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The Amazon Price Grabber: A New Tool for Just in Time Acquisitions

Sherry Buchanan, *Portland State University*
Mike Flakus, *Portland State University*

The

OCLC ILLiad Newsletter

A special welcome to Harvard Business School's Baker Library, the 1,000th library worldwide to license the ILLiad software!!!

New Features Coming in Aeon 2.0

Atlas Systems is working with two early implementation partners, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas and the Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago, to develop the features that will become part of the Aeon version 2.0 release targeted for the end of this calendar year. These features include:

- **Photoduplication Management** - Integrated management of photoduplication and digital imaging processing. Patrons will place orders through the Aeon web client and receive billing and delivery notification electronically.

- **Proxy Researchers** - The ability to create special proxy researcher accounts to facilitate the tracking of requests submitted by one patron on behalf of another.

- **Visitor Log** - The ability to issue visitor clearance slips and record the beginning and end of all reading room visits. The electronic visitor log feature will enhance reading room security and provide richer, more complete usage statistics.

- **Fast Staff Login Switching** - For reference desks where staff need to share a client workstation, Version 2.0 will offer quick switching between staff logins so that the transaction histories can more easily show who performed each processing step.

- **Additional User Registration Fields** - Version 2.0 will offer options for including more user registrations, such as research topics, to enhance patron tracking and analysis.

- **More Reports** - A larger selection of standard reports, including Visits by Day, Requests Paged by Day, and Items Checked Out by Day, in addition to current capabilities for generating customized reports.

Interested in learning about how Aeon can improve patron service and maximize staff efficiency, while providing unparalleled item tracking, security, and statistics for your special collections? Then contact Christian Dupont at cdupont@atlas-sys.com or Rich Stryker at rstryker@atlas-sys.com. You can also go to www.atlas-sys.com for more information.

Atlas Systems Welcomes Two New Employees

Atlas Systems would like to extend a warm welcome to our two newest employees, Christian Dupont and Scott Fagen.

Christian comes to us from the University of Virginia, where he was Director of the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library. As Aeon Program Director, Dr. Dupont will lead the introduction and strategic development of Aeon, a circulation and request management system that enables special collections libraries and archives to provide superior user services while enhancing efficiency and collections security. In addition to serving as Aeon spokesperson, he will work with Atlas staff to develop a full range of consulting and training services to help libraries and archives improve staff workflows, facilities design, administration, and management.

Scott comes to us from the University of Florida, where he worked as an IT Specialist supporting Ares and ILLiad on a daily basis. In 2006 he graduated from University of Florida with a Bachelors Degree in Computer and Information Sciences. Scott is excited to be assisting institutions as a part of the support and training team. He continues to be a Florida Gator fan, and enjoys cooking and sampling exotic cuisine.

The OCLC ILLiad Users Forum
A quarterly feature highlighting innovations in the field of Interlibrary Loan

The Amazon Price Grabber: A New Tool for Just in Time Acquisitions
Sherry Buchanan, Interlibrary Loan Coordinator and Mike Flakus, Programmer/Analyst, Portland State University Library

Ever wish the price of a book could be imported into the ILLiad request form? Well, dreams do come true! Just-in-time acquisitions via Interlibrary Loan are now made easier with the development of a new tool, the Amazon Price Grabber. Many of us have faced this conundrum: How do we know when to buy rather than borrow? At the Portland State University Library, we developed a way to put the Amazon list price into the request form. Also, we've established a routing rule to place requests for books costing less than $20 into a custom queue: Awaiting Purchasing Decision. Of course, any price point could be used. Recently, we performed a cost-per-transaction analysis and learned that we spend an average of $12.31 to borrow an item from another library. The Amazon Price Grabber could be programmed to route requests less than that amount to a queue, and from there we could further automate a purchase-on-demand function by exporting to Amazon, Gobi, Alibris, Better World Books, or other vendors. Just think of the possibilities!

