

Reciprocal Borrowing in a Shared Consortium World

Reciprocal borrowing is when patron physically goes to another public library to borrow material. Libraries tend to encourage reciprocal borrowing by their patrons, as it has a lower impact than interlibrary loan on the library's budget.

Reciprocal Borrowing, a short history

Reciprocal Borrowing, as an outgrowth of interlibrary loan, is a convenient method of supplementing a library's collection. In Illinois, it means that patrons of any one public library have walk-in, physical access to the collections of over 650 other public libraries. Its major difference from an interlibrary loan transaction is the patron moves from library to library, not the material. In fact, reciprocal borrowing is less expensive for libraries as it is slightly less staff and labor intensive.

Since the mid-1970's, Illinois public libraries have participated in reciprocal borrowing by public library patrons. The **Intra-System** reciprocal borrowing (borrowing among public libraries within a library system) is a condition of Lewis & Clark system membership (see <http://www.lcls.org/content/about/policies/resourcesharing.pdf>).

Inter-System reciprocal borrowing (borrowing among public libraries across system boundaries) is part of the Illinois Intersystem Reciprocal Borrowing Covenant and for LCLS members, is also part of system membership. (A copy of the Covenant is posted here: <http://www.nsls.info/services/rbp/intersystem.aspx>)

Who is responsible for paying for lost or damaged reciprocal borrowed material?

Obviously, the patron is responsible for their own debts concerning material they have lost or damaged, regardless of where or how the material was borrowed. However, in the few cases when the patron does not pay, the patron's home library (the library receives the patron's tax revenue and which issued the borrower's card) is fiscally responsible to pay the debt.

Between GateNet libraries, it is relatively easy to determine the GateNet library which issued the card. However, when the reciprocal borrower is from a non-GateNet library, causing a patron record to be created, it is important to include the name, address and other information concerning the patron's home library. The GateNet libraries have not set a standard for how this patron information is to be entered for non-GateNet reciprocal borrowers, but most enter the information as a second address or as a note.

But how has the shared consortium world changed reciprocal borrowing?

As the GateNet membership has not adopted universal patron and item loan rules, each member of GateNet determines the restrictions on their patrons (blocks) and their material (loan rules).

For patrons, these restrictions (blocks) follow them as they reciprocally borrow at other GateNet libraries. For example: GateNet library A may allow its patrons to borrow as many items as they can carry. While GateNet library B allows its patrons to borrow 10 books and 3 DVD's at a time.

- So if a Library B's patron goes to Library A, the patron will be able to check out a total of 10 books and 3 DVD's.
- But if Library A's patron goes to Library B, the patron will be able to check as much as they can carry.

The situation is different for material (loan rules). In the Millennium software, the restrictions on material are based on where the item(s) are checked out – the checkout location. For example: Library A's checkout time period is 2 weeks and Library B's checkout time period is 3 weeks. Remember, Loan rules follow checkout location's rules.

- So if Library A's patron goes to Library B to reciprocally borrow material, the patron has the material for 3 weeks.
- But if Library B's patron goes to Library A to reciprocally borrow material, the patron has the material for 2 weeks as Library A's loan period is 2 weeks.

| | GateNet Library A | GateNet Library B | Patron A at Lib B | Patron B @ Lib A |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Patron (Patron Block) | No patron blocks | Patrons Blocked to 10 book limit | No limits on # bks | Limited to 10 bks |
| Material (Loan Rules) | 2 week loans | 3 week loans | Three week loan | Two week loan |

But how has electronic access to material and information changed reciprocal borrowing?

The capability of remote access to electronic databases is becoming an issue. As part of their electronic database purchases, many libraries are including remote access for their patrons. This is a wonderful service for the patrons, and reduces some of the crowding in the library. However, this negotiated remote access is for library patrons, not necessarily for reciprocal borrowers. Public Libraries are comfortable, and probably within their database licensing agreements, to allow reciprocal borrowers in-house use of the library's electronic resources. Once the reciprocal borrower leaves the building, the issue changes to a remote access issue.

But what about the hordes of reciprocal borrowers pouring through the library's doors?

Many public libraries because of hours, collection size, and/or location see an excessive number of reciprocal borrowers visiting their library. In such cases where a library has an inordinate amount of reciprocal borrowing, the library board can place restrictions on the whole of the reciprocal borrowers. For example, the Library A trustees may adopt a policy that limits

reciprocal borrowers to 2 DVD's, while Library A's own patrons may borrow 5 DVD's from the collection. Such a Board adopted restriction on reciprocal borrowers is permissible in Illinois under the *ILLINET Interlibrary Code*, the *ILLINET Resource Sharing Code*, and System Standards and Policies.

What about non-residents and reciprocal borrowing?

Under the Illinois Compiled Statutes, an individual without tax-supported library service is eligible to purchase access to library service from the public library serving their school district. This patron card is referred to as a Non-Resident card. As of 2002, this Non-Resident card "*shall allow for borrowing privileges at all participating public libraries in the regional library system.*" (From: 75 ILCS 16/30-55.60 or 75 ILCS 5/4-7(12))

So when a non-resident purchases a card from a public library within LCLS, that card is valid at any LCLS public library AND other Illinois public libraries. When the library is a GateNet public library, the card's patron restrictions are those of the library issuing the Non-Resident Card; and the material loan rules are those of the checkout location of the material. The same conditions when a patron card is issued by a GateNet public library.

What about interlibrary loan and the reciprocal borrower?

The *ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code* indicates that interlibrary loan activity should be performed by the patron's home library, whether public library, school library, etc. This is because the **home library is fiscally responsible should the patron refuse to pay for lost or damaged ILL material.**

The GateNet libraries determined, years ago, that: 1) if the Reciprocal Borrowing patron was placing a direct request into the GateNet database, and or 2) if the staff member was placing a direct request into the GateNet database for the patron; the Reciprocal Borrowing patron would not necessarily be sent back to their home library.

However, if the ILL request was for an item not in GateNet, the patron's home library would need to make the Interlibrary Loan request.

How is a non-GateNet patron added to the GateNet database?

When an individual wishes to reciprocally borrow material from another library, they will present their home library's card. If the patron is not from another GateNet Library, and is not already in GateNet as a patron, a new patron record is created for the Reciprocal Borrowing Patron and a patron barcode is added to the patron's home library card.

As a reminder, expiration date for the GateNet borrowers account created for this non-GateNet Reciprocal Borrowing patron is the same date as their library card expires at their home library.

It is the GateNet library's responsibility to determine if the patron is in good-standing with their home library prior to creating a patron record in GateNet.

Remember, if the individual is already in the GateNet patron database, that record is used for their circulation and other activity.

The GateNet Library barcoding the patron into the database uses their codes/etc when creating the patron's reciprocal borrowing record. Choose Reciprocal Borrower as the Patron Type (4 is Adult RB and 5 is Juvenile RB). This prevents any confusion as to the GateNet ownership of the record and keeps the fiscally responsibility with the home library.