library using a special channel developed in cooperation between the Danish Library Centre (which manages the union catalogue and the national platforms) and the State and University Library. In a normal ILL transaction, only the borrowing

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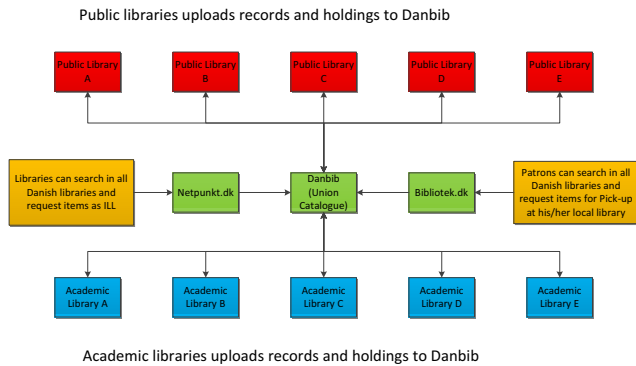
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Figure 1 The organization of Danish public and academic libraries



library knows the identity of the requesting patron. The lending library does not have this information. The reason for using this special channel for requesting is to make it easy for the patrons to use the service. They can use their identity at the local public library and not be asked to make a new account at the State and University Library (Figure 2).

When a patron searches and requests an article using the national platform, the State and University Library through the special channel receives data with the bibliographical content of the record, information about the patron and the library of the patron.

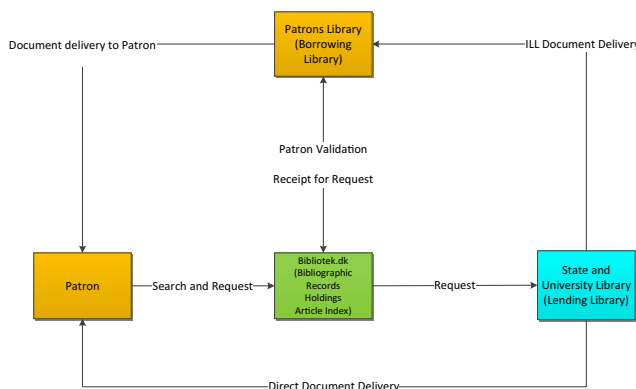
These data are stored on a server at the State and University Library along with the scanned article file.

If the same article should be requested again, the system will automatically find the already scanned article and within a few minutes deliver the article to the patron's mailbox.

The process for handling these requests is described briefly below:

- receive requests from local and national platforms;
- scan requested articles;
- deliver requested articles in digital form to libraries (they are allowed to forward to their patron in digital form) or to patrons directly;
- store scanned articles along with metadata describing the content of the article, author, title, volume, pages, etc. on a local server (E-archive); and
- recycle already scanned articles from the E-archive using automatic match between a new request and metadata from

Figure 2 A patron request using bibliotek.dk



a stored article. No manual resources are needed to meet the request which is fully automated.

Legal and business conditions for the service

The State and University has made an agreement with Copydan (Association of Danish Copyright holders) allowing the Library to:

- Scan requested articles from printed journals.
- Deliver requested articles in digital form directly to patrons. Libraries subscribing to the service are allowed to forward articles to their patrons in digital form.
- Store scanned articles along with metadata describing the content of the article, author, title, volume, pages, etc.
- Reuse already scanned articles using an automatic match between a new request and metadata from a stored article.
- The State and University Library has to pay Copydan a fee for each delivered article.
- The journals covered by the agreement are scientific publications as well as Danish popular magazines.

This agreement also allows the State and University Library to expand the number of journals included in the service. This means that almost all printed journals at the library are covered by the agreement.

There is one major exception, however. Titles that are published both in digital and printed form are not covered by this agreement and must not be distributed to patrons in a digital form but only in a traditional printed form. The State and University Library holdings of electronic journals are not a part of this agreement.

Because it is recognized that the best way to expose the service to patrons is to provide the necessary metadata efforts have been made to expand the number of articles indexed.

An additional agreement has been made between the State and University Library and the Danish Bibliographic Centre (DBC) who runs the Danish Article Index under a national agreement.

The State and University Library pays DBC to index a number of Danish popular magazines which are not covered by the national agreement. This agreement has led to an increase of 8 per cent in the number of articles indexed every year (Table I).

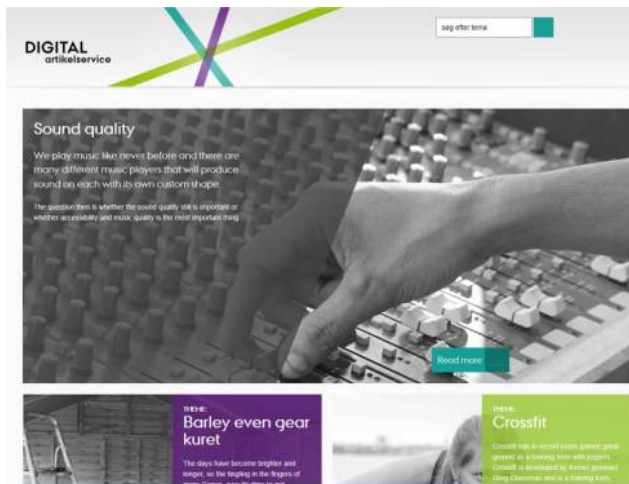
To put the numbers in perspective, it would be fair to mention that the total number of titles covered by the service exceeds 40,000 printed journals, only 200–300 of these journals are popular magazines. This means that popular magazines are taking more than their proportional part of the demand for articles.

A new Web site digitalartikelservice.dk (Figure 3) has been developed. At this Web site, we want to expose the service for the patrons. We want to market our service by implementing an editorial service, where the staff on public

Table I Numbers of articles requested

Articles delivered February 16–April 16 2015	
<i>Number of articles</i>	
Articles from scientific journals	20,499
Articles from popular magazines	2,134
Total number of articles delivered	22,633

Figure 3 Screenshot from digitalartikelservice.dk



and academic libraries can contribute to marketing the service by exposing links to articles and showing examples of articles in different subjects.

To cover some of the costs of running the service, public and academic libraries are offered a subscription to the service, giving their patrons access to direct digital delivery of articles.

At present, 70 public libraries have signed up to the service. These 70 libraries cover 4.5 million Danish citizens, representing 82 per cent of the Danish population.

Patrons from libraries, who do not have a subscription to the digital article service, can request articles for delivery as traditional ILL between the State and University Library and the patron's pickup library. These articles may only be picked up in a printed form.

Conclusion

When the State and University Library started to make plans for developing this service, the library was aware that the service would be rather unique.

Delivery of articles with a scientific content directly to the patrons has been done before, although never in the smart form, that has been developed for this service. But the idea of delivering articles from popular magazines in digital form to the general public is new.

The reception of digital article service by patrons and public libraries has so far exceeded all our expectations, and hopefully all Danish citizens in a short while will be covered by the service.

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