How does it work?
When a request is submitted from WorldCat.org or another OpenURL-compliant database, the ISBN is sent to Amazon.com, and the purchase price of the book is returned and populated into the ILLiad request form. We are now using the Location field, but we have also used the Notes field successfully. The process happens in the background, completely invisible to the user. A small JavaScript function is placed on the ILLiad book request page to initiate an AJAX call to a PHP script that conducts the SOAP web service call with Amazon and inserts that price in an unused hidden field on the request form. Sure, that sounds complicated, but the scripts are actually very short and sweet. The Amazon Price Grabber uses a free service provided by Amazon.com called Amazon Web Services (AWS). More information about getting your own Amazon Web Services account can be found at http://www.amazon.com/aws. Learn more about AWS security in the latest white paper: (http://s3.amazonaws.com/aws_blog/AWS_Security_Whitepaper_2008_09.pdf).

Preliminary Results
Since July 2008, 46 requests tagged with Amazon prices have been routed from WorldCat to ILLiad. Of the total, ten lacked the list price, twelve were under $20, seven were priced from $20 to $50, eleven were from $50 to $100, and only six were more than $100.

Here is a chart summarizing the results:
More than 25% of the tagged requests were less than $20. This could be a good starting point for a pilot in which we could more closely examine the costs to purchase versus the costs to borrow. After all, there are more options with a purchased book. We could allow the patron to keep it and save ourselves the costs of return shipping, or we could add these purchased titles to our collection, knowing that ILL-requested books circulate more frequently than books acquired through traditional acquisitions methods. Our initial findings only reflect a small number of requests because we set this up during a slow time, but we anticipate that the Amazon Price Grabber will foster better decision-making in the future.

Get Started
First, create a custom queue in the ILLiad Customization Manager. Under System, select Custom Queues, then the CustomQueues table. Select New Record, then enter the desired queue name, such as Awaiting Purchasing Decision. Be sure to enter Borrowing as the Process Type and your NVTGC (ILL if you are not a Shared Server site) in the NVTGC field. Save the record. Here is a screen shot of the queue after creation:

QueueName	Awaiting Purchasing Decision
ProcessType	Borrowing
NVTGC	ILL

To create the routing rule, log into the ILLiad Customization Manager. Under System, select Routing and make sure RoutingOn is set to Yes, then open the Routing table. Before you begin, sort by rule number and determine the correct **order** for your rules. It's important that you **number your rules consecutively leaving no gaps**. Also note that ILLiad 7.3 actually reverses the order in which routing rules are selected, so in our case, we needed to make sure that this rule came **AFTER** routing rules based on status (such as rules to route requests to Document Delivery), and **BEFORE** the rule for Direct Request sending. Here is the first part of our Routing table:

RuleNo ▲	Rul...	Process...	TransactionStatus	MatchString
0	No	Borrowing	Awaiting Request Processing	(t.ISSN in (Select ISBN from RoutingRef)) OR
1	Yes	Borrowing	PSU Full Text Document De...	U.Status=U.Status
2	Yes	Borrowing	Awaiting Copyright Clearance	U.Status like '%Distance%'
3	Yes	Borrowing	Awaiting Request Processing	U.Status like '%Distance%'
4	Yes	Borrowing	Awaiting Request Processing	t.Location like 'Amazon:%'

We have a few rules before the Awaiting Purchasing Decision, including rules that route requests based on status to the Document Delivery queue. To create this routing rule, you will select New Record, then complete the table with the information below, being sure to use the correct rule number and not overwriting another rule:

RuleNo	4
RuleActive	Yes
ProcessType	Borrowing
TransactionStatus	Awaiting Request Processing
MatchString	t.Location like 'Amazon:%'
NewProcessType	Borrowing
NewTransactionStatus	Awaiting Purchasing Decision
RuleDescription	Routes books less than 20 dollars to a queue to consider these items for purchase

It's that simple to set up ILLiad to route requests to your custom queue!

Get the Amazon Price Grabber now!
Everything you need to add this feature to your own ILLiad installation can be found at http://digital.lib.pdx.edu/oss/apg. We've included full instructions that take you step by step through this lightweight installation. And since this software package is being released as open source under the General Public License Version 3 (http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html), it's completely FREE for all! We just ask that you cite us when you refer to the Amazon Price Grabber.

Related Cool Tools You should also know about two other tools that point to sources from which you could borrow or buy on the open web. First, check out Book Burro (http://www.bookburro.org/). Book Burro is a Firefox extension that allows you to see sources from which to borrow, buy or discover information about books when browsing the web. GoGetter (http://www.rethinkingresourcesharing.org/getit.html) is a Firefox plug-in that installs a GetIt button, yielding potential sources for books found when browsing the web, including booksellers and libraries. Try them out, and see what you think!

Future Development ~ Make our Application Better
In the future, as mentioned, it would be ideal to communicate directly with multiple vendors by automating the ordering process. In the true spirit of open source software development, we invite other developers to help contribute to the future of this project and expand upon these ideas. The Amazon Price Grabber tool is very useful as is, but there are many ways that it could be even more helpful. In this same line of thinking, other similar tools could be developed to enhance workflow. For example, it would be amazing to see an open source tool that would help us locate free sources for articles, either in our own collection through citation-linking or available via open access sources, such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (http://www.doaj.org/). We could also flag requests for books that might be available for free online via Project Gutenberg (http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/) or Google Books (http://books.google.com/). We invite you to further develop our tool or write the programming for a similarly innovative tool, and let us know about it!

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Atlas Systems is a software development company founded in July 1995 with the mission of developing library automation to "Promote library excellence through efficiency." Atlas is best known for the creation and development of the ILLiad interlibrary loan management software, in use in over 900 libraries and now exclusively distributed by OCLC. However, Atlas has a growing stable of library automation products designed to meet library needs not currently addressed by standard library software services.

Atlas is a process driven software development company. This means working with librarians to first understand the underlying environment to be automated and then designing the software to automate the process. Once the software has been created, Atlas provides implementation assistance, training, and ongoing support of the product, continually upgrading the software in response to our clients needs and suggestions. This workflow review approach to software design sets Atlas apart in the library automation market.

Atlas Systems is based in Virginia Beach and currently has a staff of 15, split almost equally between development, customer support/training, and administration/marketing. If you are interested in joining the growing Atlas team, send an email to hr@atlas-sys.com.

OCLC is a nonprofit membership organization serving 42,489 libraries in 86 countries and territories around the world. Membership in OCLC is a unique cooperative venture, giving your library global access to all our services and databases, including WorldCat. Together OCLC member libraries make up the world's largest consortium.

Founded in 1967 by university presidents to share library resources and reduce library costs, OCLC introduced an online shared cataloging system for libraries in 1971 that today is used by libraries around the world. The Interlibrary Loan service was introduced in 1979 and since then has been used for more than 122 million loans among 6,928 libraries around the world.

T.I.P.S. - Training Information Per Stephanie
By Stephanie Spires, Training Coordinator

The OCLC ILLiad Newsletter is published quarterly by Atlas Systems, Inc. and edited by John R. Brunswick. Please send comments and suggestions to jbrunswick@atlas-sys.com.

Training: Share and Share Alike

The Atlas Community Portal at http://www.atlas-sys.com/community/ recently welcomed the 1000th member! This great resource is a perfect place to share your own custom marketing and training materials with others and find some new ideas for your own staff and customer programs. In the ILLiad Training discussion board you will find a *Community Contributed In-House Training Materials* subtopic with lots of custom designed resources used for OCLC ILLiad education in ILLiad libraries created by local ILLiad staff. Materials include examples targeted to staff and/or customers:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Videos
- Patron training website links
- Informational brochures
- Handouts
- Tutorials

Did you create any ILLiad handouts, videos, brochures, or presentations for your patrons or staff for training purposes? What software programs do you use for in-house training? How do you market your ILLiad services? Would you be willing to share samples or ideas? Let's talk about it on the portal! Please post on the Atlas Community Portal and help your fellow ILLiad sites get new ideas for communicating ILLiad to those who need to know - and in the process, find some new inspiration for your own program from fellow posters. *(note: you do need to be logged into the portal to see attached documents)*

A big THANKS to those who have already participated by posting and/or sharing samples on the portal.

If you have any questions or trouble posting, please contact me at training@atlas-sys.com and I'll be glad to help.

Watch the ILLiad-L list and Atlas Community Portal for training schedule announcements. Please join us in a class soon and make the most of your investment in OCLC ILLiad.